

Inspection report

June 2005

Supporting People Programme

Peterborough City Council

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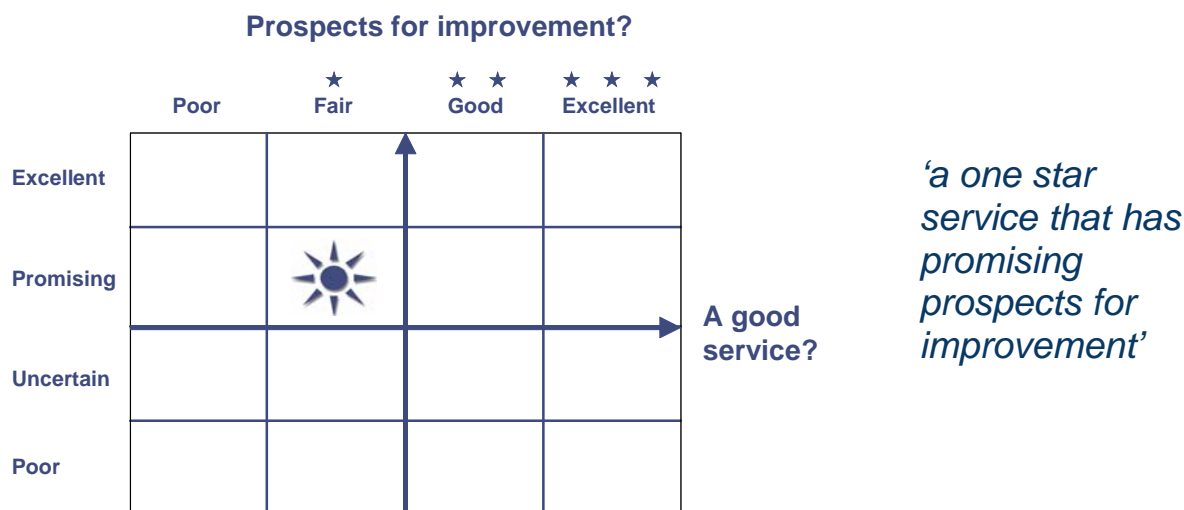
Summary

- 1 Peterborough City Council (PCC) is a unitary authority located in the east Midlands. The population is 158,300 of which 14.30 per cent are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. 17.97 per cent are over the age of 65.
- 2 The Council is Conservative-led with 33 of 57 Councillors and is governed under the Leader and Cabinet model. It employs 5,500 staff across all services, excluding those in schools.
- 3 '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 programme went live on 1 April 2003.
- 4 The aim of the Supporting People programme is to establish a strategic, integrated policy and funding framework, delivered through local partnerships in response to identified local needs and has replaced the previous complex and uncoordinated arrangements for providing housing related support services for vulnerable people.
- 5 Peterborough City Council acts as the administering local authority for the Supporting People Programme in its area. The Council works in partnership with the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (comprised of the North Peterborough/South Peterborough Primary Care Trusts and PCC Adult Services) and the Cambridgeshire Probation Service in commissioning Supporting People services.
- 6 Peterborough City Council was inspected in April 2005 as it entered the third year of the Supporting People programme. This report therefore reflects the current context for the Council as it continues to deliver the programme and focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery, the value for money presented by the contracted services, the outcomes for vulnerable people and the implementation of the Supporting People five-year strategy.
- 7 The total amount of Supporting People grant available to the Council in 2004/05 was £4.825 million. In addition the Council received a £183,868 Supporting People administration grant to fulfil its role as the administering authority. Funding in both grants has been reduced for the 2005/06 period; £ 4,582 million for the programme and £147,094 for administration of the programme.
- 8 The highest cost Supporting People service at the time of our inspection is £926.40 for supported housing services for offenders. The lowest cost service is £2.13 a week for a community alarm.

Scoring the service

- 9 We have assessed Peterborough City Council as providing a ‘fair’ one-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Scoring chart¹: Peterborough City Council administration of the Supporting People programme



- 10 We have assessed the Council’s administration of the Supporting People programme to be fair because:
- ◆ there is evidence of improving corporate ownership;
 - ◆ the arrangements for financial management and monitoring of the programme are in place and are based on both a sound procurement policy and ‘fairer charging’ policy;
 - ◆ a robust value for money (VFM) assessment is undertaken as part of provider service reviews; and
 - ◆ there has been an innovative approach to VFM through the use of e-auctions for agency staff providers to bid for contracts.
- 11 However, we found a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed. These include:
- ◆ poor signposting to services and service information;
 - ◆ slowly evolving governance of Supporting People where the commissioning body have not been seen to be driving the programme;
 - ◆ lack of provider representation on the core strategy group until April 2005;
 - ◆ failure to include or sustain user involvement in the Provider Forum;
 - ◆ serious delays in the service review schedule with only seven service reviews having been completed at the time of the inspection;

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.

- ◆ issues related to the opening of the new Peterborough prison are being identified by the Council but benchmarking against areas outside of the region with similar circumstances have not yet been undertaken;
- ◆ the Council does not have a consultation or communication strategy which limits a consistent approach to user involvement; and
- ◆ all external partnerships are not reviewed to determine their effectiveness and whether the Council should continue participation although we understand that this is planned for later in the year.

12 We have judged that the Supporting People programme has promising prospects for improvement. We found the following strengths.

- ◆ Service users can describe improvement in services under Supporting People, including involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services.
- ◆ New senior management arrangements within the Council and Supporting People are in place to deliver improvements in the short and longer-term.
- ◆ There is an ambitious programme of organisational and cultural change which is having a positive effect on performance management, human resource functions, organisational development and change management.
- ◆ The Council is investing time, money and human resources into an 'invest to save' approach for improving services.
- ◆ A comprehensive five-year Supporting People strategy has been developed in conjunction with providers, service users and other stakeholders, approved by the Cabinet and submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) by its deadline target date.
- ◆ The capacity to deliver the programme has been enhanced by the streamlining of the VFM process, basing strategic relevance assessments on the five-year strategy, supporting all actions with a new performance management and monitoring system and introducing a review management group to monitor progress on a monthly basis.
- ◆ There is strong evidence of innovative actions regarding partnerships such as the creation of the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership which has a good political champion, support from senior levels of officers and managers and acceptance by the community.

13 There are, however, some areas in which the Council needs to improve.

- ◆ Complaints to the Council and Supporting People are not yet seen as drivers for improvement to policy and practice; although there are plans to improve this it has not yet had time to become embedded.
- ◆ The lack of Council consultation and communication strategies hampers the consistent approach to involving users and communicating internally and externally.

- ◆ While the Council strongly believes that partnerships will improve the delivery of services, there is also a need to evaluate the outcomes these partnerships are achieving for service users and evaluation of the level of participation that should be undertaken by the Council based on a cost benefit analysis.
- ◆ As a result of their Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and other reviews, a number of improvements have resulted within the Council especially with regard to performance management, diversity, and human resource management and the Supporting People programme. However many are as yet too new to have delivered identifiable outcomes for service users.

Recommendations

- 14 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, organisations need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. In this context, the inspection team makes the following recommendations.

With immediate effect and ongoing

- ◆ Take measures to improve signposting for services and service information, especially for homeless individuals, persons with disabilities or disabled family members and those suffering from domestic violence.
- ◆ Complete the evaluation of the service reviews, revise the timetable to ensure completion by the 31 March 2006 target date and identify and commit the additional resources needed for completion.
- ◆ Develop a workplan with members of the Provider Forum to improve the involvement of services users, carers and advocates within the forum.
- ◆ Continue data collection regarding the new prison service and incorporate the information into the recently approved five-year strategy plan as needed.
- ◆ Take action to ensure that performance management information presented to the commissioning body (CB) is more comprehensive and focused on the achievement of Supporting People targets in order to ensure they have sufficient information to evaluate the success of the programme.
- ◆ Ensure that all providers are aware of the membership of CB and core strategy group (CSG) and how members of CSG were selected.

Within three months of the publication of this report

- ◆ Develop and obtain commissioning body approval of a consultation and communication strategy for Supporting People.
- ◆ Identify a process that will incorporate the Council and Supporting People complaints policy as drivers for improvement, especially as related to service users.

Within six months of publication

- ◆ Develop a plan to evaluate improvements achieved as a result of the implementation of the new cultural diversity, human resource management, organisational change and development strategies and new Supporting People performance indicators.
- ◆ Consider developing and implementing a programme to review the value of external partnerships and associated risks of involvement/non-involvement for Supporting People officers and managers to enable the most efficient use of their time, money and resources.
- ◆ Address all other identified weaknesses and ensure the provision of regular status or progress reports to the CB, CSG, Provider Forum and Council.

- 15 We would like to thank the staff of Peterborough City Council, particularly the officers and staff of Supporting People, who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

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Report

The locality

- 16 Peterborough City Council is a unitary authority in the east Midlands. The population of the area is 158,300 and increasing. 14.30 per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic communities. The population has a high number of people over the age of 65, 17.97 per cent compared to an England average of 16.41 per cent.
- 17 In terms of deprivation, Peterborough ranks 90th out of 354 areas of England, where 1 is the most deprived. Three wards are in the most deprived 10 per cent.
- 18 Unemployment is falling but at 2.5 per cent remains slightly higher than the national average (2.4 per cent). Major employers include the National Health Service, Peterborough City Council, Perkins Engines and a large Service sector. The Council employs 5,500 people, excluding those employed in schools.
- 19 The Council comprises 57 Councillors. The Conservative party has overall control with 33 seats. The Council is governed under a Leader and Cabinet model.
- 20 The Council's overall revenue budget for the year 2005/06 is £187 million. The budget for the delivery of social services is £28.1 million which is pooled with the local PCT under a partnership arrangement which allows the PCT to manage adult services. The budget for housing (general fund) is £2.2 million.
- 21 The Council's priorities themes for 2005 to 2008 are identified in the corporate strategy entitled '*Vision 2020*'. They include:
- ◆ improving the safety and feel of the city;
 - ◆ planning and delivering an attractive and environmentally friendly city;
 - ◆ strengthening and diversifying the economy;
 - ◆ achieving the best possible health and wellbeing;
 - ◆ providing high quality opportunities for learning and ensuring child safety; and
 - ◆ providing an effective, efficient and accessible Council.

The service

- 22 The Council acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the development and delivery of the Supporting People programme in their area.
- 23 The Supporting People programme subject to inspection is designed to meet the housing related support needs of vulnerable people including the homeless, older people with support needs, people with a learning difficulty, people with mental health problems, those with substance abuse problems, refugees, travellers and offenders.
- 24 The total amount of Supporting People grant available to the Council in 2004/05 was £4,825,453. In addition the Council received a £183,868 Supporting People administration grant to fulfil its role as the administering authority. Both grants have been reduced in 2005/06 to £4,582,416 and £147,094 respectively.

- 25 Peterborough City Council was inspected early in the third year of the programme. The report therefore reflects the current context for the Council as it delivers the programme and focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery, the value for money presented by the contracted services, the outcomes for vulnerable people and achievement of the five-year strategy.

'To provide flexible housing related support services which are innovative, cost effective, high quality and fully integrated to enable people to live as independently as possible and maximise their potential in the community.' – **Supporting People Vision Statement**

How good is the service?

- 26 The assessment was based upon the following key issues.
- ◆ Governance of the programme.
 - ◆ Delivery arrangements including strategy and needs assessments.
 - ◆ Financial monitoring and management of the grant.
 - ◆ Service reviews carried out by the administering authority.
 - ◆ Value for money.
 - ◆ User involvement.
 - ◆ Partnerships with providers and others.
 - ◆ Customer care, access to services and information.
 - ◆ Diversity.
 - ◆ Outcomes for service users.

Governance of the programme

- 27 The ODPM has set out the following structural arrangements for the governance, development and delivery of the Supporting People programme.
- ◆ Accountable Officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process.
 - ◆ Provider Forum: consults with service providers and service users.
 - ◆ Core strategy group: proposes strategic direction, service review procedures and timetables and work needed to secure the effective and efficient delivery and development of the programme.
 - ◆ Commissioning body: agrees strategic direction, compliance with grant conditions, outcomes of service reviews and monitors the delivery and development of the programme.
 - ◆ Councillors: approve key decisions of the commissioning body.
 - ◆ Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.
- 28 Supporting People commissioning bodies are a requirement under grant conditions and must have senior representation from the administering local authority, the local health services (usually one representative from each primary care trust) and the area probation service. In two-tier areas each district Council is entitled to one representative. Each named representative has one vote, although the administering local authority has a veto where there is a demonstrable financial risk to the administering local authority.
- 29 Governance of Supporting People is weak due to a lack of understanding of the role and importance of the programme in helping the Council deliver its stated priorities and objectives for meeting the needs of vulnerable adults. However, since October 2004 there has been steady and rapid improvement. The commissioning body and core strategy group have been providing more effective leadership, corporate ownership has become more evident and the programme seen as a higher priority for the Council. Over the past year the Accountable Officer (AO) and an experienced Supporting People team leader have provided consistent direction for the programme in the absence of a permanent programme manager. A weak Provider Forum is in place. The Council and Supporting People have failed to actively encourage and support the involvement of service users.

