

Supporting People Inspection Report

May 2007

# **Leeds City Council Supporting People**

**Leeds City Council**

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## Supporting People Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Now the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

## Summary

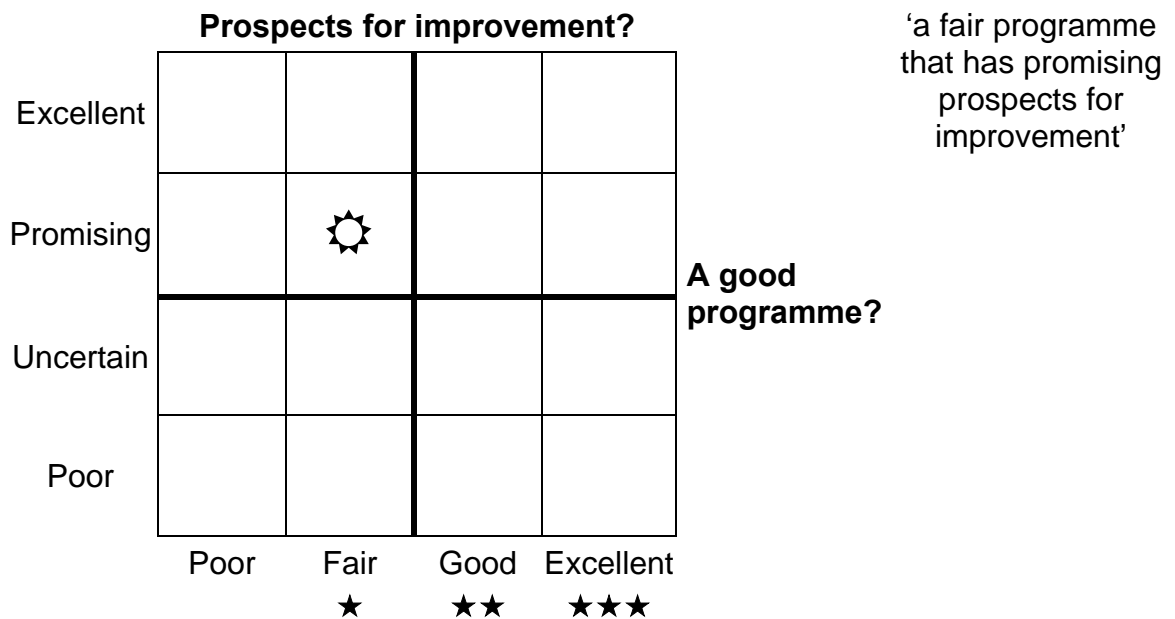
- 1 Overall, Leeds City Council (LCC) administers a fair Supporting People programme which has promising prospects for improvement.
- 2 Leeds is a large vibrant city in the north of England. A high proportion of the 723,100 population are aged 20 to 29. People over age 65 and black and minority ethnic communities make up other significant proportions. The city has pockets of high deprivation. Unemployment is above average.
- 3 The Council received a Supporting People grant of £32,986,531 for 2006/07. In total, the programme funds 12,421 units of housing-related support of which 2,022 or 19 per cent is floating support. The highest cost service at £1,312 per unit per week is an accommodation-based service for people with a learning disability reducing following review and phased retraction to £541.26. The lowest cost service is £0.70 a week for a community alarm service for older people.
- 4 Governance arrangements are well established and statutory partners and service providers are well engaged. However, there are gaps in representation on governing groups and service users are not yet closely involved. An updated five-year strategy based on broad needs information provides clear aims and addresses growing move on accommodation problems.
- 5 The programme is getting increased value for money from the grant. More relevant and better quality services are being commissioned for a reduced cost. Significant efficiency savings have been achieved. A number of new services have been introduced. Poor quality and low demand services have been decommissioned. However, for some vulnerable groups such as refugees and people with substance misuse problems, there is no change in the level of provision.
- 6 Generally, robust support plans are in place for service users focusing support on activities that help people live independently.
- 7 Eligibility and value for money assessments have not been rigorous or applied consistently across all services with some based on estimates. Consequently, the programme does not know how much grant, if any, remains locked into contracts continuing to fund activities that are ineligible or not value for money. Retraction arrangements have been agreed with social services although they are slow to shift full responsibility for funding to its proper source. Service providers are dissatisfied with aspects of the service review process, including the lack of transparency around value for money assessments.
- 8 Steady state contracts are not yet in place for the majority of service providers. Contract monitoring is only just beginning and improvements resulting from service improvement plans have not been fully validated.

- 9** Future plans are to tackle areas of difficulty and weaknesses such as the availability of move on accommodation. However, there is no programme of service or sector-wide reviews to continue the drive for improvements beyond contract monitoring arrangements. Plans do not identify the level or source of resources needed to deliver actions.
- 10** Effective and improving performance management arrangements are in place. Procurement and contract monitoring arrangements are strong. New software is being introduced to address previous IT problems. Inward investment is being attracted to the programme and a strong learning culture has developed.

## Scoring the Supporting People programme

- 11 We have assessed Leeds City Council as providing a 'fair' one- star programme that has promising prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

**Figure 1 Scoring chart<sup>2</sup>**



Source: Audit Commission

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

12 We found the programme to be fair because it has a range of strengths including the following.

- Services have been changed to better meet local needs in accordance with agreed priorities. These include 13 new services adding 353 units of support for a range of client groups; transforming homeless services; remodelling or expanding 32 schemes; decommissioning 31 low demand or poor quality schemes and promoting customer choice through direct payments.
- The availability of floating support services, not tied to accommodation or tenure, modestly increased by 320 units representing a change from 14 per cent to 16.3 per cent of provision
- Across the programme, the quality of services has increased. Following initial assessment, 355 of the 480 schemes were operating below minimum standards. Re-assessment for future contracts has identified only four services continuing to operate at this level.
- Just over £6 million efficiency savings have been realised across the programme and over £4 million in savings has been achieved through in-house provision. The average weekly unit cost of services has fallen by around 10 per cent.
- Inherited services have all been subjected to a service review to ensure they are strategically relevant.
- Governance arrangements are well established and statutory partners, Probation, the PCT, and service providers are well engaged. Partners are signatories to an updated five-year strategy which provides clear aims and addresses accommodation move on problems.
- A clear commissioning framework, the Four Tiers of prevention, emergency, resettlement and sustainment, has been developed for contracted services. It establishes a clear purpose for the service and provides a focus on throughput to prevent short-term services from becoming silted up.
- The Council has developed robust procurement arrangements and taken a lead in developing good procurement practice as part of a national Value Improvement Project. Performance, procurement and financial management are strong.
- Effective work planning and performance management arrangements are in place to monitor progress and deliver improvements.

- 13 However, there are some areas which require improvement. These include the following.
- Service users have not always been closely involved in the development and delivery of the programme. Their involvement in service reviews is also mixed and views are not prominent in service review reports.
  - Information for service users is limited. The website and Leeds local directory of services provide only basic information and are not useful tools for service users. Leaflet information is not widely available.
  - Little progress has been made in some areas where need has been identified, for example in provision to refugees.
  - Supporting People are not clearly linked to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) training led by Social Services, or regular training for Child Protection through the Safeguarding Board.
  - Eligibility and value for money assessments have not been applied consistently across all services. The extent of ineligibility amongst high cost service provision for people with learning disabilities is based on an estimate, a ceiling on the amount payable each week. Although average hourly rates have been applied, value for money assessments on in-house Learning Disability services have not followed the agreed approach applied to other services.
  - Agreed retraction arrangements mean that ineligible services will continue to receive Supporting People funding until at least 2010/11, eight years after the programme went live. This will delay investment in services to address unmet needs.
  - Service improvements have not been fully validated. Improvements have been subjected to desk top monitoring but visits to validate changes are not planned until contracts are due for a risk assessed review.
  - Steady state contracts are not yet in place for the majority of service providers. Only 18 of an expected 93 service level agreements or contracts are in place.
  - Full contract monitoring is only just beginning. None have yet been subjected to the formal monitoring arrangements which extends to a visit to assess contract compliance.
  - Governance partnerships have had gaps in representation, health, Youth Offending Services, and Children's Services have not been represented on the Core Strategic Group. In addition, there is a lack of confidence in some areas of Adults Services in the partnerships ability to discuss difficult issues.
  - Service providers are dissatisfied with aspects of the service review process, including the lack of transparency around value for money assessments.

- 14 The programme has promising prospects for improvement because:
- the Council has a track record in administering Supporting People of delivering planned actions and significantly improving inherited services. Overall the level of provision has increased despite a reducing budget. The quality of services has increased and substantial efficiency savings have been delivered;
  - there are clear aims and objectives for the programme underpinned by a number of effective plans. These include an overarching Annual Plan to implement the strategy and more detailed plans such as the Supporting People team's Work Plan and the Service User Improvement Plan;
  - plans are tackling areas of difficulty and weaknesses such as the availability of move on accommodation;
  - effective and improving performance management arrangements are in place. Performance is regularly monitored and additional outcomes measures have been approved by the Commissioning Body to provide greater breadth;
  - procurement and contract monitoring arrangements are strong;
  - new software is being introduced to address previous IT problems. The software has been procured from another council and is a tried and tested product;
  - inward investment is being attracted to the programme. Examples include pooling resources to fund a cross-authority Supporting People co-ordinator post, jointly procuring some services, such as a wet hostel for women, and funding from its PCT partner to support the administration of the programme; and
  - a strong learning culture has developed. This includes development of new approaches including a robust competitive procurement system a clear framework for future commissioning, the Four Tier Model.
- 15 However, there are some barriers to improvement. These include the following.
- The Council does not know how much grant remains locked into contracts by continuing to fund activities that are ineligible or not value for money.
  - The governing partnerships have not ensured that the same robust eligibility and value for money assessments are applied equally and consistently to all services.
  - Retraction arrangements have been agreed with social services although they are slow to shift full responsibility for funding to its proper source. Although arrangements are to be reviewed, some ineligible activities may continue to receive funding at least eight years after the programme went live.
  - The delays in securing value for money across all services and the retraction of ineligible funding will hamper progress in commissioning new services to meet identified needs.

- The approach to securing further improvements to services lacks ambition and rigour. There is no programme of service sector-wide reviews to continue the drive for improvements beyond contract monitoring arrangements.
- Progress in some areas has been slow. Many service reviews took a long time to complete, steady state contracts are not yet in place for many services and there are no changes in the level of provision for some priority groups.
- Plans do not identify the level or source of resources needed to deliver actions.

## Recommendations

- 16 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, organisations need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. Our recommendations identify the expected benefits for both local people and the organisation. In addition, we identify the approximate costs<sup>3</sup> and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context, the inspection team recommends that the Council shares the findings of this report with service users, service providers and councillors, and addresses all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation**

#### *R1 Address gaps in services:*

- *include in plans details of how services will be expanded for:*
  - *refugees;*
  - *gypsies and travellers;*
  - *people living with life affecting illnesses such as HIV/Aids and Hepatitis C;*
  - *people with substance-related problems; and*
  - *disabled people with physical and sensory impairments.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- gaps in provision will be addressed.

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

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

**Recommendation**

*R2 Continue to improve service user involvement in the programme by:*

- *ensuring all client groups have clear channels of communication and influence;*
- *developing the capacity of individuals to make a significant contribution;*
- *involving service users in meaningful ways including consultation on:*
  - *how information can be improved;*
  - *how access routes can be improved; and*
  - *how sector reviews can focus on what service users consider to be important and most in need of improvement; and*
- *setting measurable targets and reviewing the effectiveness of service user involvement annually.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- service users understand the programme better;
- service users have opportunities to influence and shape the programme; and
- the programme is developed in a way that best meets service user needs.

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

**Recommendation**

*R3 Improve the availability of information on the Supporting People programme by:*

- *ensuring information leaflets are available, widely distributed across the city and on display;*
- *widening the circulation of newsletters to include councillors, frontline staff, service users and their carers or advocates;*
- *improving the directory of services to present information on services that potential service users will find useful: for example, include details on access routes and the physical accessibility and the cultural sensitivity of services; and*
- *improving the Council website to provide more information and make it easier for service users to find details of available services.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- vulnerable people will find it easier to find out about information on services;
- people will know what choices they have; and
- awareness of the services funded through the Supporting People programme will increase.

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

***Recommendation***

*R4 Improve improvement planning by:*

- *establishing a rolling programme of risk-based, strategic sector-wide reviews to consider the needs and supply of services across all client groups;*
- *broaden the remit of reviews to include and look beyond housing-related support and include a package or care and support that responds to needs of individuals;*
- *include and join up reviews with relevant partners and other stakeholders; and*
- *identify the amount and source of resources needed to deliver planned activity and align them closely with plans and strategies.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- continued improvement activity is planned and timetabled;
- reviews look sector-wide balancing need with supply.
- reviews of services are joined up around the needs of individuals.
- activity to deliver improvements is properly resourced.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by November 2007 and continue through a rolling programme.

**Recommendation**

*R5 Ensure current services are equally subjected to rigorous eligibility and value for money assessments and ineligible funding is released more rapidly by:*

- *jointly reviewing services where eligibility assessments have been estimated;*
- *identifying and quantifying the extent of ineligibility;*
- *subjecting services to value for money assessment; and*
- *negotiating changes to the contract and retraction plan.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- service providers are all treated the same;
- the extent of funding ineligible and services not delivering value for money is known;
- the retraction agreement is based on realistic rates and not estimates; and
- on completion, funding for all ineligible activity will have been withdrawn within improved timescales.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by November 2007 and continue through a rolling programme.

**Recommendation**

*R6 Improving governance and delivery arrangements by:*

- *ensuring the PCT, Youth Offending Services, Children's Services and any other gaps are represented on the Supporting People governance partnerships;*
- *carrying out appropriate training of staff in adult and child protection issues, policies and practice;*
- *clarifying how service users can best be represented;*
- *taking action to build up the confidence of partners in governance arrangements;*
- *establishing and documenting a protocol to be followed to resolve a dispute between partners; and*
- *clarifying how councillors can become more engaged with the programme.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- all points of view are represented within the governance structure;
- staff are better informed about the potential risks to vulnerable people;
- disputes are minimised and there is a clear route to resolve disputes; and
- councillors are more involved and aware of the programme.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by November 2007 and continue through a rolling programme.

- 17 We would like to thank the staff of Leeds City Council who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

Dates of inspection: 15 January to 19 January 2007

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# Report

## Context

### The locality

- 18** Leeds is situated in the north of England. It is a large, vibrant city and regional economic centre. Around 51,000 additional jobs were attracted to the city between 1996 and 2002. Key employment sectors include public administration, education and health; distribution, hotels and restaurants; and banking. Extending to 55 hectares, the metropolitan area covers the city and its surrounding small towns, villages and countryside.
- 19** Over 17 per cent of the 723,100 population are aged 65 or over, slightly less than the national average of 18.5 per cent. 15 per cent are aged 20 to 29 years with a significant student population. Over 8 per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic communities (BME), mainly Irish, Pakistani, Indian, Black Caribbean and Chinese origin. This compares to the national average of 10.4 per cent. In addition, there are emerging communities of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers.
- 20** The city has patches of high deprivation. Leeds is rated as the 73rd most deprived council of the 354 councils nationally. Almost 20 per cent of the population live in 152 of Leeds 476 super output areas<sup>4</sup> that are in the top 20 per cent most deprived. At 3 per cent, unemployment remains above the national average of 2.4 per cent. Almost one in ten households is headed by a lone parent. Over 68,000 people have a limiting long-term illness. In addition, crime remains a major concern for Leeds residents.
- 21** Of the 317,000 homes in the city, 76 per cent are owner-occupied or privately rented. 24 per cent are in the social housing sector, split 19.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent between council ownership and housing associations respectively. Despite an increase in demand, the share of the housing market taken by the socially rented sector has declined significantly with a marked reduction in properties available through right to buy and demolition.