Administering Local Authority

- 30 Peterborough City Council acts as the administering authority for the Supporting People programme. It works in partnership with Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (comprised of the North Peterborough PCT, South Peterborough PCT and Adult Services for Peterborough) and the Cambridgeshire probation service in commissioning Supporting People services.
- 31 While the general knowledge and understanding of Supporting People may have originally been limited amongst elected members, the key members within the relevant decision-making structures of the local authority are well-informed. Officers provide elected members with initial and ongoing training which includes Supporting People issues. Members we spoke with are supportive of the Supporting People programme, have recently begun receiving reports and are discussing them in Scrutiny Committee meetings. The portfolio holder is a strong advocate for the programme internally and externally.

Accountable Officer

- 32 The Assistant Director (AD) of Community Services has served as the Accountable Officer for Supporting People since beginning work with the Council in early 2004. However, initially efforts were understandably focused on completing the housing stock transfer which took place in October 2004 rather than the Supporting People programme.
- 33 However, since October the AD has been actively working to raise the profile of Supporting People among elected members and across the Council as well as providing guidance to the work of the Supporting People team in the absence of a Supporting People manager.
- 34 Being knowledgeable about Supporting People and located at a senior management level, the AD is well-placed to be the designated 'champion' for Supporting People and can work to improve understanding of the programme and cross-departmental or cross-agency working.

Commissioning Body (CB)

- 35 The Supporting People commissioning body, formed in December 2002, evolved slowly in its understanding of the governance and guidance role of the body. However, as its understanding has grown over recent months it is now setting the agenda for Supporting People by giving clearer strategic and operational guidance to the SP team. For example, it has established what it wishes to receive regarding the completion of service reviews and how it wants the team to focus on service reviews. Within the past year the focus of the CB has also been on ensuring that the Supporting People budget is not overcommitted.
- 36 A relevant constitution and memorandum of understanding for the commissioning body has been agreed and in place since December 2002 but was reviewed and revised in December 2004 to give guidance to commissioning body members regarding conflict of interest and conflict resolution issues.
- 37 The CB meets at least quarterly, but has met more frequently in recent months. Initially attendance of partner representatives at commissioning body meetings was not consistent due to a number of changes within the Council and within partner organisations. However, attendance has improved over the last year with all key partners represented by senior officers thus leading to a more robust decision-making process.

- 38 Inspectors identified that no guidance material was available outside of the terms of reference to assist CB members with their roles; this would be useful in the event of new members joining the group. However, subsequent to our inspection the Council evidenced that the CB terms of reference had been reviewed, revised and adopted. Changes clearly identified roles and responsibilities in a clear and transparent manner.
- 39 Voting arrangements are consistent with grant guidelines, but the Council works to achieve decisions by consensus. It has not yet found it necessary to vote on any issue.
- 40 The Supporting People team has provided timely training for new members and is routinely providing the commissioning body with a wide range of documents that enable the board to make informed decisions regarding service reviews and finances. A senior finance manager attends the commissioning body to give advice on matters of financial probity, budget arrangements and compliance.
- 41 There are two key exceptions to the reporting mechanism. Performance management information provided to the CB is not comprehensive and focused. The performance information presented is of limited value in helping to evaluate the achievement of targets for Supporting People. In addition, there is no evidence of Supporting People reports being shared with the Cabinet prior to our inspection except for the draft policy on eligibility criteria presented in October 2004.
- 42 Some providers do not know who the members of the CB or CSG are or how they were selected. Since these bodies are influencing the direction of the programme and therefore the future funding priorities, a more transparent and accountable framework is needed.
- 43 Until recently the commissioning body has not strongly influenced the Supporting People programme. Some partners expressed concern that they were not as well-prepared as they would have liked to be in order to influence decision making. While we were onsite, the Council agreed to work with all partners to ensure participants are equally knowledgeable about Supporting People and thus enabled to feel more confident of having equal impact on the decision-making progress.
- 44 In an effort to overcome previous delays in setting the agenda for Supporting People and to enhance the draft strategy process, the CB has been meeting monthly. The CB is small and monthly meetings may be hard to sustain over the longer-term. There has been some discussion about broadening the membership of the group although this has not yet been resolved. Inspectors could not find any evidence of service user involvement or how user feedback influenced the CB decision making process.

Core Strategy Group (CSG)

- 45 The CSG is comprised of representatives from service providers, service areas within the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership and PCC Community Services and other relevant departments, and voluntary agencies but lacks user representation. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis.
- 46 The group is chaired by the AD of Community Services/AO for Supporting People. Although the agenda for the CSG meetings is led by the Supporting People team, members do contribute and take part in healthy debate.
- 47 Minutes of the CB and CSG are mutually exchanged in order to enhance communication and decision making between the two groups. In addition, the chair of the CSG sits on the CB to provide a direct feedback link between the two groups.

- 48 The Supporting People team provides a wide range of documents to the CSG to enable them to make informed decisions. Robust discussions and decision-making within the CSG ensures that appropriate information is provided to the CB to enable them to make difficult decisions regarding issues such as decommissioning or the remodelling of services. Recent changes in the make-up of the CSG has enabled a wider representation of external providers and increased the group's ability to more directly influence the delivery of services.
- 49 The Supporting People team has worked closely with the CSG to develop the five-year strategy and eligibility criteria. However there is still work to do in regard to the development of a framework for the minimum and maximum hours per client for each needs group.

Providers Forum

- 50 A provider forum meets on a six-monthly basis and has agreed terms of reference that have recently been revised. It has also been agreed that providers will now lead the forum, with the Supporting People team servicing the group. The chair of the group will attend CSG meetings in order to improve communication between the CSG and Providers Forum. The current interim chair attended his first CSG meeting while we were onsite.
- 51 Users were initially invited to participate in the Provider Forum but, according to some users, a lack of acceptance and inclusion of user related items on the agenda discouraged many from attending. As a result there has been no participation of users over the past 18 months. Somewhat belatedly, the Council is now setting up a separate user's forum to increase their participation and involvement in the planning and development of services and encouraging user feedback.

Delivery arrangements

- 52 The Supporting People team is located in the Community Services Department, reporting to the Assistant Director for Strategic Housing who also serves as the Accountable Officer. The team received an administration grant of £183,868 from ODPM in 2004/05. There has been no specific additional funding from the Council although a general budget provision of £150,000 was made in 2003 which remains in reserve in case it is needed.
- 53 The Supporting People team is adequately resourced and consists of the following posts all of which are currently filled.
- ◆ Lead Officer for Supporting People – currently filled by a former provider in a temporary capacity during the manager recruitment process.
 - ◆ Team Leader.
 - ◆ Development and Review Officer.
 - ◆ Information and Monitoring Officer.
 - ◆ Information and Support Officer (part-time).
 - ◆ Two Finance and Assessment Officers (each part-time).

The Council also brought additional temporary support resources to the team in order to complete the five-year strategy on time.

- 54 Delivery arrangements in Supporting People are not meeting the needs of service users in many instances. The Supporting People team is adequately resourced and individual members are aware of their role and responsibilities. Providers are positive in their evaluation of the work of the team and the team's general skills and ability to do the job. However, delays in implementing and completing service reviews has hampered the success of the programme and limited the increase of positive outcomes for service users. Performance monitoring and management systems are in place, but are not yet robust and effective or sufficiently embedded to assist in evaluating service delivery. Overall there is an awareness of individual performance targets and how they fit into the overall achievement of programme and corporate goals. The Council is investing in staff development and training.

The Supporting People team

- 55 With the exception of the Supporting People manager role, team members have been a stable group. They work well together and are committed to the success of the programme. Within the team, staff members have a varied mix of background skills and experience which support the needs of the programme and service providers. There is a common awareness of individual and team roles and responsibilities.
- 56 Service providers are very positive about the Supporting People staff. Team members are described as friendly, approachable and helpful. Providers have felt encouraged to contact them with problems and queries.
- 57 The greatest challenges for the team are described in their self-assessment as:
- ◆ completion of the service review programme and associated value for money exercise;
 - ◆ managing outcomes if the service review leads to re-modelling or decommissioning;
 - ◆ dealing with Supporting People budget reductions;
 - ◆ re-provisioning services in accordance with the five-year strategy; and
 - ◆ the need to revise the charging policy.
- 58 The Council had adopted a 'balanced scorecard approach' to achieving improvements under CPA which gave a lower priority to service plans as a tool to achieve results. However, it has recently identified that stronger service review plans need to be in place to support this approach and has again undertaken the creation of annual service plans. The service plan for Supporting People is found within the overall Community Services plan and team members are aware of its contents and their individual and collective responsibilities in meeting both Supporting People and corporate targets.
- 59 Regular team meetings and one to ones are held with the accountable officer and/or Supporting People manager and team leader. Performance management, which is just beginning to embed itself within the Council, has not yet cascaded to frontline staff appraisals although this is planned for the current year. Training needs, however, are identified within the appraisal framework. All staff has had annual and interim appraisals which included the setting of personal goals and targets and the review of training needs. Recently revised appraisal policies and procedures reflect the decision to incorporate the prioritisation of tasks and development of clear targets for each individual. A new head of performance is now in place and has a clear vision for what this programme is to achieve.

- 60 The Council is investing in the development of its staff. The Supporting People team has access to a wide range of internal and external training opportunities and their requests to attend are met. There is a regular slot on the team meeting agenda for feeding back on training and seminars attended.
- 61 Although Supporting People team members have not had specific training on the specialised needs of different service users, the officer with main responsibility for reviews has the relevant experience and skills to undertake most reviews. Where the need for other skills is identified, there is an ability to redeploy resources from elsewhere in the Council or to buy in consultant services. There are good networks in place for accessing advocacy services and work is being done with providers to link into their existing structures, for example, attending coffee mornings in sheltered schemes.
- 62 The IT system used by the Supporting People team is effective and is updated in a timely way to reflect new requirements. It has enabled the team to gather provider data and to evaluate their ability to deliver ODPM performance indicator information and meet essential milestone deadlines.
- 63 Both probation and service providers commented on the better training they had had since Supporting People was introduced. For example, training and use of the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) within the service reviews has helped to improve services for users. The extra liaison necessitated by the Supporting People framework had resulted in closer working between agency staff.
- 64 Service reviews are not yet achieving a significant level of completion and there has been a delay in appreciating the need to group service providers for reviews. This has impacted on the work load of team members and they will need to be diligent in order to achieve the identified ODPM target date for completion.
- 65 The team has been effective in its dealings with Providers. For example, the need to issue default notices has been avoided by working with the provider to overcome any lack of awareness or understanding. The team avoided future problems by running courses for providers on areas such as the new performance indicator (PI) workbooks before they were formally adopted.

The Supporting People five-year strategy

- 66 The Supporting People five-year strategy is a comprehensive, clearly written document which outlines the underdevelopment of services in a number of areas such as young people leaving care, and overdevelopment in areas such as conventional sheltered housing. The plan establishes priorities for growth and identifies how the Council is proposing to address service provision over the next five years. The comprehensive five-year strategy document was approved by the Cabinet in early March 2005 and was delivered to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the 31 March 2005 target date.
- 67 The Supporting People team utilised a wide range of demographic information to help identify the context in which they should be delivering Supporting People services and to develop the five-year strategy. The CSG members and individual providers contributed needs analysis information for their respective client groups to inform the final strategy document. The Supporting People five-year strategy document makes clear links to other strategies such as the PCC community, corporate and housing strategies, the Drug Action Team Strategy and Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership mental health strategy. However, the views of service users played a secondary role in the process and the delay in completing service reviews limited the Council's understanding of the need to challenge and reconfigure services as part of the new strategy.

- 68 Work on the five-year strategy provided an opportunity for some needs groups to take a strategic approach to services. For example, there is work taking place to develop a cross-provider sheltered housing strategy for the city.
- 69 Services for black and minority ethnic communities are improving as a result of the improved Council focus on BME provision. Research was carried out into the needs of the BME communities to inform the five-year strategy and resulted in innovative services such as New Link services for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers being brought onboard in the last six months. The Supporting People programme is also jointly funding a post for a BME support worker at Peterborough Women's Aid.
- 70 Users told us that it is currently difficult to access Supporting People unless they occupy a social housing tenancy. A need for more floating support has been acknowledged by Supporting People, but there is little progress evident at this time. For example, it is not clear why a floating support provider is currently limited to tenants of Cross Keys Homes (the housing association to which the Council transferred its housing stock) but with spare capacity has not been utilised as an interim measure.
- 71 Developing housing associations have been informed by PCC that bids for new supported housing development must in future first demonstrate their strategic relevance to priorities within the Supporting People strategy in order to be supported by the Council. This will ensure that future delivery of these projects will clearly align with the Council's strategic priorities.
- 72 The Council now understands the need to provide better feedback to providers regarding how their input influences decision making. For example, they need to be more explicit in sharing with providers how the provider input influenced the final eligibility criteria policy.
- 73 The stock transfer that took place in October 2004 will affect the Council's ability to reshape accommodation and support services for older people, as they no longer have a vested interest as owners of the stock and can deploy new resources to these services.
- 74 The need to jointly commission services has been recognised by the Council and there is a history of positive joint commissioning work especially with regard to health. However, some providers, while extremely positive about past efforts, are nevertheless concerned about a future potential impact on the user's ability to make choices that will help them retain independence.
- 75 The Council has agreed the need to work with commissioning officers to help them better understand the role of the Commissioning Body and how information flows to and from this body which will influence their ability to make commissioning decisions.
- 76 Provision for offenders has not increased since Supporting People was implemented, primarily because probation lacked robust baseline information on offenders' housing needs. Probation is now using a new system database to gather client data and commissioning specialist research on the needs of women offenders.
- 77 The likely impact of the new prison on Supporting People services is still unclear. This issue has been discussed with probation and prison officers who advised that there is no evidence to support any view that its opening will lead to an increase in housing need in Peterborough. However, the Council has not yet undertaken its own research to verify this with authorities outside of the region who are home to other prisons.