### The Council

- 22** The Council has a political structure of leader with an Executive Board. The Board is the principal decision-making body of the Council. It comprises of nine Executive Members with portfolio responsibilities. A tenth Executive Member of the Board is the Leader of the Labour Group and a further member of the Labour Group is appointed in a non-voting advisory capacity. A three-way alliance of minority parties governs the Council. Of the 99 councillors, the alliance consists of the Liberal Democrat party with 25 seats, the Conservative party with 24 seats and the Green Party with 3 seats.

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<sup>4</sup> Super output areas (SOAs) are a new geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. Introduced in 2004, the 32,482 lower layer SOAs in England have a minimum population of 1000 replacing measurement by electoral ward boundaries which varied markedly in size.

- 23 The city has a well-established local strategic partnership, called Leeds Initiative. With a wide range of partners, the partnership has developed a community strategy, the Vision for Leeds 2004/20 which has three main aims. Two are particularly relevant to the Supporting People programme:
- going up a league as a city - making Leeds an internationally competitive city - the best place in the country to live, work and learn, with a high quality of life for everyone; and
  - narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city.
- 24 In support of the community strategy, the Council has developed a Corporate Plan for 2005/08. It includes a number of strategic outcomes. These are:
- Outward facing
    - All neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green and well maintained.
    - All communities are thriving and harmonious places where people are happy to live.
    - Children and young people are healthy, safe and successful.
    - Promoting strong, healthy and safe communities.
    - At each stage of life, people are able to live healthy, fulfilling lives.
    - Leeds is a highly competitive international city.
  - Inward facing
    - Staff perform well and are constantly learning and there is effective leadership at all levels.
    - Customers receive excellent services which are efficient and effective and meet their needs.
- 25 Excluding schools, the Council employs around 17,680 full-time equivalent staff to plan and deliver its services. In 2006/07 the Council has a revenue budget of £524 million, of which £165 million is allocated to delivering Adult Services and £58 million to Children's Services. The Neighbourhoods and Housing budget for the same year is £30.6 million.
- 26 In previous assessments, both Council and service performance has performed well. For example:
- under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment - the Harder Test 2005, the direction of travel was assessed as improving well and the Council achieved a four star rating for overall performance, the highest rating;
  - in 2006, Adults Social Services were assessed as serving most people well with promising capacity for improvement; and
  - in 2006, Children's Social Services were rated as good.
- 27 In addition, the Council has been awarded beacon status in 2006 for the delivery of quality services through procurement.

## The Supporting People programme

- 28** Leeds CC acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the Supporting People programme in the area. The Council received a Supporting People grant of £32,986,531 for 2006/07, which is a reduction of £580,451 or 1.7 per cent on the previous year's allocation. The Council also received an administration grant of £523,000 to contribute towards the administrative requirements of the programme. This was supplemented from mainstream funding by a further £139,000. In addition, the Council secured an additional £89,000 from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a Value Improvement Project (VIP)<sup>5</sup> to improve the way the Council purchases and manages supported housing services.
- 29** The service is located within the Neighbourhoods and Housing Directorate. The Supporting People team consists of 18 staff made up of:
- Lead Officer;
  - commissioning manager and assistant;
  - six service development officers;
  - two support officers;
  - resource co-ordinator and two resource assistants;
  - Research and Information Officer;
  - Service User Involvement Officer;
  - Data Management Officer; and a
  - Finance and Administration Manager.
- 30** 64 service providers deliver a total of 480 schemes plus a Home Improvement Agency. In total, the programme funds 12,421 units of housing-related support of which 2,022 or 19 per cent is floating support.
- 31** The five-year strategy identifies that there are gaps in provision for the following client groups:
- refugees;
  - gypsies and travellers;
  - people with life affecting illnesses such as HIV/AIDs and Hepatitis C;
  - people with substance misuse problems; and
  - disabled people with physical and sensory impairment.
- 32** The highest cost service at £1,312 per unit per week is an accommodation-based service for people with a learning disability reducing following review and phased retraction to £541.26. The lowest cost service is £0.70 a week for a community alarm service for older people.

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<sup>5</sup> Eleven value improvement projects nationally were awarded additional funding in 2005 by the Department of Communities and Local Government to identify good practice, improved efficiency and improved services for clients who require housing-related support.

# How good is the Supporting People programme?

## What has the programme aimed to achieve?

- 33 Strategic aims are set out in the Council's recently updated five-year Supporting People strategy as:
- delivering greater choice for clients;
  - improving the quality of service delivery;
  - achieving value for money;
  - building effective partnerships; and
  - commission housing support services that promote social inclusion.
- 34 Eighteen objectives underpin the overarching aim including one to ensure that the revised Supporting People strategy contributes to wider strategic priorities.
- 35 Five key priorities are identified. They are:
- reducing the incidence of homelessness in Leeds;
  - increasing opportunities for independence for older people;
  - promoting community safety;
  - create more housing choices for people with learning difficulties; and
  - embed a comprehensive performance management framework that informs the future strategic direction of the programme.

- 36** The Supporting People programme supports a range of local and national priorities. These include the following.
- The Vision for Leeds 2004/20 aims to 'narrow the gap' between the most disadvantaged people and communities and the rest of the city. Housing support services are accessed by the most vulnerable people in the community.
  - Leeds Housing Strategy by commissioning services that help vulnerable people maintain their tenancy and promoting mixed tenure communities.
  - Home Not Alone, a strategy that promotes opportunities for older people to live independently.
  - The Homeless Strategy 2006/10 which is responding to the government agenda to reduce the number of households who are living in temporary households.
  - The Safer Leeds Strategy which tackles crime and disorder. The Supporting People programme aims to help vulnerable people, for example with drug dependencies, access housing-related support, live a more stable life and complete drug treatment programmes.
  - Valuing People, the national strategy which aims to promote the rights of people with learning disabilities, through integration with the wider community, promoting choice and independence.
  - Every Child Matters, the national programme to promote the well being of children and young people. In addition to supporting vulnerable adults with children, the Supporting People programme helps young people prepare and be successful in living independently.

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

- 37** The assessment was based on the following key issues:
- governance and partnerships;
  - grant compliance, strategy and needs;
  - delivery arrangements;
  - commissioning and performance;
  - value for money;
  - service user involvement;
  - access to services and information;
  - diversity; and
  - outcomes for service users.

## Governance and partnerships

- 38 The DCLG has set out the following structural arrangements for the governance, development and delivery of the Supporting People programme.
- Accountable Officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process.
  - Inclusive forum: consults with service providers and service users.
  - Core strategy group: proposes strategic direction, service review procedures and timetables and work needed to secure the effective and efficient delivery and development of the programme.
  - Commissioning body: agrees strategic direction, compliance with grant conditions, outcomes of service reviews and monitors the delivery and development of the programme.
  - Councillors: approve key decisions of the Commissioning Body.
  - Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.
- 39 Governance and partnership arrangements have a balance of strengths and weaknesses. There is a corporate commitment, although councillors generally are not close to the programme. Governing bodies are well established, in the main well attended by Health and Probation, and their operation is clearly described in a memorandum of understanding signed by all partners. The Accountable Officer champions the programme and performance management arrangements are well developed. However, there are gaps in representation, for example from Children's Services, and a lack of confidence in governance arrangements in some quarters. Adult protection procedures have not been developed with service providers and others with particular expertise in this area. Service providers are well represented but attendance at bi-monthly service provider meetings can be improved from all sides.

### Corporate commitment

- 40 There is a corporate commitment to the Supporting People programme in Leeds. Consideration of the positioning of the Supporting People programme in relation to the Council Change Programme indicates an understanding that Supporting People will require continuing cross-council support. Work is progressing to develop a range of indicators for the programme, some jointly with partners, and key Supporting People indicators are reported as part of the Housing block.
- 41 Senior councillors are regularly briefed on progress and separate sessions are held for individual party groups. However, there is no standing arrangement to involve councillors generally more closely with the programme. Scrutiny Boards have received a number of reports on Supporting People and related matters. Additional funding has been allocated to the administration of the programme to ensure it has the resources to implement arrangements effectively. Consequently, there is awareness of the programme across council departments but not close involvement.

### **Commissioning Body**

- 42 The Commissioning Body is well-established, involves all statutory partners and is providing direction. All statutory agencies are partners and attend meetings regularly. Some outcomes can be demonstrated from the programme. All parties are signatories to a memorandum of understanding which includes clear terms of reference for the governing partnership, voting arrangements that comply with DCLG guidance and procedures to deal with conflicts of interest. Partners are committed to the programme. Neither the memorandum of understanding nor the terms of reference set out how disagreements between partners will be dealt with. No such disagreement has arisen so far, but it is sensible to have an agreed escalation procedure approved in advance should one occur. Other than voting, the memorandum of understanding does not set out a protocol to follow. Disputes may therefore take longer to resolve.
- 43 Not all partners see the Commissioning Body as an effective decision-making group. The Social Services representative considers that the Commissioning Body does not always deal with difficult issues. Other partners disagree and we consider that there is evidence of difficult decisions being taken, for example on decommissioning low quality in-house services and agreeing a plan for a staged withdrawal from funding ineligible services. Division within the main governing body may diminish its role as a decision-making group.
- 44 Performance management for the programme is well developed. Performance against a number of indicators is regularly reported and work is well advanced on local indicators, some joint with partners, to measure key aspects of the programme. Service standards have been introduced to set out the level of service the Commissioning Body can expect from the Supporting People team. These include the frequency of performance, financial and risk reporting. Good performance management ensures under-performance can be identified quickly.

### **Core Strategy Group**

- 45 There are gaps in representation on the Core Strategy Group. Members from the voluntary sector, the statutory sector and service providers including local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are well represented. However, there has been no representation from Health, Youth Offending Services, or Children's Services. Service users are not represented on the group. An appraisal of current membership has identified these omissions and there are proposals to recruit additional representation. A Children's Services representative joined the group for the first time in January 2007. Under-represented areas, such as Children's Services and Health, are therefore unable to promote the needs and requirements of their client group in the detailed preparatory work that the group undertakes. Service users do not have a clear link to the development of policies and procedures for the programme.

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- 46 The Core Strategy Group has clear terms of reference and a work programme has recently been agreed. These documents clearly set out the purpose of the group and provide focus. Meetings cover relevant issues and all parties contribute effectively. Reports are submitted for approval to the Commissioning Body. There is evidence of outcomes, for example in restructuring homeless services and establishing a Four Tier commissioning model. Structured working arrangements are in place for policy development.

### **Accountable Officer**

- 47 The Accountable Officer champions the programme and ensures there are adequate resources to implement it effectively. The Accountable Officer is the Head of Strategic Commissioning, a fourth tier officer with line management responsibilities for the Supporting People team and the Housing Team. Being directly responsible for a range of housing strategies, including the Homelessness Strategy and the Older Peoples Housing Strategy, there are strong links with the Supporting People programme.
- 48 The Accountable Officer sits on a number of other key strategic groups such as the Leeds Housing Partnership Executive, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board which is part of the Leeds Local Area Agreement and the Corporate Parenting Board. The Accountable Officer has a high profile promoting Supporting People within and outside the Council. Additional resources have been found for the programme to enable it to deliver against CLG milestones. Part of the role includes briefing councillors, and senior council managers. The Accountable Officer also chairs the Core Strategic Group and attends the Commissioning Body in an advisory capacity. As a result, Supporting People is adequately resourced and has relevant links with other strategic planning groups.

### **Health, Housing, Social Care and Probation/criminal justice partnership arrangements**

- 49 As detailed above, there are gaps in partnership arrangements. These mainly concern Children's Services at the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group and Health representation at the Core Strategy Group. The PCT saw some overlap between the work of its modernisation teams on which Supporting People is represented and the Core Strategy Group. There are no formal links between substance misuse services and the Commissioning Body. In addition, the Core Strategy Group is viewed as a consultative group by senior managers in social services and does not feature strongly in senior social services management thinking or commitment. These are significant gaps and they weaken the status and ability of the Core Strategy Group to consider all points of view.
- 50 There is good liaison between Children's Services and the Supporting People programme at a local level and around individual cases in relation to children in need and young people leaving care to live in appropriate accommodation. A high percentage of young people leaving care are in suitable accommodation, and none of the remainder in inappropriate accommodation are homeless.

- 51 Adult and child protection issues are not well managed. Supporting People is not clearly linked to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) training led by Social Services, or regular training for Child Protection through the Safeguarding Board. Service providers are not signed up to safeguarding monitoring or training protocols through Supporting People, although some receive regular training and refresh through other routes. Supporting People procedures need to be developed with service providers and others who have special expertise in this area to ensure that the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection is comprehensively applied throughout the Supporting People Programme. As a result of this gap, the risk to vulnerable adults and to vulnerable young people is increased.
- 52 Plans do not deal with unsuitable hostel accommodation used to move offenders on towards fuller independent living. Move on accommodation is not sufficient for those high risk offenders who plan to leave the main hostel.
- 53 Probation is effectively represented on the governing bodies and the needs of offenders have been given appropriate priority. The Multi Agency Public Protection Agreement (MAPPA) is in place and effective for high risk offenders.

### **Service providers**

- 54 The Leeds Supporting People partnership has reasonable connections with service providers although improvements can be made. An established and service provider-led forum is funded by the Council. In return for funding, one service provider provides administrative support for the forum, arranging meetings, taking minutes and providing information on a dedicated website. Bi-monthly meetings show a relatively low attendance with an average attendance of 20 in 2006 out of 121 members from 75 organisations. The bi-annual briefings organised by the Supporting People team for updates and discussion are more popular. Average attendance over the past two years has been 51. Periodic newsletters are also circulated to providers. Our pre-inspection survey of service providers found that overall, 74 per cent of service providers are satisfied with arrangements for involving providers.
- 55 Some service providers complained of not always being informed when meetings were scheduled. They also remarked that the Supporting People programme team is not always represented. Supporting People team members did not attend three of the 12 meetings organised in the last year. As communication is vital to a programme delivering services through a third party, attendance at all meetings is important to build relationships, provide information and receive feedback.
- 56 Service providers are well represented on the Core Strategy Group. Four service providers have been elected to represent the forum on the Core Strategy Group. As well as taking issues forward, they have a responsibility to feedback information and discussion points to the forum. Most consider this arrangement to work effectively.

### **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)**

- 57 The programme in Leeds recognises the value of the voluntary and community sector. Two of the four service providers on the Core Strategy Group are from the voluntary sector to ensure their opinions are heard. The commissioning framework recognises the value of voluntary and other smaller organisations and aims to develop greater diversity. One outcome is a voluntary sector agency being awarded the contract to provide the hostel services previously managed by the Council. The Supporting People team is also involved in the Council's development of the Compact for Leeds, with voluntary, community, faith and public sector partners within the Leeds Initiative. Supporting People is harnessing support from this sector.