- 78 However, the priority given to offenders and people likely to offend was increased during the strategy consultation as a result of the prison opening. The five-year strategy action plan contains actions to review the level of housing need over the next few months and to collect data on the impact of the opening on the Council in general and Supporting People in particular.

Financial monitoring and management

- 79 The arrangements for management and monitoring of the Supporting People grant are sound and proportionate. There is a corporate Procurement Policy and Strategy in place that was developed in a process which saw the external auditors acting as a 'critical friend'.
- 80 A total of 110 housing related support service contracts are in place with 20 providers. All Transitional Housing Benefit (THB) claims were resolved by 31 May 2003. Peterborough developed interim contracts based on the ODPM standard format with revisions to meet local needs and practices. All interim contracts were issued and signed during July/August 2003.
- 81 Following the housing stock transfer in October 2004, LSVT contracts were drafted and issued. This is being done as a pilot for 'e-government' contracting using electronic schedules. If successful, the Council will use this electronic approach for all future contracts.
- 82 As at February 2005, one outstanding pipeline contract was not yet set up as sufficient information has not been provided. This has now been obtained and the Council contract award process will take place.
- 83 Robust payment arrangements are in place and payments are accurate and timely. All payments are made according to the interim contract and providers monitored to identify any funding shortfall which may affect services.
- 84 Quarterly reports of actual budget versus budget reconciliation between the Supporting People system and the ALA system are provided to CB members. With the approval of ODPM, the underspend in 2004/05 related to delays in pipeline schemes being developed is being retained as a cushion against any yet unknown budgetary threats as a result of service reviews.
- 85 A fairer charging policy with specific reference to Supporting People has been in place since 2003 and clearly shows the circumstances under which a service charge should be imposed. There has been little uptake by users and the policy is currently under review as the Council is working with other local authorities to develop a regional approach for future use. Information regarding charging was given to service users and providers via leaflets and posters; Councillors received information via the cabinet member that is represented on the commissioning body.
- 86 The Council's reaction to the letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) dated 31 August 2004 which announced the reduction in Supporting People funding over the next few years was to re-evaluate how they would achieve expected savings through the service review process and value for money assessment. This approach is consistent with that of similar councils.
- 87 Savings will be delivered through procurement by implementing a corporate programme group who will oversee the development of the procurement strategy and monitor its implementation and results.

- 88 Steady state contracts are not yet in place, although contracts have continued via extensions to interim contracts. A new steady state contract format has been developed by the regional Supporting People group and is now lodged with PCC's legal department for final approval. The three service reviews that have been completed, including one service for teenage parents completed early in 2004, are still awaiting the availability of this contract.

Service reviews

- 89 ODPM guidance requires administering authorities (ALAs) to review all services funded through Supporting People within three years starting from 1 April 2003. ALAs are required to produce a service review timetable together with a rationale to explain how the reviews have been prioritised. Progress with the service review timetable is submitted to ODPM through their regular performance reviews.
- 90 The service review progress is poor. Service reviews are significantly behind schedule with only six being completed. A lack of agreed eligibility criteria has added to the delay. The Council is only just adopting a themed approach in order to ensure that it will meet the ODPM deadline for completion. Although services have been decommissioned, there is no agreed decommissioning policy. Risk assessments have been undertaken and have influenced the review schedule, but some providers believe that the risks to providers who need to pick up additional service users in the event service decommissioned or withdrawal have been sufficiently assessed.
- 91 The CB has approved the review process including the value for money assessments. Service review information gathered is comprehensive and provided to the CB as requested. However, the lack of information regarding the status of reviews such as number undertaken, status of reviews in process, length of time before completing the review, number of reviews completed and number remaining, has limited the CBs to evaluate the programme or to make recommendations to improve the process. The Council believes partnership working and good communication between partners is necessary to deliver services in the future. However, there is no agreed communication or consultation strategy and some providers are concerned about the lack of ongoing communication once service reviews are underway. Service users are interviewed as part of the service review but do not receive any feedback from the team as part of the service review results process.
- 92 A service review schedule is in place that was initially based upon high cost and high risk as suggested in ODPM guidance but was later amended to include subsequent recommendations of an external review of Supporting People costs. In recent months the schedule has again been revised to implement a more thematic approach in order to ensure that the Council will meet the ODPM target deadline date for reviews. Service providers are generally well-informed about the review process, but this information is not uniformly shared with service users.
- 93 Desktop reviews are only undertaken where the provider is providing a number of identical services, for example in sheltered housing with the same provider, or where services do not meet the test of strategic relevance. For example, after the audit of policy and procedures and validation visits to approximately 25 per cent of the sheltered housing provider schemes are completed, the remainder will undergo desktop reviews. However, where there is substantially varied practice within schemes a fuller review will be undertaken.

- 94 Despite a robust schedule on paper, only seven service reviews have been completed as of April 2005. Two of these reviews resulted in decommissioning, but were not difficult decisions as they were ineligible for Supporting People funding. The Council has acknowledged that the speed of completion has been slow, but believes that it was delayed because of the lack of agreement on eligibility criteria which were not put in place until December 2004.
- 95 Although eligibility criteria are now in place, there has not yet been sufficient time to evaluate the results of the newly adopted criteria on the delivery of services and outcomes for service users.
- 96 Services have been decommissioned, but an overall strategy for decommissioning services has only recently (December 2004) been discussed by the CB and is yet to be approved. It is unclear what guidelines have been discussed with providers as they are unaware of the decommissioning strategy.
- 97 A comprehensive risk assessment of Supporting People has been undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit. It includes identification and assessment of a wide variety of internal and external risks including a reduction in funding for the programme. The results were used to inform the service review programme and the prioritisation of reviews.
- 98 However, some providers believe that there are adverse impacts of the service review process of which the Supporting People team is not aware or which are being insufficiently risk-managed. For example, providers are concerned that the impact of a possible knock-on effect to those agencies that need to become involved when a small local provider undergoes budget cuts and can no longer provide services has not been adequately risk managed. Providers also desire a more robust exit strategy where services are not going to be funded any longer in order to protect vulnerable service users.
- 99 Providers recognise that the Supporting People team has learned from the experience of early service reviews with more recent reviews progressing much more smoothly. However, the service review process is beginning to present some challenges to maintaining positive relationships with providers where, for example, their funding is to be reduced.
- 100 There is general agreement among the providers to whom we spoke that the team has the basic skills and training needed to undertake the review. Where there have been concerns about the inspector's level of understanding of a specialised client group, they have worked with the inspector to increase their knowledge. In some cases the inspector's have secured the services of a knowledgeable consultant.
- 101 As a more contract-based culture becomes evident, the Council has not yet addressed the need to work pro-actively to maintain these important partnerships. At the moment some providers are concerned about the lack of ongoing communication once service reviews are underway. For some this has been a very lengthy process and there has been no, or at the very least inconsistent, contact regarding progress over intervening weeks or months.
- 102 The Council is taking a comprehensive approach to gathering information on providers as part of its service reviews. In addition to the standard information they also refer to Housing Corporation annual assessments of providers and Commission for Social Care Improvement (CSCI) reports in order to identify relevant issues. However, because the gathering of this information could lead to delays in the completion of service reviews, the Council is evaluating how to streamline the information gathering process.

- 103 Providers have the opportunity to challenge review findings that contain recommendations to remodel or close a service. A service review appeals process is in place for when agreement cannot be reached, but the process is not generally referenced as part of service review reports and not all providers are aware that there is an appeals process in place. After discussion with inspectors, the Supporting People team has agreed to include information regarding the availability of an appeals process in all service review reports.
- 104 Although the team is providing service review information to the CB in the format they requested, inspectors noted that the review reports lack clear identification of what is being risk assessed or how services are being passported as part of the accreditation assessment. While there is evidence that this background information is available from the reviewer at the time it is considered by the CB, good practice would include this documentation in the report to ensure its availability to the provider and any future reviewer. In addition, service review action plans appear to only contain actions related to achieving QAF standards and do not address other issues outside of these criteria.
- 105 Plans are in place to deal with adverse provider actions or incidents. For example, the CB has considered whether it is possible to phase in any grant reductions and providers are requested to submit a disaster recovery plan that would sit alongside the Council's disaster emergency planning procedures should they be needed.
- 106 Savings have been achieved as a result of the decommissioning of ineligible residential care home services and the identification of savings outside of service reviews. The Council is forecasting that the three or four high cost service reviews currently in progress will result in savings amounting to £200,000 - £300,000 in a full year. The contract monitoring guidance is also focusing on a value for money process outside service reviews. Block gross contracts for short-term services are used for service users with mental health problems which may require support services for longer than the two-year period covered by Supporting People. Services are not currently configured to address this issue.

Value for money

- 107 The approach to achieving value for money services in Peterborough was initially weak but has improved significantly in the past year. The Council as a unitary authority determines local housing benefits and was responsible for assessing claims for transitional housing benefits (THB) prior to the move to Supporting People. Legacy services under THB were validated as far as possible prior to the changeover. However, sufficient resources were not available at this time to determine in any depth if the services being received by users were actually needed or if the services received were actually those for which the Council was paying. The Council therefore relies on the service reviews conducted by Supporting People to determine this, which may mean that they are not achieving the savings anticipated as quickly as they would like.
- 108 Value for money is a fundamental area for Supporting People and this was reflected in high cost services having been subject to early review and grant eligibility determined. Initially two services were decommissioned when they did not meet Supporting People eligibility criteria as outlined by ODPM. However, there is a reliance on the service reviews to demonstrate value for money and initially there were no attempts to achieve savings outside the reviews.

- 109 The CB has adopted a value for money assessment framework. Services are assessed against this framework and the standard cost assumption it sets out. The standard cost assumption is based on the hourly cost of providing eligible support tasks identified through the service review process. Where costs are significantly above or below the regional average, providers are required to substantiate their high costs or that services are of good quality in relation to low costs. The review process is providing an opportunity to review the quality and cost of provision and requires commissioners to look at providers who are not performing or to question the need for services.
- 110 The value for money (VFM) section of the service review report demonstrates a robust procedure which provides recommendations for future funding based on the application of the standard hourly rate to the number of eligible hours. Eligible hours are determined through an analysis of provider work sheets and costs are then benchmarked against local, regional and national figures. However, service users and a number of providers are not well informed about the Council's approach to achieving VFM.
- 111 The highest cost service in Peterborough is £926.40 per week for supported housing (shared/self-contained) services for offenders and those at risk of offending. The lowest cost service is £2.13 per week for a community alarm. The high cost service was reviewed early in the service review process and resulted in a reduction of the number of hours payable under Supporting People based on an analysis of actual housing related support activity, thus reducing costs.
- 112 In order to evaluate if services were representing good value for money inspectors visited a number of providers serving major client groups and undertook desktop reviews of a similar group of providers. Within these groups we found that:
- ◆ services with higher-than average costs could generally justify the higher costs based on improved or additional services that were being offered;
 - ◆ services with higher-than average costs had been reviewed early on and, if unable to demonstrate additional value for money, had seen costs renegotiated as part of a revised interim contract;
 - ◆ services with lower-than average costs were able to demonstrate the provision of acceptable standards of service; and
 - ◆ there was no evidence that Supporting People was funding services not related to housing related support.
- 113 Initially there was no attempt to achieve savings outside the review programme. However, registered care homes in receipt of the supported housing management grant (SHMG) were prioritised for early review as it was recognised that they would not be eligible for Supported People funding. These services were then decommissioned. As the programme progressed, there has been an effort to apply the knowledge gained from the VFM assessments to achieving savings in other areas outside of the service review.
- 114 The Council is currently not using the supplemental objectives under QAF to gather performance, value for money or quality data. However, although ODPM has indicated that these additional objectives will not be mandatory from April 2006 as it had originally suggested, the Council is considering whether there would be a benefit in adopting some of them if they can add value to future inspections following the completion of all service reviews under the current schedule.

- 115 The Council has a revised procurement strategy under-development which will positively influence Supporting People by providing better guidelines for commissioning services. In addition, regional working groups are being used to inform procurement and commissioning arrangements such as steady state contracts, charging and the work for the five-year strategy that was jointly commissioned.

User involvement

- 116 Peterborough City Council lacks both a consultation and communication strategy and there is no consistent or robust approach to involving service users. The Council readily admits that user involvement needs to improve. Specifically we found user involvement in Supporting People to be very poor especially in light of the need to gather data for the five-year strategy. While some feedback is obtained through older, established forums within the Council, these groups are not consulted by Supporting People on a regular basis. Feedback regarding Supporting People is generally sought as part of the service review by the use of interviews, questionnaires and focus group meetings. There is a provider forum which describes itself as inclusive, but it lacks any user involvement. A written policy outlining the Council's commitment to achieving user awareness and involvement is in place, but there is no evidence of its use in practice. Users, carers and advocates are not routinely consulted nor made aware of opportunities for their views to be heard on a regular basis. There is no consistent access to the decision making process for users carers or advocates.
- 117 Specialist advocacy and support groups' expertise has been enlisted in order to involve some hard-to-reach groups. Individual Supporting People team members attend advocacy group meetings such as the Travellers Practitioners Group and others work with internal specialised user focus groups such as learning disabilities. Service user consultation on the five-year strategy was enabled through the Peterborough Community Voluntary Services advocacy service and the learning disability partnership. Specialised groups helped to develop appropriate questionnaires for service reviews.
- 118 The Provider Forum has been in place since June 2000 to which users were initially invited but user participation has varied over the years. Users we spoke with said that most users did not feel they were accepted as part of the group and this has resulted in declining participation over the last 18 months. A service user awareness and involvement statement of commitment is in place, but this is not actively followed. The CSG does not receive information about user involvement and report any lack of progress to the CB. The Council has recognised the need to improve their involvement and is currently working on ways to encourage their participation such as implementing a user forum or seeking new ways to encourage user feedback via their website.
- 119 Feedback from users also indicated that a number of carers, advocates and voluntary organisations had not heard of the Provider Forum, nor did they recall being invited to be part of this group. Once the purpose was explained, most felt that it would be something they would welcome as a means to voice their concerns and learn about service providers and the services available.
- 120 There are well-established mechanisms for involving vulnerable groups such as adults with learning disabilities and their carers, older people and their carers and adult mental health service users. A relatively new forum for adults with physical and sensory disabilities is also in place. All of these have been involved in housing and support issues especially as related to the preparation of the five-year strategy.

- 121 Providers were positive about the contact made with service users as part of the review process. One provider specifically mentioned that Supporting People team members had made an evening visit in order to speak to service users who were out during the day.
- 122 Although they are taking steps to improve data collect regarding user feedback and the planning of services, Probation is unable to collect this information at present.
- 123 Supporting People, aware of the need to improve involvement by users, carers and advocates across a wide variety of services, has very recently taken action to develop a separate users forum. During our inspection we were advised of the details of an initial meeting scheduled for May 2005.

Partnership arrangements

'The way forward is through increasing the levels of community partnerships' – Peterborough City Council

- 124 Partnership arrangements are good within the Council and Supporting People. There are strong partnership links with health, education and housing in place. The Council is working with partners to ensure a joined up approach between the Supporting People programme and the work of other stakeholders. For example, the Supporting People team is involved with the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (GPPCP) in carrying out a review of day services for older people in the BME community. There are also a growing number of partnerships with the community and voluntary sectors as evidenced in the innovative New Link service.
- 125 The Council is seen by the Commission for Social Care Improvement (CSCI) to work pro-actively and in an integrated way with key stakeholders to help ensure effective service delivery. For example, the Health Partnership Board is currently being strengthened to meet the objectives of the community strategy.
- 126 Peterborough Supporting People team and its partners in the cross authority group have shared the costs of the appointment of a regional co-ordinator for the group since May 2004. This demonstrates a positive approach to the achievement of value for money and a tangible commitment to partnership working.
- 127 There is also evidence of cross authority group work on issues such as mapping direct access to services across the region and the joint commissioning of services. Positive partnership working has resulted in the development of a 40 bed extra care scheme which will open in March 2006. Within this facility there will be eight beds designated for intermediate care in order to reduce delays in hospital discharges. This scheme came about as a result of a partnership between the Council, health, supporting people and a housing association.
- 128 Peterborough has shared the VFM approach it has developed with the regional Supporting People networking group. This cross-authority group can demonstrate clear achievements including development of a regional steady state contract and a compelling cross authority statement for the group's five-year strategies.
- 129 There is a history of positive partnership work between the Council and probation services and Supporting People has incorporated this into work with probation. Probation describes a good relationship with the Supporting People team and are confident that they are not seen as a 'junior partner'. The Council is seen as receptive to offender accommodation issues.

- 130 The Council recognises its responsibilities towards people in the community who pose a risk to others and takes an active part in the multi-agency work to manage any risk to the public. Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) are in place and there is a good link with Supporting People under this arrangement. However, probation sees the need to put in place a protocol to deal with information sharing with partnership agencies that is outside of the MAPPA process.
- 131 The Council does not yet undertake a review of all partnerships to determine their effectiveness and whether the Council should actively continue their involvement. However, the Council has plans to address this issue during the current year.
- 132 There are a limited number of shared targets across partners such as health and education but none are identified with probation services or with the private voluntary or community sectors.

Customer care, access to services and information

- 133 Signposting to services or service information is poor. For example, the Council's 'one-stop shop' fails to give relevant guidance to users seeking information or assistance in obtaining disabled housing accommodation or to identify services that may be available through Supporting People. On several occasions we found limited interest in obtaining full information about the required needs of people with disabilities in order to give pertinent information and there was no attempt to take user information in order to return calls if necessary.
- 134 As part of our 'mystery shopping' exercises we had difficulty finding the emergency homeless contact number. The domestic violence service requires a call to a directory enquiry number for which there is now a charge. In both instances service access is limited and could pose a serious risk for the user and for the Council.
- 135 The Council provides Supporting People information to users or interested parties in a variety of ways. For example, there is a user friendly website which provides information including direct links to providers and details of provision by needs group. A basic information leaflet about Supporting People and a Supporting People poster have been produced.
- 136 The Council newsletter contains Supporting People information and is also available online. Online information is available in the major local minority languages (Portuguese, Punjabi and Urdu), but unfortunately the directions are given primarily in English. Information is also available on request in community languages, large print, audiotape and Braille. The Council's new arrivals project, New Link, can provide interpretation and signposting to advice. However, there is currently no paper-based information outlining all the available Supporting People services, although this is being considered.
- 137 The Council, working through the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership (which now includes the Council's adult services department) has produced a comprehensive directory of services available within Peterborough. The directory was revised in April 2004 and incorporated into the Better Care - Higher Standards document and now contains the aims and objectives of Supporting People.
- 138 However, despite the revision, the new document lacks contact details for Supporting People. There is no strapline to indicate the availability of information in other formats and the information within the directory frequently lacks specific provider contact details. For example, there are no helpline contact details for homeless clients or for women suffering domestic violence.

- 139 While complaints about Supporting People are dealt with via the Council's complaint policy and the availability of this is included in the provider contract, it is not clear whether this is being actively promoted by the Supporting People team and providers to inform service users.

Diversity

- 140 Given the large minority population within Peterborough (more than 10 per cent), we were disappointed to find that the Council does not have a diversity policy in place. As a council it has been slow to respond to the needs of many of its residents and in only now using the equalities policy as the foundation for developing a cultural diversity strategy and programme. As a result there is no robust process in place for assessing needs that can draw on relevant strategies that have been tried and tested.
- 141 The increasing number of minority groups within the city and need for specialised services to ensure community cohesiveness and inclusiveness have provided a stimulus for councillors to address diversity. Diversity is now seen to be a major driver in the new corporate and community growth programmes and there is a strong commitment on the part of the Council to succeed in this area and reduce community tensions as evidenced by the appointment of a new head of diversity.
- 142 The Supporting People five-year strategy identifies a number of key issues that need to be addressed in order to increase access to services for black and minority ethnic communities. These include improving this community's knowledge of housing related support services, raising awareness of the needs of these groups and providing more front line staff from these communities.
- 143 The Supporting People team commissioned a study to be carried out by the housing options service. The report was based on extensive consultation with members of minority communities who belonged to a number of client groups such as people with HIV/AIDS, people with mental health problems, refugees and community elders. In addition, further research was carried out in specific communities such as Hindu, Portuguese, Afro-Caribbean and Pakistani. The report identified groups of vulnerable adults that were not being served, such as refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, and the results of this report were fed into the gap analysis for the five-year strategy.
- 144 The Council has taken action to improve services for diverse communities. For example, in October 2004 it opened the 'New Link' centre. This new and innovative service is a multi-agency approach to delivering services through nine key projects including a resource centre, interpreting and translation, developing computer skills, new resident orientation and training, community safety, education, health and enhancing community capacity through volunteering. The service benefits a range of diverse clients by assisting with their language and cultural issues. The Council is actively seeking to raise awareness around asylum seekers and refugees with the intention of reducing local tensions.
- 145 The commitment to addressing diversity issues has been incorporated into performance management. As a result, dealing with diversity is now a core competency for all senior managers and will soon be cascaded throughout the organisation as part of the developing cultural diversity programme.

- 146 However, the lack of a robust process for assessing needs that draws on relevant skills and experience does limit how service reviews are undertaken with regard to diversity issues and therefore how they influence priority setting and joint commissioning proposals. It is difficult for the commissioning body members to give guidance in this regard to Supporting People as some are unable to provide co-ordinated information to assist the team. For example, partners such as probation (along with many community and voluntary organisations) undertake no formal diversity monitoring and are not requested to do so under Supporting People. While probation can generate information on offender need through use of its Offender Assessment System (OASys), there is limited ability to obtain the same information from community providers.
- 147 While we can see that there are pockets of good practice within the new services for minority groups, there is still much work to do to achieve a consistent approach to diversity across the Council and to incorporate these successes in the delivery of mainstream services under Supporting People. While some positive steps have been taken, the process is too new to have identified outcomes for services users or the Council.

Outcomes for service users

- 148 A wide variety of service user outcomes have been achieved under the Supporting People Programme. For example:
- ◆ a user of a mental health scheme indicated that the support received was valuable and gave him greater freedom and independence;
 - ◆ Supporting People has enabled the provision of new services including Deaf Blind UK services and a proposed extra care scheme for older people;
 - ◆ a floating support scheme has been developed for offenders which has enabled someone who had served a 20-year sentence to move on to successful independent living; and
 - ◆ the securing of Supporting People funding for six full-time floating Support Workers for the adult mental health client group.
- 149 Supporting People is described by providers as having enabled the provision of a number of new services or improvements to existing services that would not have been possible otherwise. For example, people with a range of needs who previously may not have done so are now successfully sustaining tenancies. These include such diverse groups as those with hearing and/or visual impairments, people suffering from physical or mental illness and people with chaotic lifestyles.
- 150 Through the DOH extra care fund, PCC were successful in obtaining a substantial capital contribution (£950,000) toward the provision of an extra care scheme for the frail elderly.
- 151 The following case study demonstrates the positive outcomes achieved by a number of service users within a service receiving Supporting People funding.

Supporting People Case Study

Service user groups

- Persons with learning disability.
- Persons with a long term mental illness.

Type of service

- Supported Accommodation 'Home for Life' scheme where each individual is housed appropriately within one of two homes specifically designed to meet their needs.

Key players

- Residents of homes, assigned housing association staff, Supporting People team.

Issue/s (to be) addressed

- Achieving personal goals, addressing individual support and development needs, learning to live independently, improving self confidence.

Action/s taken

- Activities to encouraging decision-making, support the development of daily living skills, deal with conflict and improve problem solving and communication skills.

Outcomes for service user

- 'I have completed a computer course and I am now doing a course that teaches me how to dismantle computers. These courses will enable me to get and job, earn my own money become more independent'.
- 'I'm learning to manage my own money and can learn to start to make a life of my own'.
- 'The staff has helped me to attend a programme for people with drinking problems. I have almost completely stopped drinking alcohol and I am more settled. The help and advice I've received here will help me to cope better with my difficulties and not resort to using alcohol to try and forget my problems'.
- 'I've just complete courses to become a voluntary HIV support worker and a volunteer support worker for young carers'.
- I've had the opportunity to change my life with a nice group of people. I've even learned how to cook for 11 people!