### **Grant compliance, strategy and needs**

- 58 Significant weaknesses override the strengths in this section. Eligibility and value for money assessments have not been applied consistently across all services. Instead estimates inform a retraction plan that will move responsibility for funding ineligible services slowly to their correct funding agency. The five-year strategy sets out future aims and priorities clearly although not all stakeholders have been involved. It is based on a broad base of needs information, informed by a number of research projects. The strategy is particularly strong in addressing move on issues.

### **Grant conditions and eligibility criteria**

- 59 The Council and its partners have agreed clear grant eligibility criteria in line with CLG guidelines. Leeds CC is also part of a regional eligibility project aiming to bring consistency in assessments for service providers across neighbouring councils. Service providers and officers have a clear understanding of services that are eligible.
- 60 However, eligibility assessments have not been applied consistently across all services. Assessments have proved problematic in services for people with a learning disability and some mental health services. An alternative approach has been adopted to quantify the extent of ineligibility. A ceiling rate has been established progressively reducing year-on-year. For example the maximum amount of housing-related support payable in 2005/06 is £550 per unit per week reducing by £50 a year to £350 per unit per week in 2010/11. The benefits of this approach are its simplicity and consistency. However, there are a number of drawbacks including the failure to properly assess eligibility in line with grant conditions, schemes which may be wholly ineligible continue to receive funding, and schemes providing ineligible services but costing less than the ceiling continue to receive funding. Grant conditions are not fully complied with and savings are not maximised to invest in additional services addressing unmet need.

- 61 A five-year retraction plan has been agreed with social services and implemented in 2006/7 although it is slow to move funding to its correct source. Service reviews carried out in 2004 identified ineligible activities funded by Supporting People grant, and yet funding under this arrangement continues at least until 2010/11, eight years after the programme went live. The cumulative amount of £5,211,975 is an estimate and not based on actual assessments. In addition, funding swaps, although limited to services agreed as Supporting People priorities, have the potential to reduce this amount to £3 million. Funding is not available to develop low level, eligible housing-related services because it continues to be used to support ineligible care services.
- 62 Value for money assessments have not been carried out consistently across all services. Value for money assessments, particularly the element around cost comparisons, have not been completed on many of those services affected by the retraction plan. Some in-house services have claimed their accounting arrangements made it difficult to break down scheme costs in the way required by the value for money cost pro-formas. The Council was required to disaggregate the cost of care and support when submitting their estimate for claims against transitional housing benefit prior to the introduction of Supporting People so it is surprising that this apparent confusion persists. Although the Council has applied an alternative assessment, the approach adopted is not consistent with the requirement for equity of approach with external services.

#### **Five-year strategy**

- 63 The five-year Supporting People strategy was updated in December 2006 to ensure that its aims, objectives and priorities continue to be relevant. It shows good analysis of information, and makes good links between the Supporting People programme and the corporate and community strategies. It is strongly connected to the aims of a number of other strategies, particularly housing strategies, although there are exceptions. There are no examples of co-ordinated strategic priorities between Children's Services and Supporting People. Partners, service providers and staff are clear about what the strategy wants to achieve.
- 64 The five-year strategy has clear high-level aims and objectives, although a number of key stakeholders had limited engagement in its development. Partners are positive about the five-year strategy and consider it adequately reflects their needs. Both the PCT and Probation have been closely involved in its development and consider the needs of their clients are appropriately reflected. Some stakeholders, however, have not been closely involved in its development. Ward councillors and service users had limited opportunity to contribute and a number of commissioning managers in social services have not been involved. The failure to involve all stakeholders, particularly those commissioning allied services and those receiving services, increases the risk that the strategy will not target key improvement areas.

### **Needs mapping, analysis and review**

- 65 The strategy is based on a broad range of reliable needs data. A number of research projects, such as People Living on the Fringes of Homelessness and/ or the Criminal Justice System and People Living with HIV and/or Hepatitis C in Leeds, have informed the development of priorities. Others, such as regional research into the needs of gypsies and travellers, have only recently been completed. Supporting People staff work alongside housing staff involved in the development of local strategies and are well connected to PCT modernisation teams and Probation. Research information is shared. It is, however, less clear how needs information is kept up-to-date, for example how information gathered from service reviews and contract monitoring feed into the knowledge pool on need. Relevant local performance measures, for example on emergency psychiatric re-admissions and the percentage of people in stable accommodation at the beginning and end of probation contracts, are being introduced to supplement intelligence on need. Up-to-date and reliable intelligence on needs provides the base for sound decision-making on priorities.

### **Strategy for access to move on accommodation**

- 66 The approach to accessing move-on accommodation is a strength of the strategy. It is recognised that move-on is an increasing problem in Leeds with a rise in applications for accommodation and a marked reduction in social housing available; council lettings fell from 9,927 in 2001 to 5,580 in 2005. The strategy sets out a clear four tier framework for the delivery of housing-related support. Contracted services need to fall into one of the four tiers: Prevention, Emergency, Resettlement and Sustainment. Targets are set for the maximum length of stay within each and throughput measures have been introduced. These ensure there is a continued focus on moving people on from accommodation services and preventing services becoming silted up. Exclusions from access to social housing are being addressed through the procurement method statements to ensure approved contractors agree to apply non-discriminatory letting policies which can later be validated at contract reviews. Homeless prevention is a priority. Though still a problem, move on is being actively managed.

### **Delivery arrangements**

- 67 Strengths in delivery arrangements outweigh weaknesses. Work planning, performance management, including financial management and risk management are all strong. The Supporting People team has appropriate skills and experience to deliver the programme but opportunities to enhance those skills and use expertise from other parts of the Council and the wider partnership have not always been taken. IT has been problematic requiring inefficient manual intervention to ensure SPLS data uploads are submitted on time. Fairer charging arrangements seek to maximise the income of service users but the Council could do more to promote its availability.

### **Supporting People Team**

- 68 The team has appropriate skills and experience to carry out their role. Most have been recruited for competencies and experience gained in their previous roles. In addition, staff have access to training to develop skills. A high proportion of staff have project management skills and there are opportunities to develop others through training on issues such as domestic violence, the social model of disability and substance misuse. Members of the team will receive NVQ training in Procurement during 2007. The team has access to specialist corporate support, for example legal support, corporate procurement or IT support. Partners say they have 'come a long way' and particularly praised the Supporting People manager for her accessibility and careful briefings. One partner agency described the team as supportive and providing a professional service. Children's Services say they have good access to the lead officer and have found team support helpful on a case by case basis. The service provided is generally well regarded.
- 69 However, not all opportunities have been taken to develop appropriate skills and make use of existing expertise. Less than half of the team have had diversity training and the service development officers have not had training in Adult and Child Protection. Staff are not as well equipped to deal with diversity and adult protection issues.
- 70 Repositioning Supporting People with the housing business team has further strengthened the links between Supporting People and other strategic planning arrangements, particularly within housing. It helps to join up the process of strategy development and performance management. Resources can be shared.

### **Work planning**

- 71 Work plans are well developed but need more work on targets and resources. The team has a clear service plan with explicit links to the Supporting People programme strategic objectives. Actions are identified to progress programme implementation with key success measures. Not all measures are SMART however, and the plan does not identify the resources required to deliver actions.
- 72 Sound monitoring arrangements are in place encompassing individual contributions. Progress against the plan is monitored by line managers and relevant aspects reported to the Core Strategy Group. The plan is structured in such a way that it makes clear links to higher level departmental and other strategic objectives. Individual performance is linked to objectives through the individual performance and development scheme where targets are set for key aspects of business. All staff have appraisal reviews every six months. Mechanisms are in place to plan and monitor improvements.

### **Local Area Agreements**

- 73 The Leeds Local Area Agreement (LAA) does not currently refer to the Supporting People programme, although there are shared targets and objectives. The updated strategy details how supported housing is contributing to the objectives of the LAA. Senior officers are involved with the LAA governance structure, for example the Accountable Officer attends the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and the Performance Group. Commissioning Body has agreed to work towards alignment during 2007.

### **Performance monitoring and management**

- 74 Performance monitoring and management systems for the Supporting People programme are well developed and improving. The recently agreed service standards require:
- financial information to be presented at each Commissioning Body meeting;
  - performance data to be tabled on a monthly or quarterly basis; and
  - an update of the annual plan to be reported quarterly.

Key performance indicators are reported regularly and included in the suite of indicators monitored corporately. The quality of data has been accredited by external auditors. A suite of relevant local performance indicators has recently been developed for the programme which will assist in monitoring outcomes that the programme achieves. They include, for example:

- people with physical disabilities who are helped to live at home through the receipt of housing support; and
- repeat homeless acceptances where the applicant was in receipt of housing support.

These indicators are being built into the contract monitoring arrangements. Trends, outcomes and poor performance will be easier to detect.

- 75 Financial monitoring is strong. An update on the financial position with supporting analysis and projections is reported on a monthly basis to the Commissioning Body and to the Council's Chief Finance Officer. A prudent approach is taken to financial management with a reasonable amount set aside for unforeseen contingencies. Finances are managed in line with corporate guidelines and in accordance with service standards.

### **Fairer charging**

- 76 Adequate fairer charging arrangements are in place. Supporting People is included within the Council's broader Fairer Charging Policy for social care. The Supporting People administration grant part-funds a welfare visiting officer within the corporate Fairer Charging Team. The Benefits and Fairer Charging teams are linked to maximise incomes for service users, plus joint visits are arranged with the Pension Service to provide one comprehensive benefit/income assessment. Leaflets have been produced for service providers and service users on the charging policy, assessment and entitlement although they are not widely available. A 'take-up' campaign was undertaken with service providers in 2004 but has not been repeated. Applications are dealt with quickly but 'take-up' rates and comparisons are not closely monitored. Arrangements are good once a claimant becomes aware of possible entitlement and requests an assessment.

### **Risk management**

- 77 Risk management arrangements are strong and follow corporate guidelines although contingency plans need further development. A comprehensive risk register is in place for the Supporting People programme which categorises risks according to probability and likely impact. It is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Commissioning Body. Contingency plans are in place for major emergencies and IT failures. However, there are no plans in place for the sudden closure of an accommodation-based service, although when this occurred it was well handled. Foreseeable risks are unlikely to disrupt the programme. Contingency plans are necessary to ensure a speedy and planned response to emergencies.

### **DCLG SPLS data upload**

- 78 Despite IT problems, the Supporting People team submits the SPLS extract successfully and within required timescales. Some calculations have had to be completed manually and IT has also impacted on the accuracy of a small number of payments to service providers. The appointment of a dedicated Data Management Officer funded through the Council's general fund has improved the quality of data. A new, tried and tested software system has been procured from another council and the first phase was going live during the week of the inspection.
- 79 The Council monitors the return of quarterly workbooks from service providers closely. Non-returns are quickly followed up. At 6 per cent non-returns, the latest quarterly figures show service providers in Leeds are performing well in comparison to similar councils. To improve matters further, the Council has introduced a £30 administrative charge for service providers who fail to submit their quarterly work book return on time. Up-to-date data is available for submission to CLG and to monitor performance.

## Commissioning and performance

- 80 There is an equal mix of positives and negatives. Procurement arrangements are robust and other processes such as quality assurance, complaints and appeals are generally sound. Contracts, however, are not all in place and service improvement plans are not yet fully validated. Service reviews left some service providers dissatisfied and contract monitoring is only just starting.

### Contracts

- 81 The Council has robust procurement arrangements. A framework for commissioning Supporting People services was developed as part of a joint work stream with the Core Cities and with the assistance of the Council's corporate Procurement Unit. This framework was consulted upon and was agreed by the Commissioning Body in September 2004. It sets out the basis on which services are commissioned and procured within Leeds. Five procurement criteria need to be met: the service is strategically relevant; the provider of the service is fully accredited; the service is good quality at level C and improving; the service provides value for money; and the service performs well in terms of key performance indicators. Future service requirements are clearly specified and service providers are required to complete an outcome focused method statement which sets out how they will deliver against these standards. The method statement forms part of the future contract and is to be monitored. Improvements in value for money are achieved and there is a sound basis for future monitoring.
- 82 There is some joining up of commissioning and monitoring arrangements although this is not consistently applied across all areas. For example, homeless services are jointly commissioned, rough sleeper services for people with substance misuse problems are jointly monitored with the Leeds DAT and services for women with alcohol problems are jointly monitored with social services. In other areas contracts are not monitored jointly. This can lead to inconsistencies and duplication.
- 83 There is no programme of service or sector-wide reviews beyond May 2006 to continue the drive for service improvements. The Council expects improvements to be delivered through the new contracting process. In addition, there are wider proposals for some client groups, for example services to people with a learning disability and services to older people. However, there is no plan or programme to show how services to all client groups will be reviewed. For example, there are no timescales to consider provision to people with drug problems (which may include and extend beyond housing-related support). Service providers and other strategic commissioners are unable to plan effectively in the longer-term.

- 84** Delays and uncertainties with contracts impact adversely on service providers and service users. Currently 323 services are without a signed, written contract. Interim contracts have expired and steady state contracts are not yet in place. Eighteen steady state contracts have been issued to date and the Council is on schedule to deliver the remaining 77 by the end of February 2007. Contract lengths are clearly related to the strength of assessment against the five criteria or to common expiry for particular client groups, such as learning disability or older people where the model of support is under review. Only four services remain below satisfactory quality standards and the team are working closely with the relevant service provider. However, the uncertainty in future funding arrangements caused by delays in awarding contracts are having an adverse effect on some service users and service providers. Service providers have lost experienced staff as they are unable to provide any medium-term security of employment. Without a signed contract, there is a greater risk of disruption to services. Both impact on the continuity of provision to service users.
- 85** Some service providers do not fully understand the procurement method, despite two events held to help providers understand the requirements of method statements. The presentations did not explain that method statements were to be scored and the implications for procuring future services. This has caused some concern for service providers. Much of the method statement assessment duplicates the assessment under the Quality Assessment Framework.
- 86** Contract monitoring is not taking place. A thorough and robust system is in its final stages of development and will be introduced shortly. Resources to date have concentrated on service reviews and procurement. This means that contracts are not yet under a formal system of monitoring and control. Until this is addressed the Council has no mechanism in place to monitor services and ensure continuous improvement for service users.
- 87** A useful impact assessment pro-forma makes sure the implications of decommissioning a service are fully considered. The pro-forma has been developed through the regional group and acts as a check list to prompt considerations such as:
- What are the housing implications for existing users?
  - What impact would service closure have on demand for other services?

Addressing the questions listed, the team identify the issues decommissioning a service raises and captures details of proposed actions, person responsible and timescale. It is a useful tool to ensure the impact of decommissioning a service is fully understood and the appraisal is dealt with sensitively.

### Quality assurance

- 88 Standards are consistently applied. Quality assurance arrangements are in place although not fully evidenced. A panel of officers comprising two independent members of the Supporting People team including the Commissioning Manager review the findings and service review reports. A similar arrangement is being introduced for contract monitoring reports. The panel consider the evidence, findings and conclusions to ensure policies and procedures have been correctly applied. However, they do not evidence their scrutiny or their conclusions. Service reviews are considered by the Core Strategic Group and approved by the Commissioning Body. Services have been subjected to the same degree of rigour.