Summary

- 152 Overall, we judge that Peterborough City Council is delivering a one-star service in its planning and delivery of the Supporting People programme. We have highlighted the following areas in reaching this judgement.
- 153 The services we visited were of good quality, represented value for money and provided positive outcomes for services users. There are improved services for the growing BME community as a result of investment in plans to decrease community tensions and encourage integration into the community. There is strong commitment from the Council, probation and health within Supporting People and evidence of partnership work such as joint commissioning.
- 154 Access to services and service information is something that the Council had already recognised as a weakness and subsequently initiated a 'one-stop shop' to improve accessibility. However we found no evidence to indicate an improved picture, especially with regard to Supporting People.
- 155 There is limited user involvement in the planning and development of Supporting People services. Overall, there is no communication or consultation strategy which leads to inconsistency in information sharing and user involvement.
- 156 Governance of Supporting People has been weak. However, corporate ownership of Supporting People and governance by the commissioning body is improving as a result of the work of the corporate champion and officers over the past 12 months.
- 157 Delivery arrangements are fair. Service users and providers are positive about the team and its ability to provide information and guidance that is timely and appropriate. There is a comprehensive service review process in place, but service reviews are not meeting scheduled target dates.
- 158 Sound financial management arrangements are in place and proportionate to the level of scrutiny that is required. While no specific savings have been achieved as a result of the few service reviews completed, the Council is addressing this by implementing a corporate programme group who will oversee the development of a procurement strategy and monitor its implementation. Value for money is a high priority and is achieved through a robust value assessment framework.
- 159 Historically the Council has been slow to address issues relating to diversity. However, the Council is now taking steps to develop and implement a diversity strategy and has hired a new head of diversity. Supporting People has taken steps to undertake a needs assessment for black and minority ethnic communities and the results are reflected in the newly adopted five-year strategy.
- 160 The Provider Forum, while open to services users, carers and advocates, has not taken measures to encourage their consistent participation. We were told that plans are in place to address this beginning in May 2005.
- 161 Performance management improvement is a high priority for the Council, but it has not yet been embedded across the Council and has only recently been incorporated into Supporting People and its 2005/06 service and implementation plans and reports to the commissioning body.
- 162 The co-operation and support of partners, providers and services users in gathering information to influence the Supporting People five-year strategy has resulted in a generally robust document that was approved by the Council and submitted to ODPM in a timely fashion.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

What is the evidence of service improvement?

- 163 The Council has demonstrated their response to previous inspections and feedback by investment in staff resources and skills to deliver improved outcomes. For example a libraries inspection has resulted in the development of an improvement plan and recruitment of an interim manager to head-up the service and to deliver the improvement plan. The Council is sufficiently confident that this service will be improved that a re-inspection has been requested for February/March 2006.
- 164 In response to weaknesses identified by the CPA, new senior management arrangements have been put in place to deliver improvements in the short and longer-term. These will be overseen by a corporate programme board which consists of senior managers, leader of the Council and two other portfolio holders.
- 165 The Council has tended in the past to treat complaints as isolated incidents for resolution rather than as a driver for improvements in policy and practice. Plans to improve this approach exist, but will take time to implement.
- 166 Service users told us they had experienced improvement in services under Supporting People. For example, they describe new support plans that are more focused on their needs and desires following a service review of their provider.
- 167 New services are being developed and established providers are given support in remodelling services to meet Supporting People criteria and Council objectives. Supporting People enabled the provision of services such as those now provided for the visually and hearing impaired, a floating support service for offenders and an improved mental health service that encourages work towards greater freedom and independence following discharge.
- 168 Signposting for service information and access to services is poor. As a result of our inspection the Council was made aware of access to information and services problems we encountered within the 'one-stop shop'. The Council took immediate action to address the posting of relevant contact numbers but is also planning on reminding advice and housing officers about taking sufficient information to be able to return phone calls if necessary and producing a new leaflet on housing options for people with a disability or who have disabled family members.
- 169 The Council is putting £1.5 million into an 'invest to save' approach for improving services. One result of this investment has been an innovative new service, 'New Links', opened in October 2004. New Links has the support of multiple agencies across Peterborough and is well-used by refugees, migrant workers and asylum seekers during their waiting period for an asylum decision. The service helps them to integrate into life in the Peterborough area by providing a number of services such as translation, learning English, advice and guidance in seeking available benefits for which they are eligible.
- 170 The Council is beginning to learn from others and to apply the results of their own work in specific areas. For example, the Supporting People team is actively working with neighbouring Councils to share ideas and experiences. It is also closely involved with regional working groups to focus on particular issues such as the development of the regional steady state contract. Work is also now beginning on developing a regional information sharing protocol.

- 171 The Council recognises that it needs to improve user involvement and proposes to improve this process within Supporting People by holding quarterly service provider and service user forums. In addition, the Council is aiming to achieve the Quality Mark for Home Improvement Agencies; what it learns from this will assist them in preparing the Home Improvement Agency for future Supporting People service reviews.
- 172 The Council has learned from experience that it needs to monitor projects on an ongoing basis once the initial project deadline has been achieved. For example, it has introduced work on a post LSVT risk assessment and follow-up which they plan to eventually evolve into a performance management monitoring role.
- 173 Innovative practices are being undertaken by officers such as the sending out of documents to users based on their individual language needs. However, these ideas are not shared corporately and the Council does not have a process to learn from their own successes.
- 174 The Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership, which is a working relationship involving the two Peterborough PCT's and PCC Adult Services, is seen as an example of positive practice by central government and a good example for other authorities. As a result of this recognition, the Council is now sharing its successes with other authorities and contributing to their learning processes.
- 175 During the five-year strategy consultation it was determined that the point system used in the shadow strategy was not considered transparent or easy to understand by stakeholders. Following discussions the Council agreed to drop the points system in favour of clearly stating the priority areas for development. The five-year strategy now states that the commissioning body when commissioning new or additional services will give priority to those schemes:
- ◆ which bring capital funding to Peterborough;
 - ◆ where there is match funding in full or in part;
 - ◆ which serve children leaving care and offenders;
 - ◆ which meet the level of strategic relevance in terms of supporting wider community objectives; and
 - ◆ which address a level of unmet need and its consequences.

How good are the current improvement plans?

- 176 The Council has developed a number of comprehensive improvement plans to address weaknesses identified in the CPA and other external reviews. While a 'balanced scorecard' approach was initially undertaken, the Council recognised that this was insufficient to provide the robust improvement needed. As a result they have focused on the development and implementation of a number of key strategic plans and service development and improvement plans. Clearly-focused strategies are now in place and there is growing evidence of positive change beginning to occur such as improved services for a wide variety of client populations.
- 177 Supporting People is planning to hold annual joint meetings of the CB and CSG in order to plan the work for the year ahead and to actively co-ordinate the current year's meetings. However, we are unsure how providers and service users in the Provider Forum will be included in this process.

- 178 There is recognition that there is a need to improve the level of service user involvement in the Supporting People programme. The May meeting of the provider forum is scheduled to consider how it can engage better with service users. This may involve using a different vehicle to the provider forum to encourage their involvement if this is more appropriate and may tie in with the Supporting People plan to develop a user forum.
- 179 Two major reviews undertaken under best value in recent years have explicitly involved social care, housing and health (Older People Services and Learning Disabilities). Both reviews challenged how the Council looked at service delivery and contributed to the development of how Supporting People services should be shaped in the future by identifying alternative methods of service provision such as with smaller voluntary organisations.
- 180 The Council's key housing plans and strategies make appropriate links to the SP programme and draw on data gathered through the SP needs mapping exercise. The homelessness strategy action plan identifies Supporting People as a potential source of funding for support for people with rent arrears and those in temporary accommodation. Subject to priorities identified in the five-year strategy and the availability of Supporting People funding, the Council is exploring the options for people who abuse drugs and alcohol and supported lodgings for people aged up to 25 years.
- 181 The Council is reintroducing services plans to be completed in conjunction with the balanced scorecard approach. A new business planning approach has been adopted and approximately 70 per cent of corporate, departmental and divisional business plans have now been prepared. Inspectors viewed the service plan for Supporting People and found it to be better focused on the priorities, goals and objectives of the programme and written in a SMART² format.
- 182 Historically risk management has been a weak area at Peterborough. Some activities in respect of risk analysis have taken place at detailed levels but may have missed the bigger picture and have not always formed part of a structured or strategic approach. The new business planning approach incorporates the management of risk into each service objective. A Supporting People business plan with risk analysis is in place and within two months of our visit all divisional business plans will have their risk analyses completed.
- 183 The 2005/06 work plan for the regional planning groups includes a number of forward thinking developments. For example regional protocols are being discussed in relation to the housing corporation and future strategic planning. A regional housing strategy is under development, travellers and domestic violence cross authority research is being conducted and they are looking to develop a regional best practice database and joint information sharing protocol on service providers. A comprehensive regional strategy will enable the Council to work with cross authority providers to drive improvements.
- 184 The corporate strategy outlines the priorities for the Council but there are no specific identified links with the Supporting People programme. The 2005/06 work plan for community services has been amended to include activity to make clearer links to Supporting People within the community strategy. Peterborough City Council does not have a consultation/communication strategy in place but development will be undertaken as part of the annual plan for 2005/06.

² SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

- 185 The Supporting People team working in conjunction with its partners, providers and service users has developed a comprehensive five-year strategy that was approved by the Cabinet in early March 2005 and delivered to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the target deadline date. Within the new format, the team has addressed the weaknesses identified in the shadow strategy and has incorporated more relevant data that it obtained from providers and from those users who had been involved in the first service reviews.
- 186 A local area agreement pilot programme which includes aspects related to health in older people is in place and involves Supporting People. When completed in June 2005 it will help the Council to focus on achieving better services and improving their ability to meet objectives of the community strategy.
- 187 The supply mapping exercise carried out to inform the five-year strategy identified that:
- ◆ the housing related support market in Peterborough was underdeveloped (with the exception of various older people's client groups) or non-existent;
 - ◆ services had a wide ranging cost profile and a significant number of client groups with high cost services; and
 - ◆ access to services by BME groups was limited despite this group accounting for 10 per cent of Peterborough's population.
- 188 The Council can demonstrate the achievement of value for money in an innovative procurement initiative relating to the use of agency staff. An e-auction for providers of agency staff took place in December 2004; here providers submitted bids based on their percentage mark up of a priced schedule of hourly rates. The Council developed new contracts in the way that gave the best value and reduced the number of agencies used from 20 to 4 or 5. This will result in an annual cost saving of £100,000 and achieve additional efficiency savings by processing fewer invoices and reducing administration costs. However, we are unclear how or if this approach will be applied to Supporting People.
- 189 The diversity model being introduced within the Council as part of its developing programme is seen as a model for cohesion by the Home Office. However, it is unclear how the new diversity strategy will influence the development of services under Supporting People.
- 190 Strategic Plans for the PCTs are only now in the process of being drafted and therefore have not been available to inform the direction of Supporting People five-year strategy. The Strategic Plans, when completed, will ensure a more purposeful input to Supporting People and will influence future amendments to the strategy.
- 191 The five-year strategy now clearly outlines the level of priority (one to three, with one being the highest). Services are identified as to which are or are not a strategic priority and where each falls in the level of priority. Providers now have a much clearer picture of the future and develop appropriate business plans.
- 192 The Council is aiming to meet the housing needs of BME communities and vulnerable groups by following the priorities of the new five-year Supporting People strategy to inform future investment in new supported housing rather than having designated schemes and quotas.
- 193 An Offender Accommodation Strategy has recently been approved but is not SMART in format. For example, there are no overall timescales for achievement and no explicit links to shared objectives or targets with other strategies such as MAPPA or the community safety strategy.

- 194 The probation strategy lacks detail on timescales, targets and links to other relevant documents. It has not been updated to take account of the opening of the new prison which could potentially have a huge impact on the areas ability to resettle offenders. It does not consider creative ways to increase provision for offenders and there is no evidence of a track record of innovation and development in offender accommodation issues.
- 195 The homelessness strategy action plan refers to the development of a referral form to ensure that vulnerable people are prioritised for floating support services. However, we could not determine if this form is now in use or what impact it is having on the delivery of services.

Will improvements be delivered?

- 196 The Council has been slow to identify the full context in which it needs to deliver services. Following the 2002 CPA it has placed a strong emphasis on determining key priorities for service users and key stakeholders and has created comprehensive community and corporate strategies based on these priorities. There are many clear aims and objectives, although some timelines are as yet unrealistic given the major performance challenges needing to be addressed. Organisation and cultural changes are a high priority, leading to the development of new strategies and programmes focusing on diversity, human resource practices, partnerships and performance management. Aware of the need to increase capacity, the Council is undertaking a comprehensive skills assessment to identify gaps and make adjustments in order to establish the right balance of resources and skills. Historically performance management has been poor, but changes introduced in the past 12 months are beginning to take root. Officers and managers are more aware of how to ensure relevant performance management practices are in place and how improved performance information can help deliver quality services. The Council consulted extensively with tenants to successfully complete the transition from council landlord to a large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) in October 2004.
- 197 Peterborough has embarked on an ambitious programme of organisational and cultural change. The overarching programme will encompass performance and performance management, human resources functions delivered under separate forms (strategic and operational departments), organisational development and change management. Seeing the need to mainstream diversity, the Council has made significant changes to put diversity at the heart of all service delivery, for example, having the ability to deal with diversity issues is now part of senior manager core competencies.
- 198 There are plans in place for achieving corporate strategic priorities through the promotion of a wide range of partnerships with the voluntary, community, private and public sectors. The Council believes that partnerships will increase funding and resources to deliver improved services. To enhance this process, they are setting up a community engagement board to be chaired by the assistant chief executive following a best value review into community engagement.
- 199 Also underway is a human resource project to revise job descriptions, complete job re-evaluations and integrate a robust performance management system across the Council. As part of the improved performance management framework the Council will monitor individual performance and overall satisfaction levels separately. There is also a plan to commission a Supporting People best value survey in late 2005/06.