### Reporting

- 89 The Council has made reasonable progress with its service review programme and progress is regularly reported to the Commissioning Body. All services have had their strategic relevance and quality assessed as part of the review process. Most have also had the costs of services analysed and compared with others. Of the 523 service reviews required, six were outstanding as at 31 March 2006. These were approved by the Commissioning Body in April and May 2006. Service reviews are considered by the Core Strategic Group and approved by the Commissioning Body. Current services are all strategically relevant.
- 90 There is mixed use of expertise to support service reviews. The Drug Action Team has been used to enhance skills of the review team. However, Social Services commissioners have not been involved in Supporting People service reviews except for some Learning Disability joint reviews. In addition, there have been no joint service reviews with Children's Services. Many of the reviews were largely desk top exercises and there was a failure to ensure reviewing officers always had up-to-date skills in all relevant areas. As a result, there is little confidence in the outcomes of some service reviews by senior social services managers
- 91 Service providers are dissatisfied with service reviews. Over 59 per cent of service providers responding to our pre-inspection survey were dissatisfied with the outcome of their service review and subsequent contract negotiation arrangements. A number of service reviews took a very long time to reach a conclusion. Some commenced in 2004 and were not completed until 2006. Reviewing officers did not always seek advice from service providers on how best to engage with service users. There has been no separate feedback to service users on the outcomes of service reviews. The implementation of improvement plans has not been fully validated and service providers were not provided with any written feedback to confirm that their QAF scores had improved. Finally some service providers do not have a contract, interim contracts have expired and there are delays issuing new ones.

### **Cross-authority**

- 92** It is a weakness that there is no joint accreditation of providers shared with cross-authority partners. This would streamline administration processes and reduce the burden on providers to meet accreditation criteria. There are no examples of joint reviews between the Council and other Administering Local Authorities. This is a missed opportunity to combine resources and expertise to ensure consistency and identify best practice to be shared. Positively, the Council has worked with another Administering Local Authority to carry out a peer review of its service review process. This was effective in challenging the robustness of the approach and as an opportunity to learn from others.
- 93** Leeds is an active member of the West Yorkshire Cross Authority Group, chairing the group until recently. The group is proactive in the development of the programme and has commissioned a number of joint research projects. One of its notable achievements is the development of an excellent offender protocol to ensure that housing and support are properly considered at the time an offender is approaching release. The administration of Supporting People in Leeds is benefiting from working with neighbouring councils.

### **Improvement planning**

- 94** Validation of service improvements is not yet carried out. Only desk top assessments have been carried out to verify that service improvement plans are being implemented. Ninety one service improvement plans were issued and progress is monitored by service development officers through correspondence, meetings and as part of the procurement process. Validation visits are not carried out until the contract is due to be monitored. This means that issues such as service users not being involved in support planning at one scheme visited, and the routine and staffing arrangements at another being inflexible and continuing to reflect an institutional approach are not picked up by the Supporting People team. This is a serious weakness given the direct impact that this is having on the quality of life of vulnerable service users.

### **Complaints**

- 95** On the whole, a solid complaints procedure has been adopted for the Supporting People programme and it is effectively applied. The programme has adopted the Council's Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedures. It operates on three stages from an initial complaint to the service provider, where applicable, then raised to the Supporting People team and lastly complaints are considered by the Commissioning Body. Timescales are set for most stages of the process, apart from responses by the Commissioning Body. Complaints are handled promptly and sensitively, with one serious complaint concerning abuse being handled particularly well. Transparent arrangements are in place.

### **Appeals process**

- 96 Processes are in place to challenge decisions within a clearly defined timeframe. An appeals process enables service providers to challenge decisions if they are dissatisfied with the decision reached. Appeals are considered by a panel of officers independent of Supporting People administrative arrangements. Only one appeal has been heard which was unsuccessful. Opportunities exist for decisions to be challenged.

### **Outcomes**

- 97 Arrangements have a strong focus on outcomes. Future services are procured through the method statement which is based on a service specification geared towards delivering improved outcomes. Measures are being put in place to assist monitoring and track outcomes. Outdated services and those that are not strategically relevant have been decommissioned, in total 379 units of housing-related support. In other areas through remodelling and expansion, provision has increased by 367 units with more focus on flexible floating support units. Processes have a correct focus and are delivering results.

### **Value for money**

- 98 In this section there is a mix of positives and negatives. On 2005/06 comparisons with core city councils, Leeds costs were average. Since then the Council can demonstrate reducing unit costs and increasing quality across the programme. The Council is taking a lead on procurement and arrangements are strong and drive continued improvement. The Council is active in benchmarking data. However, there are two significant weaknesses. Firstly, value for money assessments are not transparent for service providers. Secondly, they have not been applied consistently to all services. A substantial efficiency calculation has been made for in-house learning disability services but it is based on the use of average hourly rates and not the result of application of the same value for money criteria applied to other services.

### **How do costs compare?**

- 99 The average unit costs for the Leeds Supporting People programme have reduced considerably over time.

**Table 1 Unit cost comparisons between April 2003 and October 2006**

<b>Weekly unit costs</b>	<b>April 2003</b>	<b>October 2006</b>	<b>Change</b>
Accommodation-based services	£124.23	£112.62	9.3% reduction
Floating Support services	£84.86	£75.90	10.6% reduction

101 Based on 2005/06 data, cost comparisons with other core cities are around average. The table below shows how Leeds compares against six other core cities against a range of client groups.

**Table 2 2005/06 unit cost comparisons with core cities**

<b>Client group</b>	<b>Leeds Average Unit Cost £</b>	<b>Ranking out of 7 (1st is the most expensive)</b>
Older people	10	Equal 4th
Homeless families	158	4th
Learning disability	452	3rd
Mental health	132	4th
Single homeless	149	2nd
Offenders	130	2nd
Physical disability	125	3rd
Young People at Risk	99	6th
Domestic violence	167	6th

### **How is value for money managed?**

- 102 There is a clearly laid out policy to assess value for money but it is much less transparent in practice. A policy is in place which sets out the considerations necessary and strikes a balance between costs, quality and outcomes. Service reviews do consider various elements including the quality and cost of the service and performance. However, these three elements are not drawn together in service review reports to reach conclusions, they remain in separate sections of the report. There were inconsistencies in the way information was presented in reports. Quartile costs were not always presented, and final reports presented to the Commissioning Body lacked the detail of the draft reports and therefore made the reasons for conclusions less evident. Service providers found value for money assessments to be the least satisfactory part of the service review process. Over 40 per cent of service providers expressed dissatisfaction with the approach, some saying there was a concentration on cutting costs. Value for money assessments were not always concluded as part of the service review, being completed as part of the procurement approach, some time later.

### **Benchmarking**

- 103 Leeds actively participates in benchmarking activity. Leeds CC has taken part in the cross-authority and regional benchmarking work which took place in 2005. They will also participate in the planned revision of these based on new contract prices early in 2007. Benchmarking of service and administration costs is ongoing and the Council makes use of national, local and regional level data. Outcomes are reported to the CB and Core Strategy Group. Data is available to make meaningful comparisons.

### **Procurement**

- 104 Procurement arrangements are strong with value for money one of the five criteria to be satisfied before a new contract can be awarded. The assessment is repeated as part of the method statement. Where services cannot demonstrate that they can deliver value for money, services will be exposed to competition.
- 105 This process has not been applied to all service providers. As a result of budget pooling arrangements, some in-house services have been unable to disaggregate running costs to determine individual scheme costs. The Council was required to unpool costs in preparation for the Supporting People programme prior to April 2003. As a result, an estimated efficiency figure has been calculated based upon flat rate staff costs. The efficiency savings generated from the Learning Disability service are significant and amount to £1.7 million per annum. However, it is not possible to say whether these services continue to provide value for money.

- 106** Leeds has been at the forefront nationally of procurement for the Supporting People programme. As one of only eleven projects nationwide, Leeds Value Improvement Project has focused competitive procurement on high value, high risk services which do not meet its five procurement criteria. The approach has been tested through the competitive procurement of a direct access hostel for homeless families previously managed by the Council. The tender resulted in the contract being awarded to an independent service provider and has successfully delivered a substantial improvement in value for money with a better quality service being delivered for less money.

#### **Improving value for money**

- 107** Improvements in the quality of services are being achieved at a reduced cost. Following initial assessment through service review, 355 schemes were assessed below the minimum standard. As part of the procurement method statement assessment, quality is re-assessed and only four services continue to operate below minimum standards. The procurement quality assessment is a broader assessment than the QAF assessment but no less demanding. It is based on a self-assessment with standards to be validated when contracts are monitored. Just over £6 million efficiency savings have been realised across the programme and over £4 million has been achieved through in-house provision.
- 108** It is not clear how value for money work will continue its improvement. A number of individual schemes are to be subject to competitive tender which is expected to deliver improved value for money. A procurement strategy is being developed that seeks to improve service delivery models and performance through a phased review of contracted services. However, the details have still to be determined.

#### **Cross-authority approach**

- 109** The West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and York Cross Authority Group has completed a range of initiatives that have a positive impact on the Supporting People programme and outcomes for service users. This includes a model to assess service user outcomes, research into the housing needs of gypsies and travellers, and the establishment of regional groups to assess the needs of service user groups most likely to access cross-authority services. Positively, the group has also agreed a comprehensive offender housing protocol and is using provider client records for high risk offenders to inform a regional resettlement framework. This is identifying shared priorities and achieving consistent approaches regarding the delivery of Supporting People programmes.

- 110 The cross-authority group has a work plan setting out four key areas for development in the future. Priorities are appropriate, including improving the accessibility of services and developing joint procurement initiatives. It is already working with the regional centre of excellence to carry out regional market analysis work. This is identifying potential new providers for Supporting People services to enable the procurement of new services to be competitively market tested. A procurement programme is being agreed based on priorities identified within five-year strategies. This will enable the group to combine procurement needs to attract discounts. It is a weakness that the group does not jointly commission any cross-authority services. This would enable councils to combine grants to meet the specialist needs of services users across several local authority areas. The Council is working on a cross-authority basis to achieve consistency of approach and joint procurement opportunities to improve the value for money of contracted services. None has been achieved to date.

### **Administration grant**

- 111 The Council has a mixed performance in securing value for money from the administration grant. Staffing levels are subject to regular review and need corporate approval for any changes. Salary levels are set at competitive local rates. The Council supplements the administration grant to ensure that adequate resources are available to administer the programme. To replace the IT system, the Council looked at several options and procured software from another Council as this met their requirements and was the cheapest to set up and maintain. However, IT shortcomings result in the need to intervene manually to ensure payments and DCLG returns are dealt with on time. Data quality has been poor resulting in the employment of a dedicated officer, funded outside of the administration grant, to improve and cleanse data. Improvements in value for money will be delivered.

### **Service user involvement**

- 112 There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in this area. The Council has only recently agreed a framework to fully involve service users in the programme so its approach is not embedded. Positively, initial efforts to set up a service users reference group have been highly effective and a range of positive outcomes for service users are already evident through this and related initiatives. Service users, including hard to reach groups, have also been successfully involved in the programme through research projects identifying needs assessments and this is informing commissioning decisions. Service user involvement in reviews and procurement is not robust.

## Opportunities

- 113 The Council has mapped relevant established groups for involvement and consultation. Positively, service users from these groups have been invited to be involved in the Supporting People programme through a recently established service user reference group. The service user reference group is an effective forum for involving service users in the Supporting People programme. Most service user groups are represented, with work underway to address any gaps through further engagement of existing groups. The membership of the group ensures the views of a wide range of service users are represented.
- 114 The service user reference group is valued by participants. Service users receive training to assist them to understand the programme and the role of the group. Crucially, there have been early successes in achieving outcomes. This includes developing a specific Supporting People customer complaints procedure and consultation on support planning guidance and an executive summary of the five-year strategy specifically for service users. Service users also talk about their circumstances and how Supporting People has assisted them to live more independently. This emphasises the importance of being involved as an opportunity to influence services available to support independent living.
- 115 Service users are not currently involved in the governance arrangements for the programme, although the Core Strategy Group receives regular updates from the service user reference group. This ensures service user views are considered in programme developments and recommendations to the Commissioning Body. This enables some influence on the strategic direction of the programme. There are clear objectives to improve service user involvement in the service user engagement strategy. This complies with the corporate approach to consultation and considers best practice identified from working with another Administering Local Authority. The strategy sets out three levels of involvement at an individual level through support plans, a service level through the local services being received and at a strategic level through the governance of the programme. The establishment of the service user reference group is the first stage in the Council's ambitions to train and empower service users to have greater influence.

### **Outcomes from user involvement**

- 116 The Council has involved service users in other ways and this has resulted in positive outcomes for service users. Approximately 600 service users and potential service users were involved in research projects to inform needs assessments. This is informing commissioning priorities and the Council has approved or is considering projects to provide housing-related support in response to needs identified. This includes providing housing-related support for women involved in prostitution following successful engagement of service users considered to be 'hard to reach'. Similarly, the homelessness service has been robustly reconfigured by decommissioning two direct access homeless hostels to provide alternative emergency dispersed supported housing. This will result in a wider range of provision for service users in response to their requests for self-contained housing with high level support to enable independent living to be successfully maintained.
- 117 It is positive that the Council has recognised the benefits of involving advocates and carers in the programme. Voluntary and other smaller organisations are recognised in the commissioning framework and the Supporting People team is involved in the Compact for Leeds, along with voluntary, community, faith and public sector partners. Service providers have well established links with advocates, who frequently engage with service users to assist them to express their views.

### **Involvement in contracting and monitoring**

- 118 The involvement of service users in service reviews was not robust. There were some positive examples of service users being appropriately engaged in the process and supported to give their view, but service users were not always involved. Where service users were involved, this was not always at times or in ways which met their preferences and review reports do not clearly identify service user views on the service to inform quality and eligibility assessments. This restricted options available for service users to inform service review outcomes and therefore future commissioning decisions.
- 119 Service users have been involved in procurement following reviews, but this is not extensive. They have influenced method statements for tendering purposes, but have not been involved in arrangements to consider tenders received. This is a missed opportunity for service users to have a say regarding the successful provider to ensure future services will meet their needs and expectations.

### **Access to services and information**

- 120 Weaknesses outweigh strengths in this area. Information on the Supporting People programme is not comprehensive and in some instances is not fully accessible to service users. The Better Care: Higher standards charter does not include information on Supporting People and service users are not sufficiently informed about fairer charging. The Council is working with housing providers to identify and address barriers to access and referral arrangements and service users have access to a single assessment for pensions and welfare benefits to maximise their income.

### **Access and referral to services**

- 121** The Council has effective access and referral arrangements linked to the Four Tier Model. Emergency services are accessible to service users to whom the Council owes a statutory duty, resettlement services can be accessed directly to secure planned moves from local authority care, hospital or prison, and there is direct access to sustainment services if service users have settled housing solutions or wish to remain in their own homes. Access to Learning Disability Services is arranged through the Joint Commissioning Partnership to ensure that specific care and housing-related support needs of service users is met. Service users assessed as high risk offenders at MAPPA are appropriately referred to specialist offender services. It is a weakness that referral arrangements are not widely publicised through the directory of services. This may prevent service users from accessing services they need to assist them to live independently.
- 122** The Council is proactive at improving access and referral arrangements. It is working with providers to identify issues affecting service users waiting for move on accommodation and these barriers to access are being discussed with Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) operating the Council's waiting list. This will inform revisions to how properties are allocated and the condition in which they are let. A strength of this approach is the challenge it makes to excluding some service users from accessing accommodation by bypassing their application when offers are being made. Providers consider this to be particularly relevant for offenders. The Council is improving service user access to private sector accommodation through a private landlord accreditation scheme. This also gives some reassurance that landlords are acting equitably.

### **Information**

- 123** Services provided at public access points are effective. Staff are aware of the Supporting People programme. They appropriately signpost existing and potential customers to relevant departments, agencies, and information.
- 124** The Council publicises Supporting People through a leaflet, but this is not fully accessible to all service users. The leaflet is easy to understand, clearly explaining service user groups eligible for housing-related support and the types of support available, and is available in public access points and through the Council's website. It is also available to people whose first language is not English with leaflets translated into most community languages. This assists potential service users to identify the opportunities presented through the programme for independent living. The availability of this information does not extend to accommodation-based schemes. Other formats such as large print, Braille and audio tape are not publicised, and there is no pictorial information for people with limited literacy skills to access.

### **Directory**

- 125 The directory of services does not effectively publicise housing-related support options available to potential service users. The directory includes details of providers and service user groups eligible for each service. However, key information, such as referral routes, locations of accommodation-based services and types of support available are absent. This information will therefore not assist service users to fully assess options available for meeting their housing-related support needs. Positively, the directory is widely accessible through public reception points and the Council's website. There are links from the website to the national directory, assisting service users wanting to access housing-related support outside of Leeds. The directory is reviewed quarterly to ensure the information remains relevant.

### **Website**

- 126 The Council's website contains limited information on Supporting People. Specific pages are dedicated to the programme which are accessible through a search facility and an A to Z of services. An enquiry by client group routes a service user through to services available from social services. There is no mention of housing-related support nor a link through to the directory of services. Supporting People pages include publicity and guidance on the programme, although information is absent for some key areas including recent developments in service users involvement and governance arrangements. The website fails to include a web link to the national Supporting People website 'spkweb' should service users want to know more about the Supporting People regime. Service users, providers and other stakeholders may therefore not have all the information they need to understand opportunities presented through the programme and priorities for development. The website can be converted into large text, other languages and has a browse aloud facility to ensure it is accessible for people who are visually impaired. It also promotes sign language videos explaining Council services available for people who are hearing impairment.

### **Better Care: Higher Standards**

- 127 The Council's Better Care: Higher Standards charter effectively provides information on health, social care and housing services, although it is a weakness that the charter does not include information on Supporting People and the funded services. This is a missed opportunity to promote opportunities for service users available through the programme, particularly since the charter is regularly reviewed. The charter is easy to follow and contains relevant information. This includes contact details for accessing services and service standards setting out the types and quality of service customers have a right to expect.

### **Access to fairer charging**

- 128** Service users are not well informed about fairer charging. Leaflets publicising the scheme are not available at accommodation-based schemes or public access points, and although information is available on the Council's website, requests for assessments can not be made online. The Council is in the process of producing new information, involving service users, to publicise the scheme, but this information does not identify eligible service user groups, making it less likely that service users will identify the scheme as relevant to their circumstances. Publicity campaigns have not taken place for some time to raise awareness. Positively, there is a joint visiting team for the welfare benefits service and the pension service, and this is effective for improving access to benefits to maximise the income of service users.
- 129** Services provided at public access points are effective. Staff are aware of the Supporting People programme. They correctly signpost existing and potential customers to relevant departments and agencies, and information available on the programme. Vulnerable people are being properly signposted to relevant services.

### **Diversity**

- 130** Strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area. The Council has effectively analysed existing service provision to assess whether it meets demand and to identify any gaps in its research. There is a range of culturally sensitive services and these were evaluated through service reviews. Equality and diversity considerations are reflected in procurement processes. Services are accessible to vulnerable people from BME communities, but provider compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has not been assessed to identify whether services are accessible to people with disabilities.

### **Identifying diverse needs**

- 131** There is a robust process in place for identifying diverse needs. The Council has worked with local and cross-authority partners to analysis whether existing service provision meets demand. Where the housing-related support needs of service user groups is not fully understood the Council takes action to address this through joint research projects. This has been effectively completed for people who are potentially homeless or likely to enter the Criminal Justice System, people living with HIV and/or Hepatitis C, women involved in prostitution and gypsies and travellers. These findings have been considered by governance bodies and have been included within the revised five-year strategy. This will ensure these vulnerable people are more likely to benefit from opportunities available through Supporting People in the future. This information is also shared with the PCT and Probation to inform other strategies, aiming to deliver these shared priorities effectively by combining resources to work efficiently.

### **Excluded groups**

- 132 The Council has completed a gap analysis to identify the needs of excluded groups of vulnerable people and how these might be met. This is mainly through research projects, supported by available data on the programme and service user profiles. The Council has taken decisions to address the needs of vulnerable people when the gaps analysis has identified under provision. It has assessed that only 6.3 per cent of older people receiving support are homeowners, even though 67 per cent of older people are homeowners. This intelligence has identified the need to commission floating support so that older people do not necessarily have to access sheltered housing to secure the support they require to live independently.

### **Cultural sensitivity**

- 133 Service reviews assessed whether services reflect the cultures of the communities they serve and are welcoming and accessible to all. The approach evaluated provider diversity policies and procedures and whether support planning is effectively identifying and delivering culturally sensitive services needed. Services being delivered include access to Afro-Caribbean and Asian support workers, occupancy agreements in different languages, signposting to local community groups and places of worship and awareness of how to access translation facilities. This is resulting in services being accessible to vulnerable people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), with 28 per cent of service users being from BME communities in 2005/06, exceeding the local population of 10.2 per cent.
- 134 It is a weakness that assessments of the cultural sensitivity of services are not always reported to governance bodies to inform commissioning and improvement planning. However, equality and diversity issues are considered as part of the tendering method statement framework to ensure this is a priority for new services being commissioned.
- 135 Reviews have not been used to assess provider compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). It is therefore not known whether Supporting People services are fully accessible to people with disabilities or whether providers are identifying any remedial action required to ensure statutory compliance.

### **Outcomes for service users**

- 136 Strengths outweigh weaknesses. A number of new services have been introduced and existing services expanded or remodelled following service reviews. Low demand or poor quality services have been decommissioned or replaced. Changes are in line with strategic priorities and provide a wider range and better quality services for service users. Support plans generally involve service users and target activity on increasing or maintaining independence. Measures to monitor outcomes are good. Limited improvements have been made in making services more flexible and not tied to accommodation. In addition, there are no changes in the level of provision for some clients, such as refugees, with development constrained by available funding.

### Supporting People service improvements

- 137** Services have been changed for existing service users to better meet local needs in accordance with agreed priorities. A total of 13 new services have been introduced since the programme went live, including seven which were pipeline services. A total of 353 additional units of support, both floating and accommodation-based, provide a greater range of services for a number of client groups including older people, single homeless, people with learning disabilities, and people with sensory impairment. Two extra care services have been added, one of which provides support for older people with dementia. Services are in line with Supporting People priorities. There is a greater range of services available for vulnerable people.
- 138** Homeless services have been transformed. Unsuitable and outdated hostels have been closed and replaced by better quality dispersed accommodation with housing-related support. More floating support is available to help people maintain tenancies. One service has been commissioned to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness. It is targeted towards supplementing the Council provided sanctuary scheme tackling domestic violence and hate crime. These services are contributing to reductions in repeat homelessness, providing greater stability and security for victims and maintaining good performance in other areas, such as the number of rough sleepers and the number of families in bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation.
- 139** Through service reviews provision has changed to address need and improve value for money, although concerns remain over how well this has been achieved across all services. Thirty two schemes have been expanded or remodelled. An additional 182 units of accommodation-based support and 185 units of floating support have been added. For example a floating support service for young people at risk increased its capacity to support 184 young people from 149 and agreed to take referral from a wider geographical area. There has been a significant increase in the number of bedspaces designated for offenders from 424 to 643. Thirty one schemes have been decommissioned for a variety of reasons including low demand, providing ineligible services, poor quality and outdated models of service delivery. Across the programme, the quality of services has also increased as evident from improved quality assessments.
- 140** Little progress, however, has been made in some areas where need has been identified. There has been no increase in the number of units of support for people with substance misuse problems. Instead the programme has introduced a requirement for staff in relevant services to be trained and work at Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards increasing the capacity of service providers to deal with this client group. Other areas, such as services to refugees, people living with life affecting illnesses and travellers show no additional capacity. Limited finance constrains the ability of the programme to develop new services across all the areas of identified need.

- 141 Investment in new services is constrained by funding locked into ineligible services. Grant continues to fund ineligible services and the extent of that ineligibility has not been fully assessed. Retraction arrangements mean that some funding will continue to be locked in for eight years. This protects ineligible service provision to highly vulnerable people at the expense of lower level preventative type services that may otherwise have been introduced.

### **Case studies**

- 142 A young person receiving medical support for mental health and drug-related problems has struggled in the past to maintain a tenancy. She has difficulty reading and writing. With added confidence provided by the offer of floating support, a local landlord offered her a new tenancy. Her support plan identified that she would require help with reading and understanding letters, filling out forms, attending appointments, and contacting energy companies. She also needed support in organising her finances, making sure she claimed welfare benefits and budgeting. Seven months on, she is maintaining her tenancy, is growing in confidence and is attending a local college to improve her reading and writing skills. She is keeping her medical appointments and is positive about her future.
- 143 A young single parent was having difficulties in remaining in rented accommodation, due to poor budgeting skills. Coming from Eastern Europe, she also had problems reading and writing in English. Floating support has helped her to establish her tenancy, set up budgeting accounts to manage her money, and accessed medical services and childcare support to allow her to attend college. Several months later, she is maintaining her tenancy without falling into arrears, is less dependant and now very confident of her future. As well as her language course, she is now in the process of obtaining other qualifications that will help her gain employment.

### **Choice for service users**

- 144 The availability of services not tied to accommodation or tenure is beginning to change but slowly. Between April 2003 and October 2006 the number of accommodation-based units of support fell by 118 compared with an increase of 320 units of floating support. This resulted in an increase in the proportion of floating support from 14 per cent to 16.3 per cent. A pilot exercise examining how the 67 per cent of older people who live in their own homes can be assisted to access housing-related support services without moving home should have further impact on this. Until then, the majority of support is only provided if the service user lives in the accommodation.
- 145 Leeds is promoting customer choice through direct payments. Service users have the opportunity to procure their own housing-related support services through direct payments. So far over 270 service users have benefited from this scheme. This gives service users control over their choice of service provider.

## Support plans

- 146 Support plans are in place for service users ensuring housing-related support is focused on improving or maintaining an individual's ability to live independently. These are checked as part of the service review process and in the main have been developed and reviewed with service users. There were exceptions where support plans had only very recently been developed and some without any contribution from the service user. Housing-related support is helping vulnerable individual's live independently although more could be done to ensure that service users are empowered to participate fully in the delivery and development of services.

## Outcome measurement

- 147 Outcome measures are in place and improving. Key performance indicators for the Supporting People programme have been regularly monitored and reported to the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group. Measures are being improved to capture a wider and more accurate picture of programme achievements. The Supporting People partnership is adopting the regional outcomes measurement framework which has been developed by the regional group. A suite of local performance indicators designed to identify the contribution made by housing support services to meet wider strategic priorities have been approved by the Commissioning Body. Examples include demonstrating how many older people are being helped to live at home through the provision of housing support, and identifying the number of patients readmitted to a psychiatric ward within 28 days of discharge. Relevant measures are being established.

## Summary

- 148 Overall, we judge that Leeds City Council has made fair progress in implementing the Supporting People programme. The programme is getting better value for money from the grant. More and better quality services are being commissioned for a reduced cost. Poor quality and low demand services have been decommissioned. Governance arrangements are well established and statutory partners and service providers are well engaged. An updated five-year strategy based on broad needs information provides clear aims and addresses accommodation move on problems. Work planning, performance, procurement and financial management are strong.
- 149 However, for some vulnerable groups, there is no change in the level of provision. Eligibility and value for money assessments have not been applied consistently across all service providers with some based on estimates. Full contract monitoring is only just beginning and service improvements have not been fully validated. Steady state contracts are not yet in place for the majority of service providers. There are gaps in representation on governing groups and service users are not yet closely involved. Service providers are dissatisfied with aspects of the service review process, including the lack of transparency around value for money assessments.

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

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

- 150** Positive aspects of the Supporting People programme's track record outweigh negative ones. There is a record of delivering planned actions on time and achieving milestones. Services are changing with across the board improvements in quality, the decommissioning of outdated services and a number of new or remodelled services that better meet identified needs. Substantial efficiency improvements have been delivered and homeless services have improved markedly. However, in other areas improvement has been slower. Many service reviews which drive improvement took a long time to complete, and there has been no expansion of services in some areas where gaps were identified.
- 151** The programme generally has a positive track record in delivering change. Actions from the 2005/06 Action Plan have been delivered. All 26 actions have been completed in line with timescales set. CLG milestones have been met and returns are completed on time. Only 4 of the 523 service reviews were not completed by the March 2006 deadline and these were completed shortly afterwards.
- 152** However, there are some areas where progress has been slow. Service reviews took a long time to complete, in some cases extending to two years, and most providers do not yet have a steady state contract. Estimates have been made for the level of ineligible services and a five-year retraction plan agreed which will take until 2010/11 to complete. Consequently, service providers lost some confidence in the service review process and funding will not be unlocked quickly from ineligible services.

## Improvements in outcomes experienced by users

- 153** There are a number of changes where improvements are experienced by service users. Thirty one services have been decommissioned and 32 remodelled to better meet service user needs. In addition, 13 new services have been introduced. Improvements include the following.
- The decommissioning of outmoded direct access hostel provision where service users shared cooking and bathing facilities was replaced by 250 units of housing support which is attached to emergency self-contained accommodation procured through the private sector.
  - The West Yorkshire Housing Protocol has contributed to more offenders, on release from prison, having access to appropriate housing and support. In 2003/04 40 per cent of people leaving prison went into direct access homeless hostels. By 2005/06 the number had fallen to 28 per cent with more people going into longer-term services. To continue making progress, new service specifications address barriers to accessing services. New service specifications for offender and homeless services require Supporting People service providers to work within the agreed protocol.
  - Remodelling a hostel service for homeless women with children to provide 15 dispersed units. This provides increased choice for service users and enables the service to provide for larger families including those with teenage or adult males.
- 154** Progress in changing services in other areas is slower. For example there has been no expansion of services to refugees, travellers or people with mental health problems where performance indicators show Leeds to have a high level of psychiatric care admissions. In a scheme providing services to people with learning disabilities, we found people being increasingly helped towards independence, but slowly and some distance to go before people are demonstrating real choices. The routine and staffing arrangements at one scheme are inflexible and continue to reflect an institutional approach. Of the 590 people with learning disabilities who receive housing-related support, 55 per cent live in an institution-like environment where five people or more are accommodated. Leeds Supporting People partnership is supporting the major, PFI funded, long-term Independent Living Project which has very good prospects of replacing outmoded institutional accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities with a mixture of self-contained and smaller accommodation. Supporting independent living requires a different approach to delivering housing-related support services in addition to changing the building.