- 200 The Council has undergone significant changes since adopting the Leader and Cabinet model of governance in 2001 and in 2004 initiated a corporate restructuring to better meet organisational priorities and set the foundation for future development. As part of this restructuring, the Council devolved their adult social care departmental responsibilities and pooled this area and its budget with the two Peterborough PCTs in 2004. This has resulted in an improvement in PIs, especially those related to delayed discharges and higher user participation.
- 201 The commissioning body is more aware of their role in helping drive the Supporting People programme and has taken steps to improve their ability to direct and manage. For example, they have suggested the development of new PIs for Supporting People which will enable them to make better informed decisions about the progress of the programme in meeting the needs of vulnerable people.
- 202 The Council's Internal Audit team has reviewed the risks which may be associated with the Supporting People programme. It considers a range of possible risks to the programme and its operation and sets out management controls and checks for each risk. However, while it identifies a potential for service user and/or provider dissatisfaction, it does not consider the problems for service users if a provider ceases operating or runs into other service delivery difficulties.
- 203 The Council is in the early stages of discussion with the Housing Corporation's diversity officer to facilitate a regional approach to BME housing needs through the Housing Strategy. Included in the discussions is a BME housing association provider who delivers services under Supporting People and can provide first hand information regarding the delivery of services.
- 204 As mentioned previously, the Council is investing £1.5 million in an 'invest to save approach'. This has resulted in an innovative approach to delivering services to refugees, migrant workers and qualified asylum seekers through the New Link service.
- 205 Historically the identification of user views has not played an important part in setting priorities for the Council as is clearly evidenced by the lack of a communications strategy and consultation strategy. Without this framework, there has been a reliance on developing programmes based on what the Council believes users need rather than on what the users have identified as being needed or desired. This approach was used in the early days of Supporting People, but as the programme has become more embedded and officers and staff more knowledgeable, there has been a shift in emphasis to seeking user involvement and feedback.
- 206 Realising that the Supporting People service review programme was seriously behind schedule and could be in danger of not meeting the ODPM deadline, the Council bid for and successfully obtained approximately £30,000 extra from the government to augment the capacity of the team.
- 207 The rationalisation of the service review programme and the completion of the five-year strategy has freed up resources to improve the Supporting People team's capacity to complete the service review programme by March 2006. These additional resources combined with the more focused thematic approach to services reviews will improve the Council's ability to deliver the programme.

- 208 Capacity has also been increased by reviewing and streamlining the VFM process within service reviews. The strategic relevance assessment will now be based on the five-year strategy and resources have been released from strategy development work to assist in Supporting People reviews. These actions will be supported by performance monitoring with new performance indicators introduced on reviews and a review management group which will meet monthly to monitor progress.
- 209 The need for jointly commissioned services has been recognised and discussions have begun on setting up joint commissioning groups to deliver the priorities in the five-year strategy. The Council is clearly intent on leading this in a proactive manner rather than relying on the persuasive abilities of providers to encourage funding for various initiatives. Their pro-active manner is evidenced by:
- ◆ a five-year strategy with comprehensive research and consultation;
 - ◆ priorities for action clearly identified in the strategy; and
 - ◆ an annual service plan and Supporting People implementation plan which contains specific tasks with milestones and responsible people identified.
- 210 The partnership between health and adult services is innovative and strongly supported by a good political champion, support from appropriate senior levels of officers and managers and acceptance by the community. CSCI considers performance to be good and improving for adult care services as assisting people to live independently and offering best choice is very much a focus of the Council.
- 211 One year on the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership can evidence good pooled budget performance, improved performance indicators for both health and adult services and continued political willingness to make the partnership effective in meeting the goals and objectives of both parties along side meeting statutory obligations in a positive manner.
- 212 There is positive commitment to cross-authority working in the east region and members, including PCC, are clearly benefiting from the joint approach. The track record of achievement, plus work in progress in the areas of service development, information exchange and partnership working are encouraging signs of a forward moving programme which may lead to positive outcomes for service users.
- 213 The Council is working with its partners at a strategic level to address the impact of the new prison. The Accountable Officer is the local authority representative from the regional housing forum on the regional work group working with probation and the prison service. This work group is developing the accommodation pathway element for the Resettlement Strategy for the East of England and the target is to complete this within the next 12 months. Results of this will feed in to amendments to the five-year strategy.
- 214 Supporting People has set an ambitious agenda under the 2005/06 work plan. It recognises that it is well behind other similar authorities in setting priorities and has secured the extra resourcing needed to meet the established targets. Developing the five-year strategy has enabled them to identify weaknesses in delivering the programme and set clearly identified priorities and actions to address the weaknesses.

- 215 The drive, ability and commitment of a number of key individuals within the Supporting People team and the strategy division are important to the future success of the programme. The portfolio holder is supportive and enthusiastic about the service delivery changes being made, and especially the new emphasis on performance management.

'It's a 'must' to get better at performance management - I need the tools to ask why things are the way they are' - Senior Councillor

- 216 Management information provided to the CB has not been as comprehensive and focused as is needed for them to make well-informed decisions. Resources are now available within the Council following the completion of strategy preparation and the Council's new approach to performance management will provide the framework under which new, more comprehensive, reports will be generated.
- 217 The Council has made a significant investment in the creation of a new corporate performance section based in the chief executives department, with the intention of improving performance management and decision making abilities across the organisation. A new Head of Performance was appointed and has already made changes to support improvement within the Council.
- 218 At present the only Supporting People performance being monitored by the Cabinet is in respect of budget expenditure. There is a need to develop more specific performance management indicators to demonstrate how well Supporting People is meeting the needs of vulnerable people.

Summary

- 219 Overall, we judge that Peterborough City Council has promising prospects for delivering further improvements in the delivery of its Supporting People programme.
- 220 User involvement and the incorporation of user feedback into the development of the Supporting People programme have been poor. Plans and strategies outside of the recent Supporting People five-year strategy have been developed without the benefit of this information and have not realistically met the challenges to the programme. The development of the five-year strategy has benefited from the learning of other reviews such as CPA and feedback from ODPM and has attempted to involve users more. However, this involvement is not consistent and relies on existing forums for feedback rather than establish new forums that are specific to Supporting People service delivery.
- 221 Performance management has been introduced but the programme is too new to have delivered any outcomes that will influence service delivery or improve user outcomes. Performance information is not yet a driving force for change and does not assist in setting priorities for Supporting People.
- 222 The Supporting People programme is adequately resourced, team members knowledgeable and well suited to their positions. However, there have been four Supporting People managers overtime resulting in the need for the AO to oversee day to day operations on a regular basis. The expectation that the AO has sufficient time to manage the programme in addition to other responsibilities is perhaps unrealistic and may have contributed to the delay in achieving corporate ownership. Inconsistency in daily management is also seen by inspectors a contributing factor in the delay in recognising the need to undertake thematic reviews in order to meet ODPM targets.

- 223 At a corporate level we found that Supporting People has become increasingly strategically embedded within the organisation. There are good links between corporate and community strategies and Supporting People as the programme is seen to be the mechanism for achieving a number of corporate objectives and joint targets with health and probation partners. Lessons learned from previous external assessments have been applied to Supporting People leading to additional resource investment and improved monitoring and performance management.
- 224 Partnership working is seen as the way forward in delivering needed services under Supporting People. The involvement of health and probation is positive and there is evidence of continued partnership work and support in meeting the new priorities established by the Supporting People five-year strategy. The success of the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership has supported their decision to use innovative approaches to meet community needs.
- 225 Services have improved either through the re-modelling of current services or the development of new services to meet gaps identified in needs assessments, especially in relation to the BME community.
- 226 A new corporate business plan approach has been adopted resulting in the development and adoption of corporate, departmental and divisional plans. Supporting People service and improvement plans are improving with more focus given to service user involvement in planning and development.
- 227 The adoption of strategies for addressing cultural diversity, human resource management, organisational change and performance management are establishing effective foundations on which the Council is building capacity and organisational cohesiveness.

Appendices

The purpose of an inspection is to make two judgements. The first is how good is the service being inspected? The second is what are the prospects for improvement? We carried out a range of activities to enable us to reach our judgements.

Documents reviewed

Before going on-site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that Peterborough City Council provided for us. These included the following.

- ◆ A wide variety of corporate contextual documents such as the:
 - ◆ Audit Commission CPA (2002);
 - ◆ corporate performance plan;
 - ◆ Community, Housing, Homelessness, Community Safety, Social Inclusion, Domestic Violence, Procurement and other strategies; and
 - ◆ equalities policy.
- ◆ Specific Supporting People documents such as:
 - ◆ Supporting People self-assessment;
 - ◆ service user information leaflets and website information;
 - ◆ Supporting People Shadow Strategy and associated ODPM Evaluation;
 - ◆ Terms of Reference and relevant meeting minutes for the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group; and
 - ◆ newly adopted Supporting People five-year strategy.

During and subsequent to our inspection we also had the opportunity to review a number of additional documents submitted in evidence by the Council. These included the following.

- ◆ Draft service and improvement plans for Supporting People.
- ◆ Documents in support of actions to address inspection related issues such as:
 - ◆ risk management;
 - ◆ charging policy;
 - ◆ eligibility criteria;
 - ◆ offending (probation)
 - ◆ performance management including diversity, equality, management competency framework;
 - ◆ consultation and communication;
 - ◆ BME and Race Equality;
 - ◆ Supporting People training and involvement of elected members;
 - ◆ additional minutes of Cabinet, CB, CSG meetings;
 - ◆ service reviews;
 - ◆ cost analysis and VFM; and
 - ◆ Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership Agreement.

Reality checks undertaken

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

- ◆ interviews and focus groups with key staff, Councillors and providers;
- ◆ visits with service providers, desktop reviews and analysis of ODPM batch 1 and batch 2 service provider information;
- ◆ observation of meetings;
- ◆ user consultations as part of service visits;
- ◆ External Provider surveys;
- ◆ calls to local advice and service providers; and
- ◆ post-inspection week phone interviews.

Demographic information

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

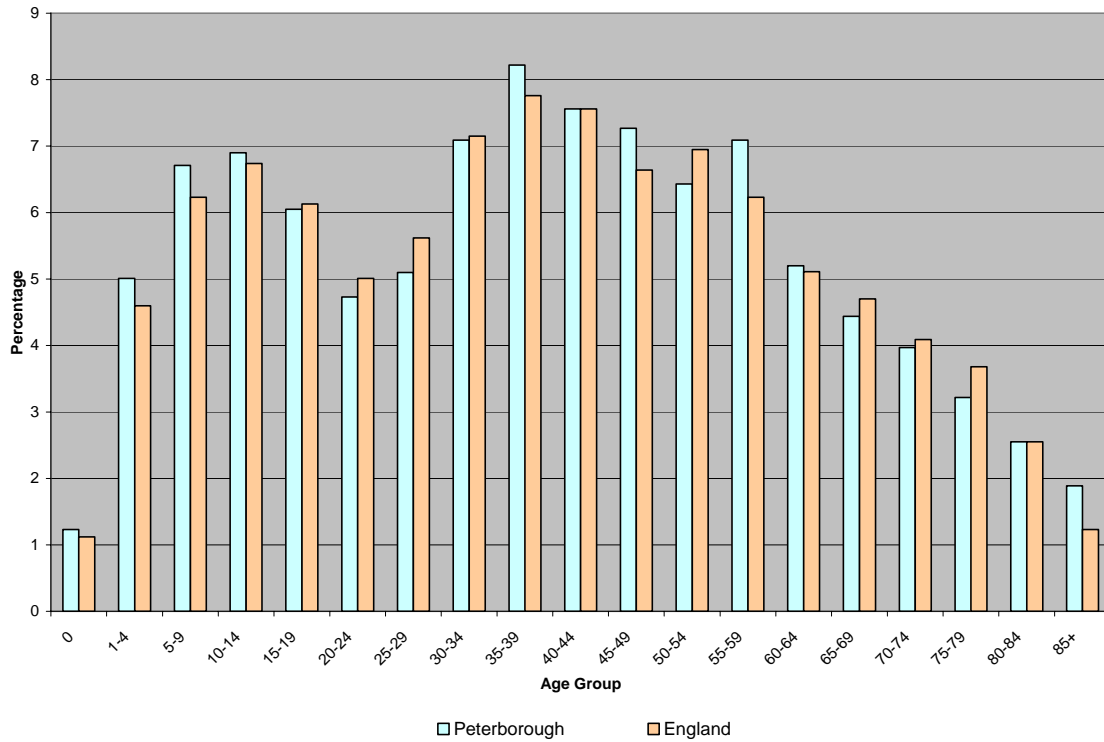
Measure	Peterborough	England
Population (mid-2003) ³	158,800	-
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2002)	17.97	16.41
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2002)	14.30	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ⁴	2.5	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ⁵	90	-

³ Source: mid-year population estimates (2003).