### **Direction of travel of key performance indicators**

- 155 Key performance indicators show above average and improving performance. Over 98.6 per cent of service users in longer-term services are supported to establish and maintain independent living. Against 15 comparator councils Leeds performance ranked fourth for the first quarter of 2006/7 and shows a marginal improvement over the previous year. In short-term services more service users are moving on in a planned way than they did previously. Performance has steadily increased since 2004/05 and ranks as sixth against the 15 comparators.

### **Demonstrate improving value for money over time**

- 156 The programme can demonstrate improving value for money. Current services are all strategically relevant having been assessed as part of the service review and method statement processes. The unit cost of services shows a significant reduction between April 2003 and October 2006. Efficiency savings of £6.5 million have been generated through service review, decommissioning, remodelling and tendering. The majority of savings, £4.8 million, have been achieved against in-house council contracts and a further £1.7 million from external service providers. In addition, the quality of services has improved across the programme from a position where 355 services were operating below minimum standards to the current one where only four services continue to operate at that standard. However, more savings may have been achieved if full value for money assessments had been carried out on all in-house services. Service improvements have not been fully validated and there is no evidence of a clear ambition to achieve excellence in all services. Efficiencies enable service levels to be sustained with bi-annual allowances for inflation despite a shrinking budget.
- 157 Individual examples of improved value for money through procurement contribute towards the bigger picture. For example, competitive tendering of a direct access service resulted in a new contract being awarded to a voluntary sector provider who was able to demonstrate capacity to significantly improve the service. In addition, a saving of £265,000 was achieved for each year of the five-year contract. Procurement resulted in better services at a lower cost.

## **How does the Council manage performance?**

- 158 Drivers outweigh barriers to improvement. A number of positive factors drive improvement including clear, long-term aims, broad ranging plans that translate objectives into actions and robust contract monitoring arrangements. Strong performance management arrangements are in place and proposals have been approved to improve the range of information available. Move-on difficulties are being addressed. Service user involvement, a weakness of the programme, is recognised and effective action is being taken. Learning is a strength including developing good practice for others. Barriers include the lack of identification of resources to deliver action plans and the lack of a clear programme to continue service or sector review improvements.

## How good is the service's improvement planning?

- 159** The Council has set out clear, long-term aims and priorities for the Supporting People programme in its five-year strategy. These are challenging and co-ordinate well with other strategies, for example in working to achieve one of the Council's three main aims of narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged in Leeds and the rest of the community. The strategy also identifies shorter-term priorities for action; reducing the incidence of homelessness; increasing opportunities for independence for older people; promoting community safety; and creating more housing choices for people with learning difficulties. The programme has clear direction.
- 160** Plans translate objectives into a broad range of actions for the current year. These cover areas such as governance, performance management, strategic development, commissioning, equality and diversity and customer information. The Annual Plan focuses activity in the right areas, such as improving information on the Council's website and undertaking research into the need for a new service targeted at preventing unnecessary admissions to psychiatric care. It is supported by a lower level Service Plan which addresses more operational improvements such as the replacement of the IT system and the need to improve service user involvement. In general, areas in need of improvement are highlighted for action in the improvement plans.
- 161** The plans have limitations. The resources to deliver the plans and the individual actions within them are not identified. In addition, actions are not always linked to SMART targets. Without clearly identified resources, plans or actions may not be able to be delivered. The impact of actions cannot be properly assessed without relevant and measurable targets.
- 162** The methodology for ranking priorities is not clearly set out. Good background work has been carried out in assisting the determination of future commissioning priorities and action is progressing to consider what projects are necessary to deliver priorities. However, the system used to determine greatest and least priorities is not documented. Ranking is important both when additional funding is available for investment and when reductions need to be made from existing supply. Decisions therefore lack transparency.
- 163** Retraction arrangements have been agreed with social services although they are slow to shift full responsibility for funding to its proper source. Responsibility for £5.2 million worth of ineligible services will progressively move year-on-year to social services. The arrangement commenced in 2006/7 and will not be completed until 2010/11. Only £3 million additional funding will be realised by the programme with the remainder made up through swapping funding responsibility for other eligible services currently funded by social services. The impact is that funding remains locked into ineligible services for a long time and the Commissioning Body needs to ensure that funding swaps are only approved for priorities identified within the five-year strategy to ensure they are appropriate and supported by partners.

## 54 Leeds City Council Supporting People | What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?

- 164 Robust contract monitoring arrangements have been developed. Sound arrangements have been developed to ensure service providers comply with agreed service specifications. It includes a risk-based approach to ensure that services at greatest risk receive more frequent and detailed scrutiny. Contract monitoring arrangements will enable the programme to closely track performance.
- 165 Plans do not include any structured programme of service reviews to continue to deliver improvements, efficiencies and reshape services. Procurement is the tool intended to be used to deliver improved efficiencies. Contracts across client groups have been given a common expiry date to facilitate a sector-wide review on the renewal of contracts. In addition, there are early proposals to undertake a pilot exercise to provide additional floating support for older people which is not tied to property, and there is a clear understanding that services for people with learning disabilities will be part of the major Integrated Learning Project. However, these proposals are not captured in a wide-ranging and longer-term programme of service or sector reviews. Without such a programme, the benefits of planning, agreeing and communicating an agreed approach with service providers would be lost.
- 166 Individual performance is effectively linked to strategic aims and objectives. Staff have their performance assessed through the corporate Performance Appraisal and Development reviews. These are reviewed at six monthly intervals and link individual performance to targets and higher level objectives. Staff are therefore clear about the contribution they are expected to make.

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

- 167 Leadership of the programme is mixed. Positive aspects include setting a clear direction, reshaping services, delivering efficiency improvements, establishing sound procurement and performance monitoring arrangements and developing best practice. Less positive features include the failure to apply eligibility and value for money criteria across all services, delays in developing service user involvement and cohesive governance structures with the full confidence of all partners. As a result, the programme has developed well in some areas and not in others.
- 168 The Supporting People programme is engaged in corporate arrangements to ensure that the equality and diversity strategy is understood and implemented throughout the Council. This is primarily through an Equality and Community Cohesion Champions Board, which meets quarterly and has a high profile, being chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive and including representatives from all departments at management team level. This considers the Council's legislative responsibilities and responds to best practice. The Board is supported by an Equality Standard Operations Group, which includes representation from the Supporting People team. There are also clear arrangements for departments to contribute to the delivery of the strategy, through individual diversity plans which include the requirement to carry out impact assessments. Positively, performance is assessed and regularly reported.

- 169** The equality and diversity strategy includes disability, race and gender equality schemes, which have been expanded to cover other areas of marginalisation, such as religion and age, and this is available on line. The Council is taking action to raise awareness of equality and diversity by working with departments and including a diversity supplement in the Council's customer newsletter. The Council currently meets level 3 of the equality standard and has realistic targets to improve its performance bi-annually to achieve level 5 by 2010.
- 170** Service user involvement is improving rapidly. Accepting service user involvement as an area of under-performance, the Council has employed an officer specifically to develop this area. A reference group of service users has been established and an action plan put in place to deliver service user reference group priorities. The plan includes training to develop the ability of service users to understand and contribute to programme development and also includes proposed involvement with the governance structures by March 2007. The service user reference group has definite potential to improve their involvement and ability to influence and shape the programme.
- 171** Proposals to improve performance management arrangements are sound. Currently arrangements are well developed. Finance and risk management are strong including regular reporting. Key performance indicators are measured and reported. Targets are being reviewed to ensure they remain realistic and challenging. A suite of outcome-based indicators has recently been approved by the Commissioning Body. Proposed indicators clearly highlight areas of under supply and assist in determining priorities. They include indicators relating to services for older people who do not live in social housing and people with mental health problems who are re-admitted to psychiatric hospital. In addition, there are proposals to improve the quality of data submitted on work books. Key Performance indicator data has been validated by the external auditor. However, to ensure the quality of data used to collate figures a sample of 20 is to be audited by the team quarterly. Proposals will provide a better range of reliable information on the performance of the programme.
- 172** Financial management and risk management arrangements are strong. A register of risks to the effective delivery of the programme is maintained and regularly reviewed. Both are routinely reported to the Commissioning Body and Core Strategic Group. The programme operates within or close to budget and risks are managed effectively.
- 173** Ensuring service users move on through temporary accommodation is central to Supporting People partnership planning. An action plan is being developed through the Core Strategy Group in discussion with Arms Length Management Organisations to help address inappropriate exclusions. Contract specifications also address the issue of exclusions which will be checked through contract monitoring. Clear targets and performance measures are proposed to ensure there is good information on the throughput of services. Maximum lengths of stay are set for various different accommodation types and this will ensure information is readily available. Monitoring throughput and addressing inappropriate exclusions are key components in ensuring optimum use of short-term services.

- 174 Learning from and spreading good practice are strengths of the programme. There are a number of examples where Leeds Supporting People team is involved with others and benefiting from collaborating with neighbouring councils. Furthermore there are examples where Leeds Supporting People team is demonstrating a clear lead in setting and sharing good practice. These include the following.
- Leeds is active on regional groups to ensure they contribute and learn from collective action and good practice. Examples include decommissioning arrangements, benchmarking and joint research.
  - Leeds Supporting People partnership is adopting the regional outcomes measurement framework which has been developed by a neighbouring council in partnership with the regional group.
  - Internally, the team are learning from systems followed by Internal Audit. Quality assurance measures for administration arrangements are part of the service improvement plan.
  - The development of a robust competitive procurement system through the national Value Improvement Project. This work has culminated in the production of the Local Government Procurement Guide with Plymouth and the DCLG. This is now cited nationally as a model of best practice.
  - The programme has developed a clear framework for future commissioning. The Four Tier Model provides a basis for commissioning, and the service itself is clear what its purpose is.

## Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

- 175 Factors increasing the Council's capacity to improve outweigh those that limit it or act as a barrier. Team skills are enhanced in line with programme requirements, although some opportunities have been missed. Capacity has benefited from the establishment of the wider Strategic Commissioning Group and the size and structure of the team remain under review. New software will provide the programme with a more reliable and robust platform for administration. Procurement arrangements are strong and the programme is taking opportunities to attract inward investment. Significant funding is available for investment in 2007/08. However, the Council does not know the true extent of excess funding that remains locked into social services contracts and until this is addressed the level of re-investment available to meet unmet need remains uncertain.

## **Access to the appropriate skills, tools and finances to deliver improvement**

- 176** Skills are being effectively reviewed to ensure they are relevant and up-to-date, although some opportunities have been missed. The Supporting People team reviews performance and development in line with corporate requirements to enhance existing competencies. These identify gaps and development needs and opportunities. For example, a high proportion of the team has received project management training and Service Development Officers are all to be trained to NVQ Level 4 to prepare them for the increased workload around procurement. Staff are satisfied that they can access training opportunities they feel they need to develop their skills. However, although diversity training is now part of induction arrangements, a number of staff have fallen through the net and not had training. In addition, Service Development Officers have not had Adult and Child Protection training in order to raise awareness of the potential risks experienced by some vulnerable people. Systems are in place to develop skills although some opportunities are missed.
- 177** The size and structure of the team is being regularly reviewed to ensure it is well placed to deliver the changing needs of the programme. Over the past 18 months the team has expanded to complete the service review programme and address other issues. A further review of the team size and structure is planned shortly. Robust corporate human resources policies provide the framework for a team restructure. A high number of current staff are on short-term contracts or in temporary promotion positions. On the one hand, this provides flexibility to quickly implement proposals from the restructure. However, it also leave staff feeling insecure and increases the risk of losing key trained staff and expertise. A restructure will leave the team better placed for the future.
- 178** The team has increased in capacity to meet a peak in its workload. An additional six posts have been added to the team in the last 15 months to help deliver the programme and meet DCLG milestones. Two focused on service reviews and a service user involvement officer was employed in November 2006 specifically to improve engagement with service users.
- 179** Opportunities have been taken to integrate the team and access specialist support. The creation of the Strategic Commissioning group has enabled the Supporting People team to link up more effectively with wider services, skills and expertise. One officer has been seconded to the team to improve ICT arrangements. This assists in managing the peaks of work and accessing specialist expertise.
- 180** New software has been introduced to improve the support effective administration of the programme needs. It is tried and tested bespoke software that operates effectively elsewhere. Improvements will remove the need for manual interventions and integrate activities such as extracting DCLG submissions, issuing payments, and maintaining comprehensive records. Routine activities and access to information will improve.

## Financial and human resource planning

- 181 Funding is available in 2007/08 for investment in new services or existing services. The Council has made difficult decisions to improve its financial capacity. This was crucial to address a £1.7 million deficit projected for 2007/08. Savings have been achieved through individual service reviews and a reduction in eligible overhead levels, but the most significant impact has been the Council's decision to increase the budget for Social Services so that Supporting People grant funding ineligible learning disability services can be withdrawn. A surplus of £1.64 million is now projected in 2007/08 and this provides opportunities for the Council to invest in new services to meet the housing-related support needs of additional service users.
- 182 However, it is a significant weakness that value for money and accurate eligibility assessments for some contracts remain outstanding. The Supporting People programme continues to have difficulties identifying true costs and outputs of these services to determine eligibility. The Council has therefore not carried out robust value for money assessments of these services through reviews. The true extent of potential savings available within the programme is therefore unclear and additional savings have not been released for investment in new services to meet the housing-related support needs of additional service users.
- 183 Financial planning, generally, is strong. There is a clear separation of strategic and operational issues. Officers within the departmental finance team focus on the strategic element of financial management such as budget forecasting for current and future years with a view to identifying when funding will be released to commission new services. Finance officers within the Supporting People team focus on the core role of processing payments and administration of the charging policy. Reliable information is available for decision-making.

## Procurement

- 184 Procurement arrangements are in place and provide a sound platform for future commissioning. Both the commissioning framework with its five procurement criteria, procurement method statements and the Local Government Procurement Guide produced as part of the VIP project provide the basis for future decisions.
- 185 The PCT and the Council agreement to revise partnership arrangements in the context of the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement will provide a better basis for Supporting People partnership dialogue and partnership working. The decision to review commissioning arrangements in the context of the Local Area Agreement and wider partnerships will assist the joint commissioning plans for the procurement of Supporting People provider services.
- 186 Partners, including service providers, consider that the Supporting People programme has contributed to changing the culture on the way things are done. It is no longer a static environment in which to deliver services and a greater focus is placed on improvement, value for money and on outcomes to be achieved.

## **Investing, and attracting inward investment, to deliver improvement**

- 187** The Council is attracting inward investment. Examples include pooling resources with neighbouring councils to fund a regional co-ordinator post and securing additional funding from CLG to carry out a value improvement project to explore procurement options for services eligible for Supporting People. Funding is also attracted from partners and others to jointly procure some services, such as the award winning Care and Repair service, a wet hostel for women, and with Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to procure a floating support service for teenage parents and young people. Finally, Leeds Supporting People partnership has attracted funding from its PCT partner to support the administration of the programme. These opportunities have enhanced the programme and enabled more services to be delivered, more effectively to vulnerable people.

## **Summary**

- 188** On balance, Leeds Supporting People programme has promising prospects for improvement. It has a track record of delivering planned actions and significantly improving inherited services. There are clear aims and objectives for the programme underpinned by a number of broad ranging plans. Plans are tackling areas of difficulty and weaknesses such as the availability of move on accommodation. Good and improving performance management arrangements are in place. Procurement and contract monitoring arrangements are strong. New software is being introduced to address previous IT problems. Inward investment is being attracted to the programme and a strong learning culture has developed.
- 189** However, there are a number of areas where less progress has been made. The programme does not know how much grant remains locked into some contracts through continuing to fund activities that are ineligible or not value for money. Retraction arrangements have been agreed with social services although they are slow to shift full responsibility for funding to its proper source. Many service reviews took a long time to complete and there are no changes in the level of provision for some priority groups. There is no programme of service of sector reviews to continue the drive for improvements beyond contract monitoring arrangements. Plans do not identify the level or source of resources needed to deliver actions.

# Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

## Demographic information

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

**Table 3**

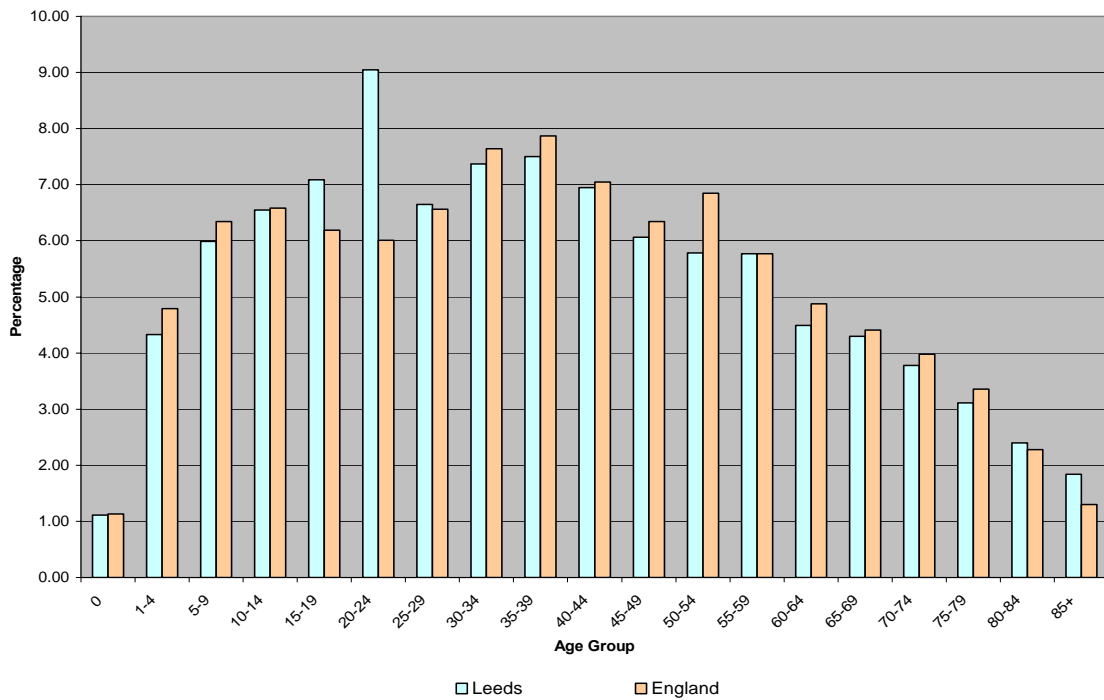
Measure	Leeds	England
Population (mid-2005) <sup>6</sup>	723,100	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2004)	17.7	18.5
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2004)	8.2	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) <sup>7</sup>	3.0	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) <sup>8</sup>	73	-

<sup>6</sup> Source: midyear population estimates (2005)

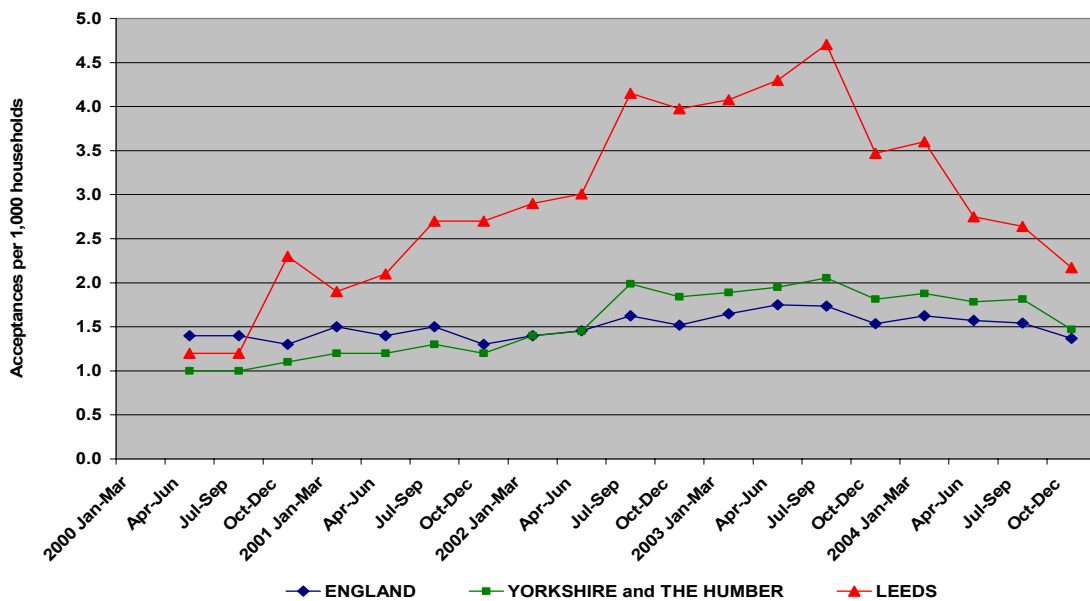
<sup>7</sup> Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (January 2007)

<sup>8</sup> Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

**Figure 2 Percentage of the population<sup>9</sup> in each age group compared with England**



**Figure 3 Households accepted as homeless between 2000 and 2004 compared with the region and England (acceptances per 1,000 households)**



<sup>9</sup> Source: midyear population estimates (2004)

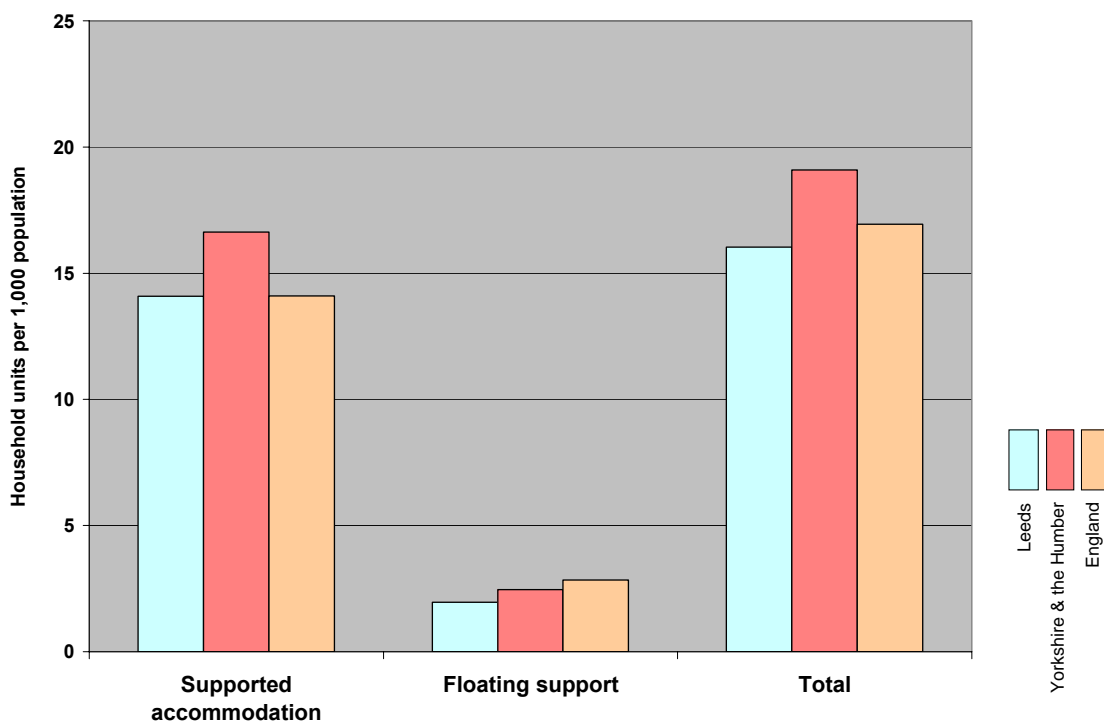
## Performance information

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

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

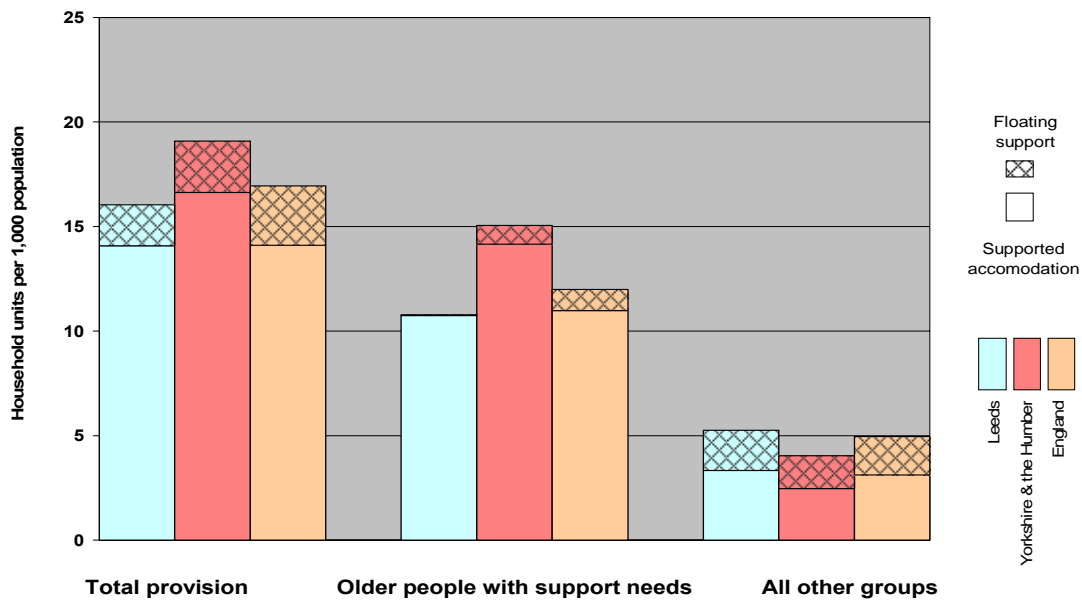
### Supporting People data

**Figure 4 Total service provision funded through Supporting People<sup>10</sup>**

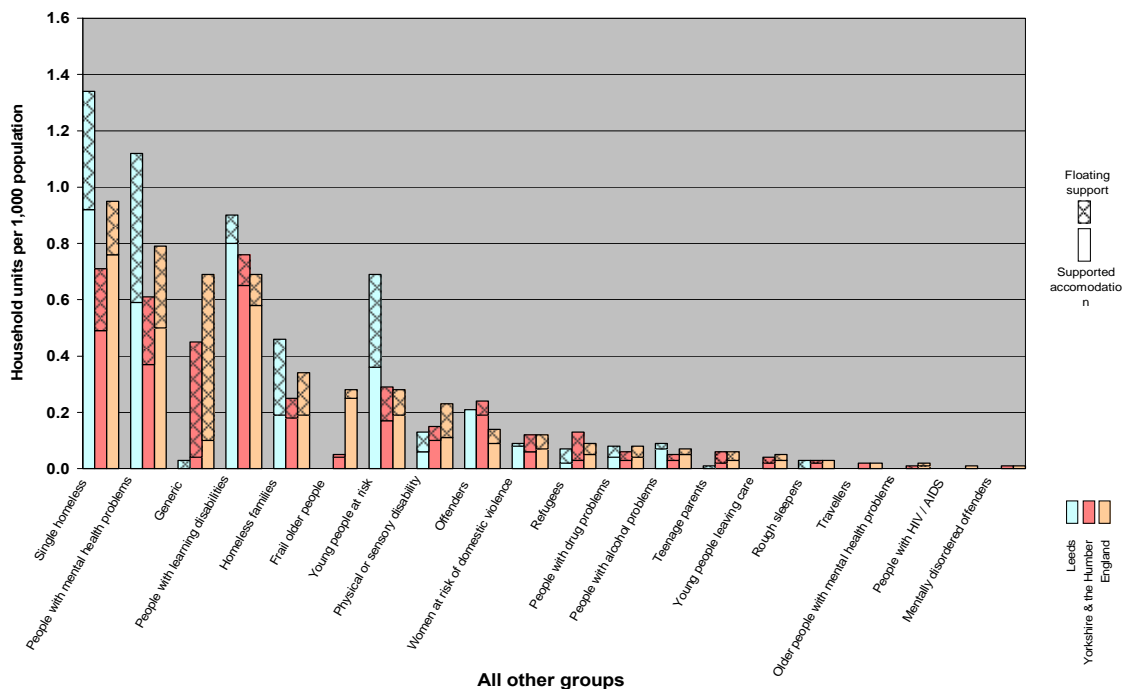


<sup>10</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

**Figure 5 Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England<sup>11</sup>**



**Figure 6 Services for other groups compared with the region and England<sup>12</sup>**



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

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

**Table 4 Funding for Supporting People<sup>13</sup>**

<b>Leeds</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>
Final Supporting People grant	£35,934,048	£35,347,269	£33,566,982
Pipeline allocation	£230,135	£416,763	£-
Administration grant	£186,431	£523,595	£523,670