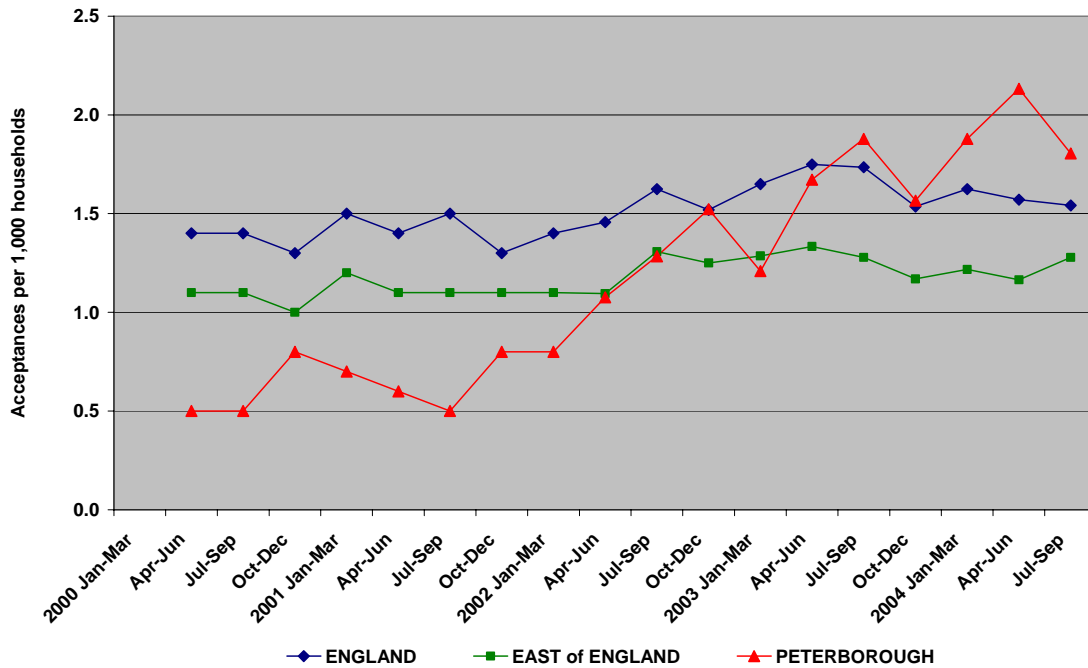
⁴ Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (January 2005).

⁵ Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

Percentage of the population in each age group compared with England



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



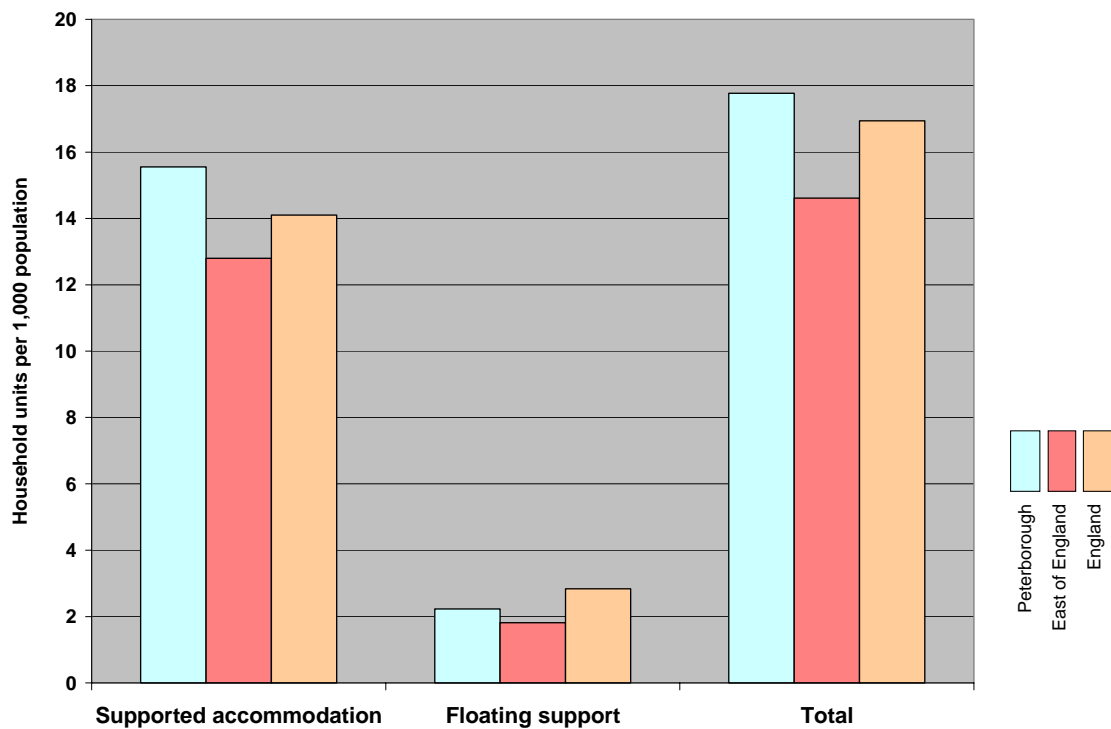
Performance indicators

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.

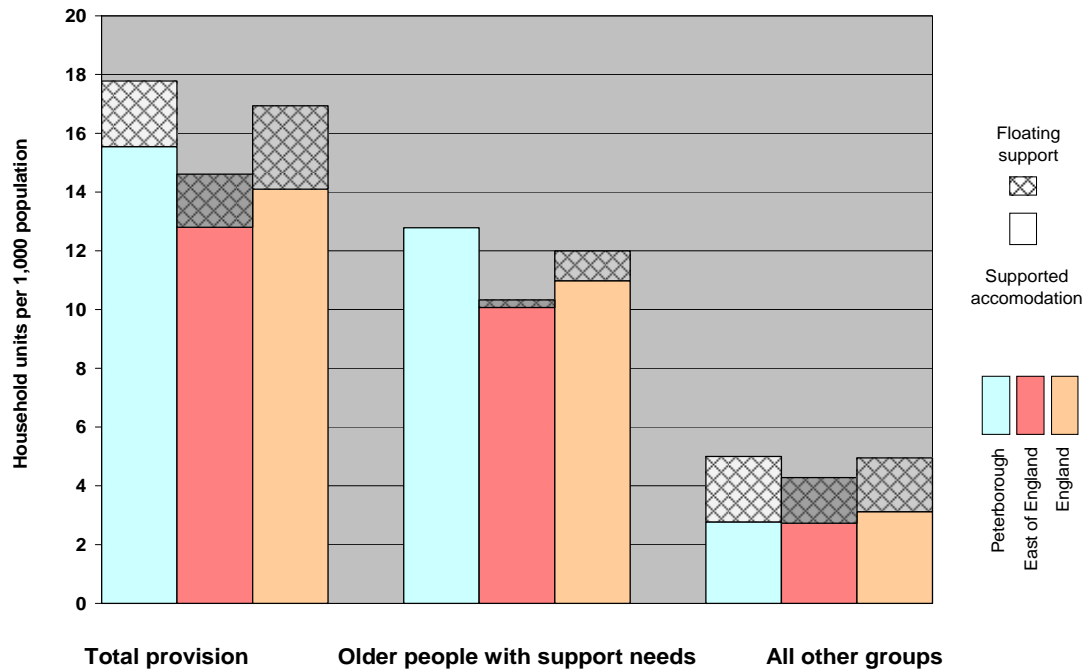
Supporting People data

Total service provision funded through Supporting People⁶

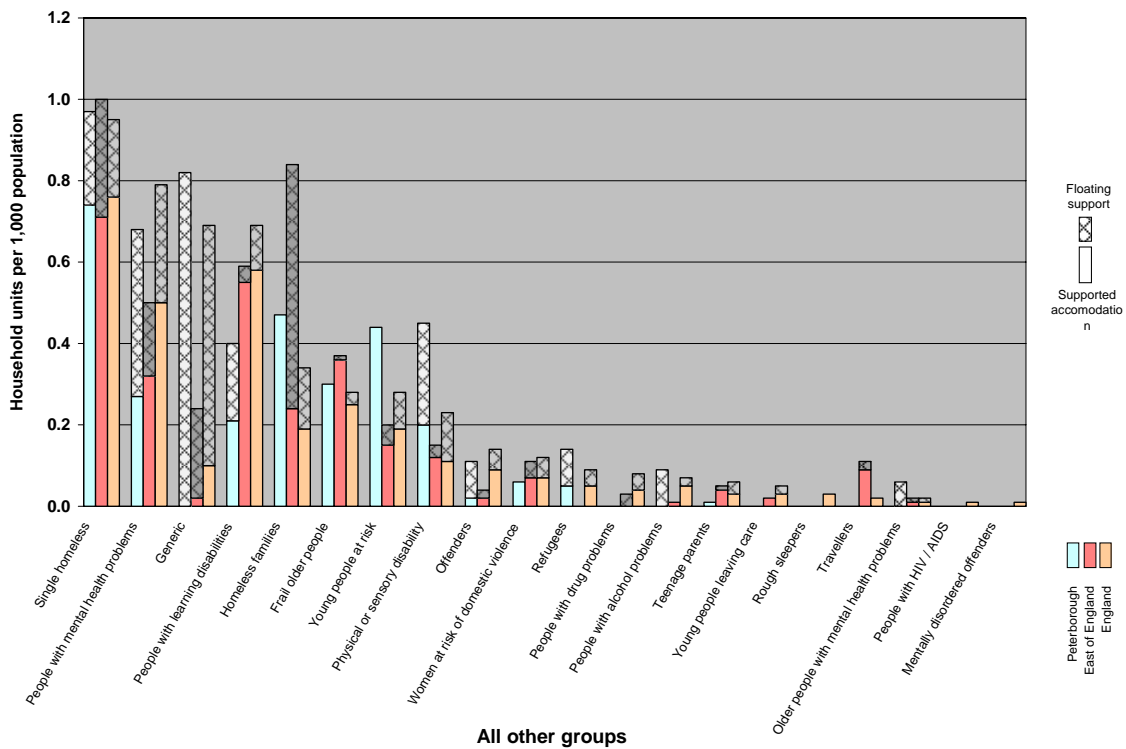


⁶ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England⁷



Services for other groups compared with the region and England⁸



⁷ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

⁸ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Funding for Supporting People⁹

Peterborough	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£ 4,879,944	£ 4,760,003	£ 4,582,416
Pipeline allocation	£ 62,755	£ 65,450	N/A
Administration grant	£ 206,812	£ 183,868	£ 147,094

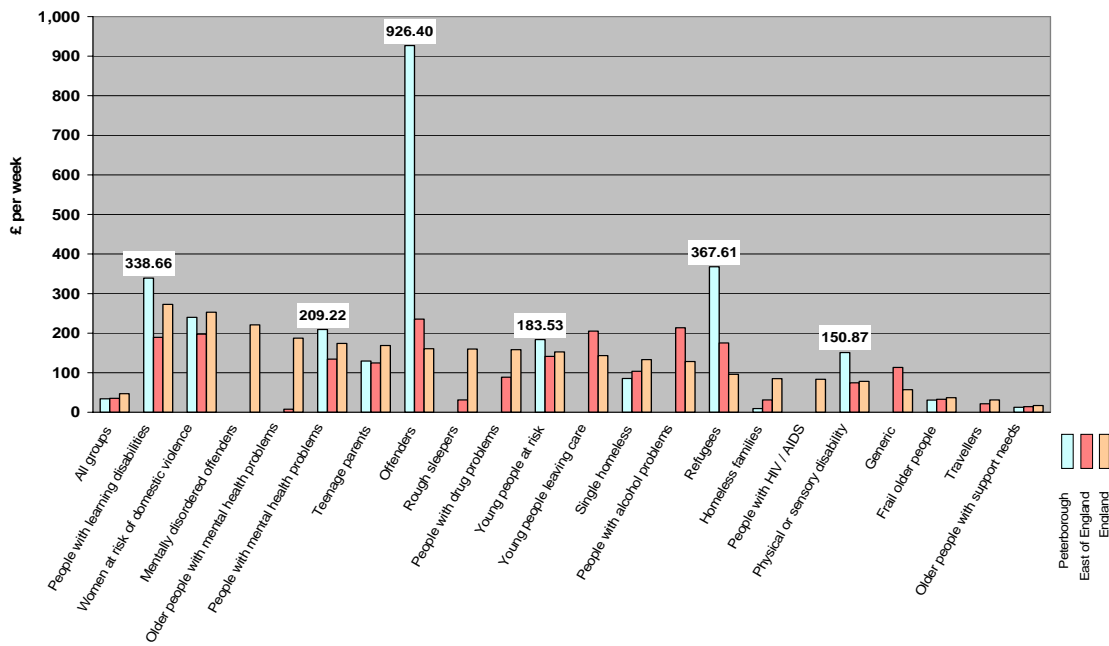
Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2004/05 (£ per week)¹⁰

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Peterborough	£ 0.59	£ 24.00	£ 30.65	£ 74.79
East of England	£ 0.46	£ 22.74	£ 28.08	£ 58.17
England	£ 0.71	£ 28.16	£ 34.51	£ 61.08

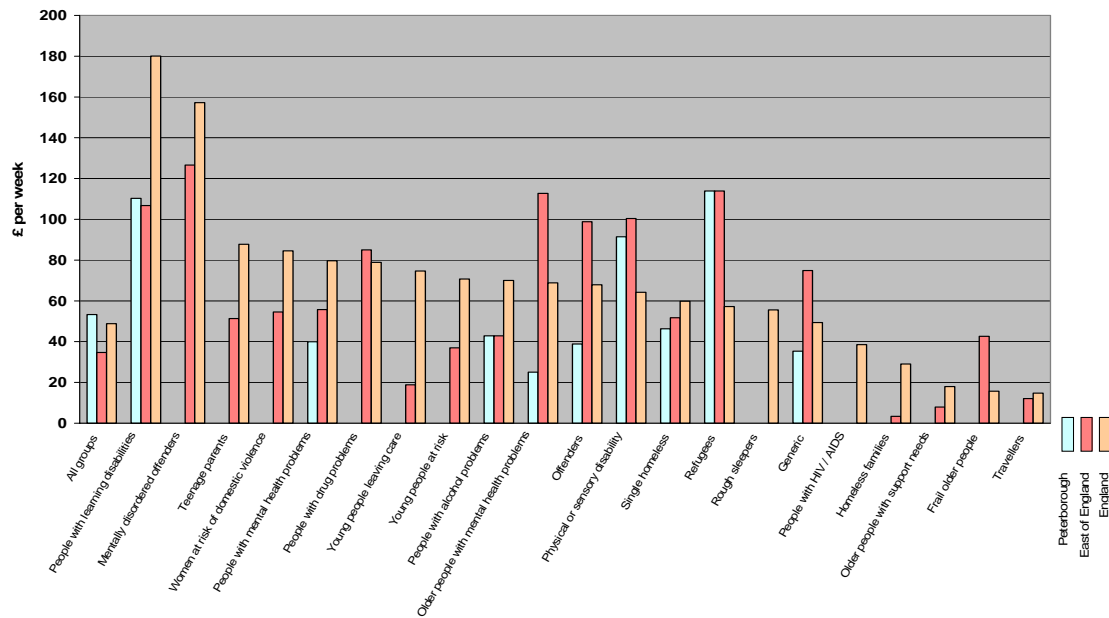
⁹ Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

¹⁰ Source: Platinum cut grant information and 2004/05 Supply data.

Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹¹



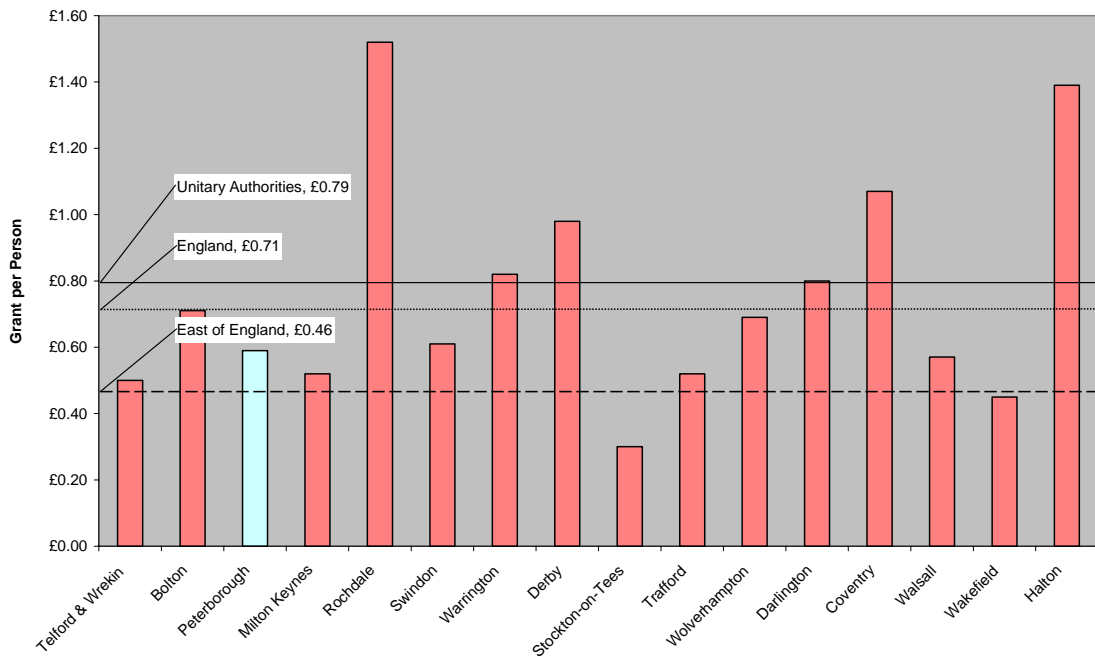
Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹²



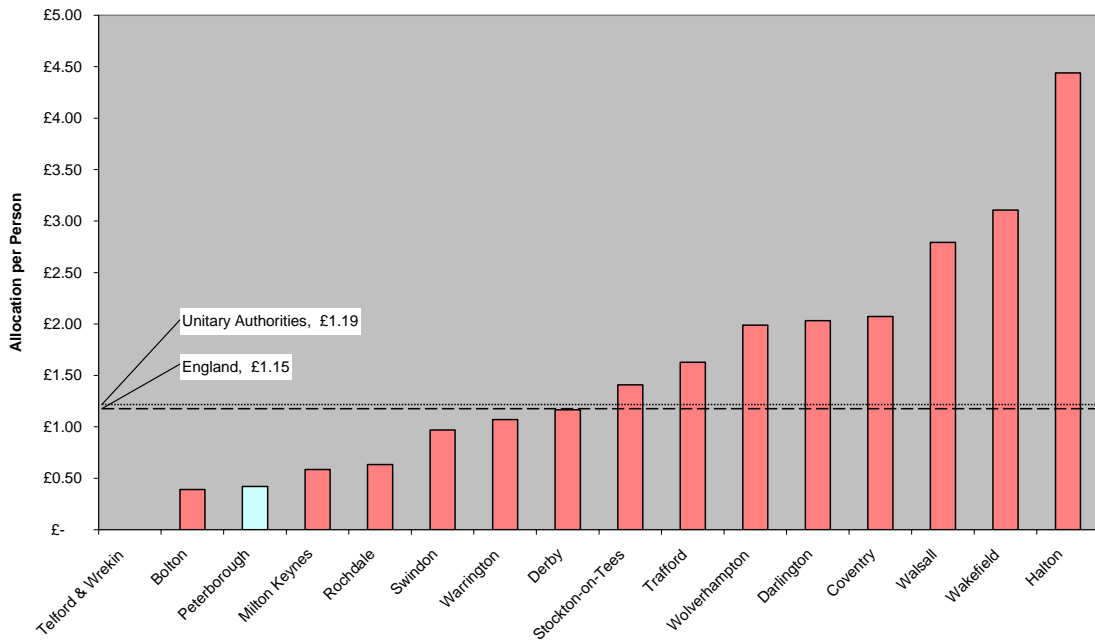
¹¹ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

¹² Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours¹³, all unitary Councils and all English Councils (2004/05)



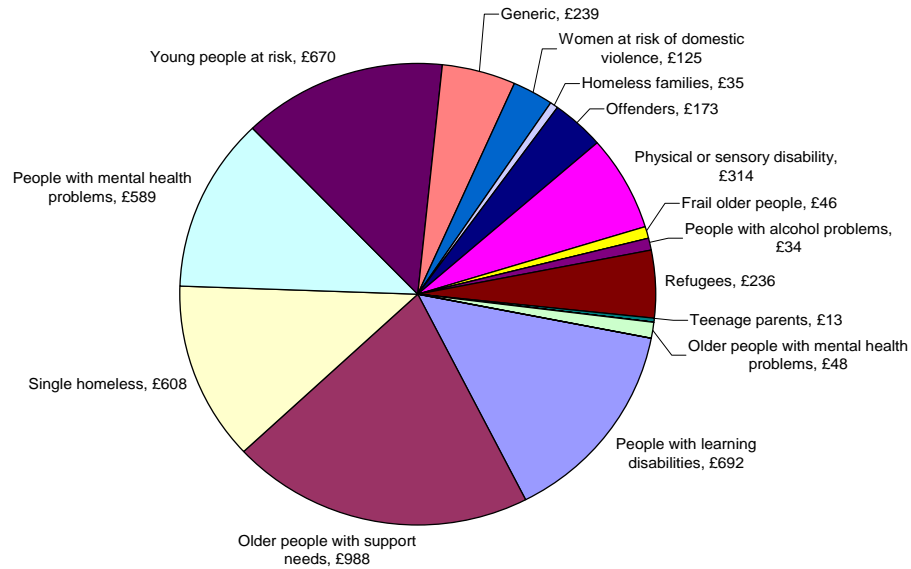
Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours¹⁴, all unitary Councils and all English Councils.



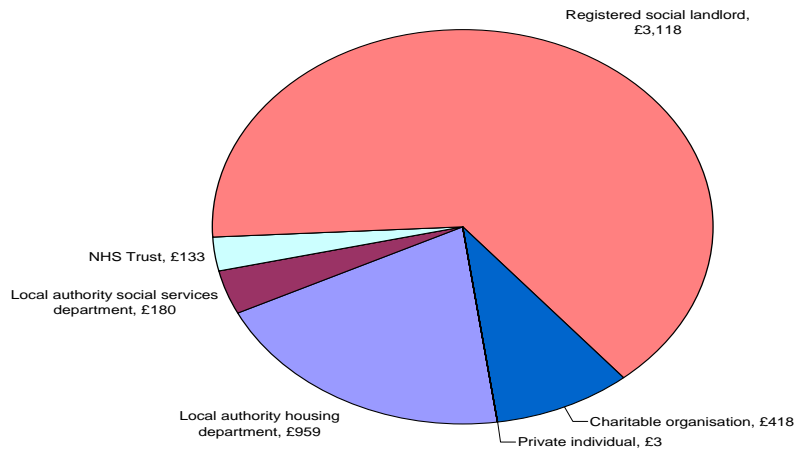
¹³ A comparator group of similar councils.

¹⁴ A comparator group of similar Councils.

Share of spending between user groups (£000s)¹⁵



Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)¹⁶



¹⁵ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

¹⁶ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

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	Promising	★★
Children's Services	Most	Promising	(3)

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.

Peterborough	
Significantly above average (★★★★)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31) Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30) Employment, education and training for care leavers (A4) Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that their opinions and preferences were always taken into account (D57)
Above average (★★★)	Emergency psychiatric re-admissions (A6) Admissions of older people to residential/nursing care (C26) Admissions of supported residents aged 18 to 64 to residential/nursing care (C27) Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54)
Average (★★)	Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that they can contact social services easily (D58)
Below average (★)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40) Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29) Delayed transfers of care (D41)
Significantly below average (●)	Percentage change on previous year in total emergency admissions to hospital (A5) Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39) Older people helped to live at home (C32)

Supporting People – Housing related support services

‘Supporting People’ is the Government’s long-term policy to enable local authorities to plan, commission and provide 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 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 support services with Housing, Social Services, Health and the Probation Service. Negotiation and consultation is also required with 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 Programme allows for greater diversity of provision tailored to individual needs and delivered in a local strategic context. For example:

- ◆ support services for people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities whose needs have previously not been met in an appropriate or timely manner;
- ◆ support services for vulnerable older people who wish to live independently, including those in sheltered housing;
- ◆ temporary hostel accommodation – including probation hostels and those providing support for women fleeing domestic violence;
- ◆ support services for people with mental health problems and learning difficulties;
- ◆ floating support to a range of vulnerable people including young people leaving care; and
- ◆ Home Improvement Agency services whose work includes providing practical support to older owner occupiers to enable them to live independently.

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 would 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

Positive practice

'The Commission will identify and promote good practice. Every inspection will look for examples of good practice and innovation, and for creative ways to overcome barriers and resistance to change or make better use of resources.' **(Seeing is Believing).**

Item 1

The Council were able to demonstrate the achievement of better value for money in an innovative procurement initiative relating to the use of agency staff. An e-auction took place in December 2004 for providers of agency staff where providers submitted bids based on their percentage mark-up of a priced schedule of hourly rates. This enabled the Council to package up new contracts in a way that gave the best value and to reduce the number of agencies from 20 to 4 or 5. Not only will this result in an annual cost saving but also there will be efficiencies achieved by fewer invoices to process and reduced administration.

Item 2

Under an 'Invest to Save' programme the Council has partnered with a number of private and voluntary organisations, the police and health to develop an innovative programme to meet the needs of newly arrived refugees, qualified asylum seekers and the local migrant population. The facility acts as a resource centre providing interpreting and translation services, orientation and training on community safety, education, health, computers and learning the value of volunteer work in gaining new language and work-related skills while integrating into the Peterborough community. In six months of operation, the programme has proved highly effective in reducing community tensions and supporting minority populations.