**Table 5 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)<sup>14</sup>**

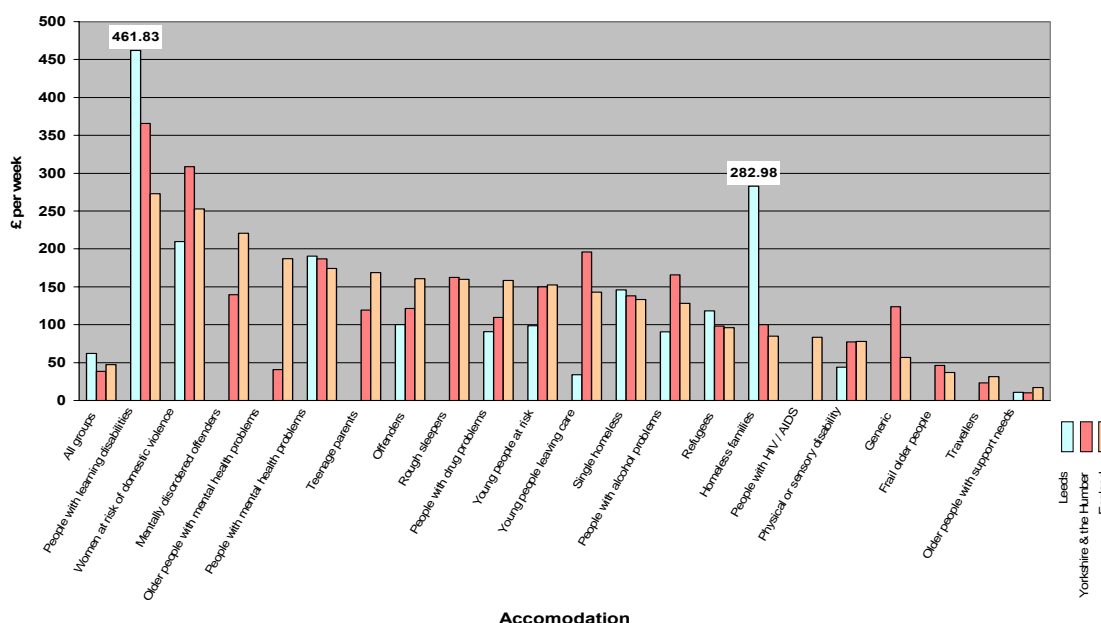
	<b>Per head of population</b>	<b>Per unit</b>	<b>Per unit excluding community alarms</b>	<b>Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing</b>
Leeds	£0.96	£46.43	£49.98	£123.04
Yorkshire and the Humber	£0.72	£25.38	£32.87	£100.47
England	£0.70	£28.30	£34.71	£76.37

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

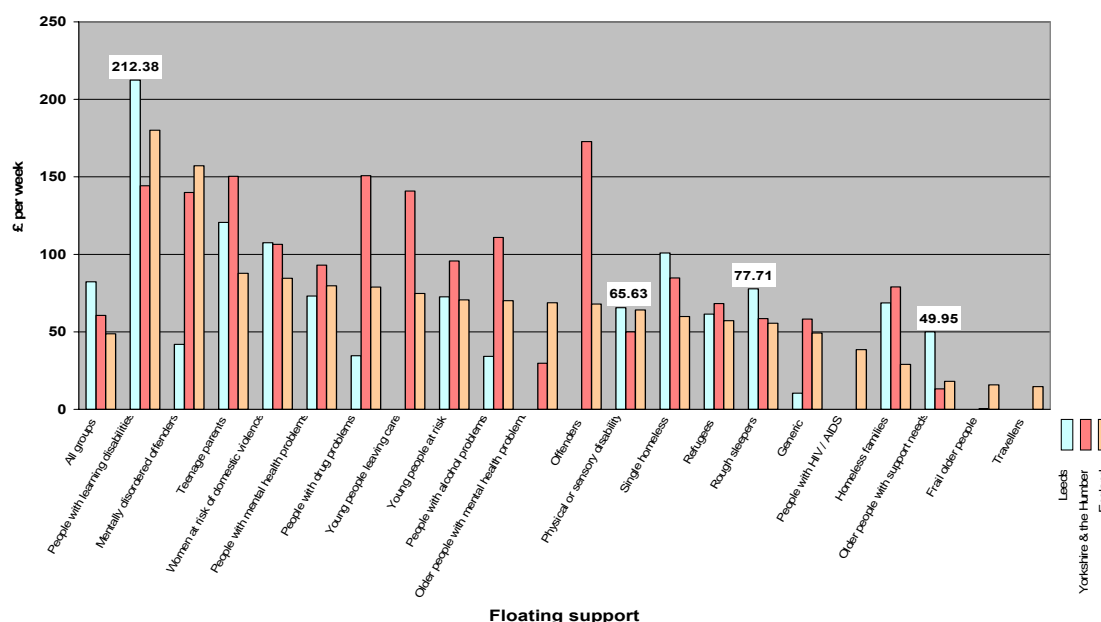
<sup>13</sup> Source: Grant allocations, ODPM

<sup>14</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003

**Figure 7 Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>15</sup>**



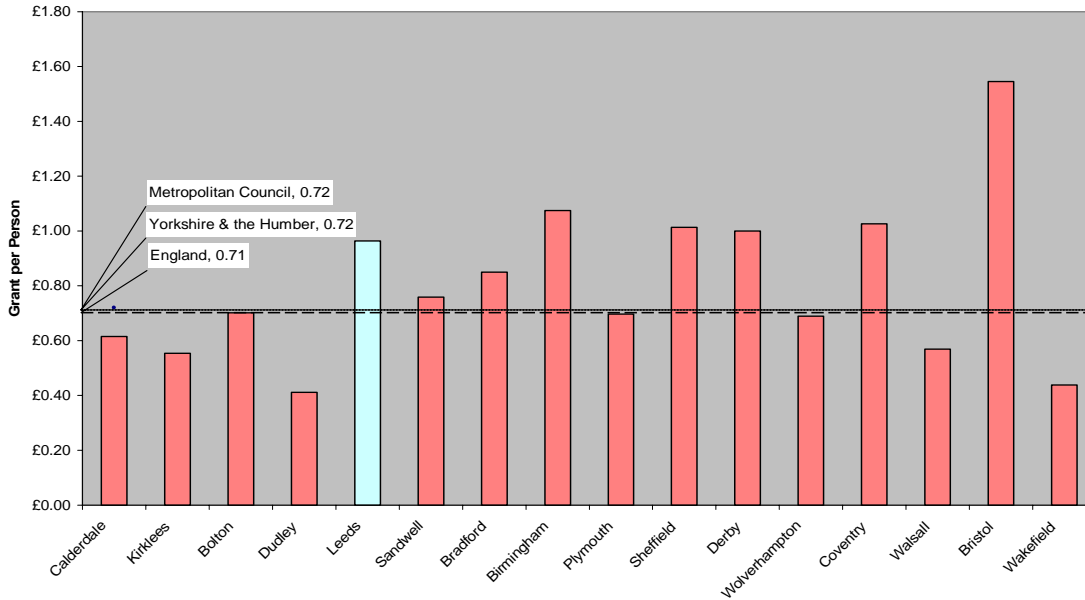
**Figure 8 Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>16</sup>**



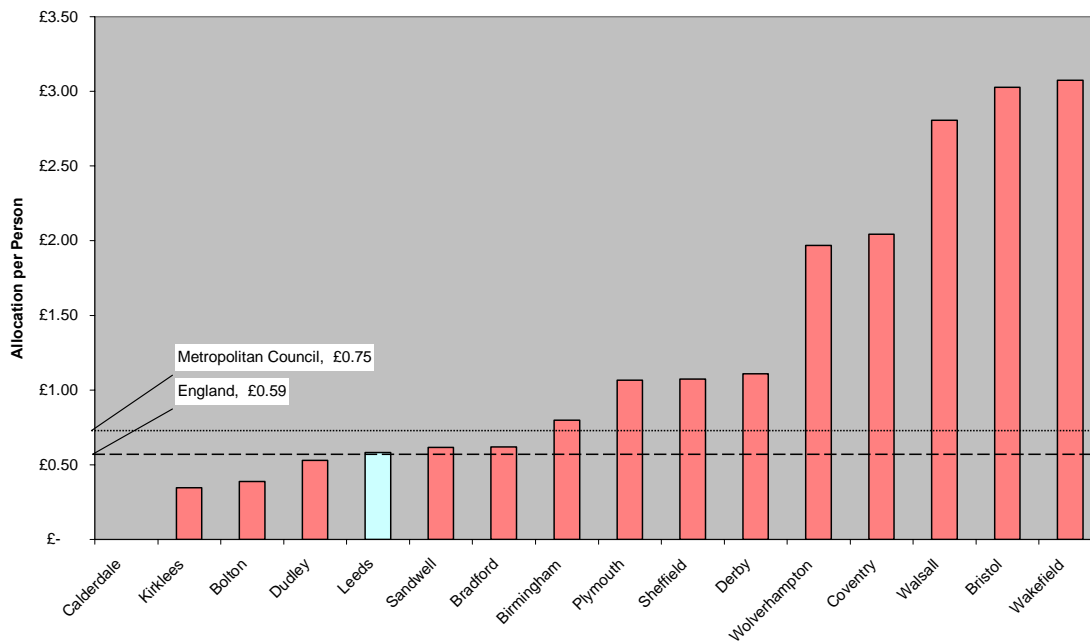
<sup>15</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

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

**Figure 9 Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours,<sup>17</sup> all metropolitan boroughs and all English councils (2004/05)**



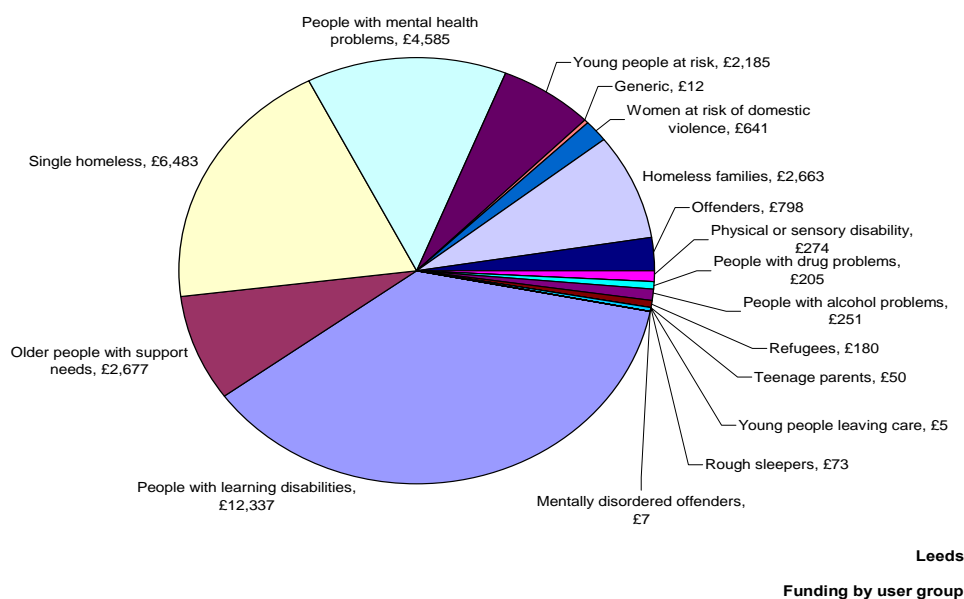
**Figure 10 Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours,<sup>18</sup> all metropolitan boroughs and all English councils**



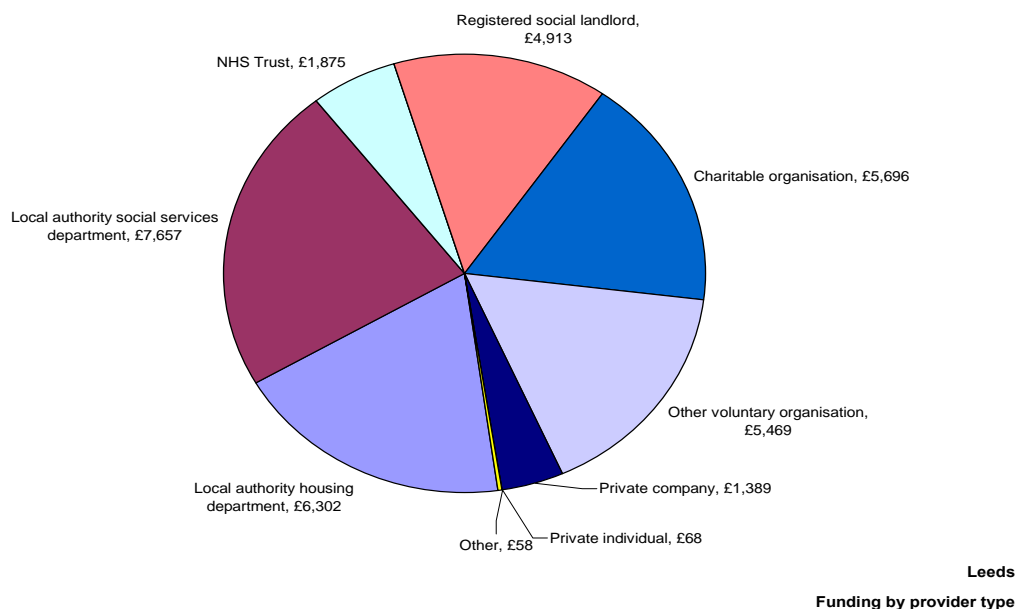
<sup>17</sup> A comparator group of similar councils.

<sup>18</sup> A comparator group of similar councils.

**Figure 11 Share of spending between user groups (£000s)<sup>19</sup>**



**Figure 12 Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)<sup>20</sup>**



<sup>19</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

<sup>20</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

**Table 6 Social Services star ratings November 2004**

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

	<b>Serving people well?</b>	<b>Prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Performance rating (CPA equivalent)</b>
Adults' Services	Most	Promising	☆☆
Children's Services	Most	Promising	(2)

## Social services performance indicators

**Table 7 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04**

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

Leeds	
Significantly above average (•••••)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31) Admissions of older people to residential/nursing care (C26) Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29) Older people helped to live at home (C32) Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54)
Above average (••••)	Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39) Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30)
Average (•••)	Admissions of supported residents aged 18 to 64 to residential/nursing care (C27) Delayed transfers of care (D41) Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that their opinions and preferences were always taken into account (D57)
Below average (••)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40) Emergency psychiatric re-admissions (A6) Employment, education and training for care leavers (A4) Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that they can contact social services easily (D58)
Significantly below average (•)	Percentage change on previous year in total emergency admissions to hospital (A5) Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31 March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51)

## Best value performance indicators

**Table 8 Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 compared with metropolitan boroughs**

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

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

## Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken

- 1 When we went on-site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on-site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. Our reality checks included:
  - a questionnaire survey which was sent to all service providers of housing-related support services;
  - focus groups for service providers, frontline staff, service users and neighbouring councils' Supporting People lead officers;
  - visits to supported housing schemes, to talk to service users, managers and frontline staff;
  - visits to a number of service user access points to test the level and extent of information available for service users;
  - observing meetings of the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group;
  - examination of a sample of completed service reviews and the complaints log;
  - telephone calls to test how easy it is to access services; and
  - interviews with a wide-range of stakeholders, including partners, councillors, managers and staff.

## Appendix 3 – 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)

### Four Tier Model

- 1 The Four Tier model organises commissioned services into four distinct but interdependent groups of services.
  - Prevention – services with a remit to intervene to prevent a crisis or homelessness.
  - Emergency – services that are responding to crisis or homelessness.
  - Resettlement 1 and 2 – supported housing and other support to help service users move on from emergency services and resettle people back into the wider community.
  - Sustainment – longer-term, open ended packages that enable people to sustain independent living.
- 2 Its aims are to:
  - stop the cycle of homelessness;
  - prevent crisis placements;
  - simplify the pattern of services; and
  - provide a clear role for housing support services.
- 3 The model provides clarity both for the service provider, referral agencies and the service user about the purpose of specific services. It shows how services fit together. Challenging throughput targets provide an emphasis on moving people through the various tiers from emergency to resettlement.
- 4 As part of this framework, the Council is working with local housing providers to remove inappropriate exclusions from lettings policies and practices that prevent vulnerable people accessing suitable housing.