

Supporting People Inspection Report

January 2006



# Supporting People

London Borough of Lambeth

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# Contents

Supporting People Inspections	4
<b>Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
Scoring the service	6
Recommendations	9
<b>Report</b>	<b>12</b>
Context	12
How good is the service?	15
What are the prospects for improvement to the service?	49
<b>Appendix 1 – Data appendix</b>	<b>56</b>
Demographic information	56
Performance information	57
<b>Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – Reality checks undertaken</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Appendix 4 – Positive practice</b>	<b>70</b>

## Supporting People Inspections

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

Within the Audit Commission, the Housing Inspectorate inspects and monitors the performance of a number of bodies and services. These include local authority housing departments, local authorities administering Supporting People programmes, arms length management organisations and housing associations. Our key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) set out the main issues which we consider when forming our judgements on the quality of services. The KLOEs can be found on the Audit Commission's website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing](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 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has published a number of consultation papers on the developing programme and a work plan setting out what local authorities and their partners will need to achieve in order to deliver the programme effectively. All the relevant papers for Supporting People can be found on the Supporting People k-web that can be accessed through the Supporting People website: [www.spkweb.org.uk](http://www.spkweb.org.uk)

## Summary

- 1 The London Borough of Lambeth is the largest of the inner-London boroughs and the fifth most densely populated authority in the country. The population of 268,500<sup>I</sup> is forecast to continue to rise over the coming years. The borough has a diverse community, with 38 per cent of the population from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.
- 2 The borough contains extremes of prosperity and deprivation and is ranked as the 23rd most deprived of the 354 English local authorities<sup>II</sup>.
- 3 Lambeth has a young age profile, with 45 per cent of the population aged between 20 and 40 and only nine per cent aged over 65 compared to 18.5 per cent nationally<sup>III</sup>.
- 4 There is a low level of home ownership in the borough (36 per cent) with much higher than average levels of social housing (42 per cent) and private rented housing (18 per cent)<sup>IV</sup>.
- 5 The Council comprises 63 councillors. Labour is the largest party with 29 seats, but the Council has been controlled by a joint Liberal Democrat (27 seats) and Conservative (7 seats) administration since May 2002. A leader and executive model governs the business of the Council.
- 6 The Council's net revenue budget for the year 2005/06 is £411 million, compared to £382 million in 2004/05. The adult social services budget in 2005/06 is £122 million, compared to £116 million in 2004/05. The Council employs just under 4,000 staff, excluding school staff.
- 7 The Council was assessed as a 'poor' authority by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2002 and again in 2003. This score was upgraded to 'weak' in December 2004.
- 8 The Council received £20,998,429 Supporting People grant in 2005/06 and carried a cumulative under-spend of £590,345 forward from the previous year. In addition, the Council received an administration grant of £349,114.
- 9 There are 72 different providers with 143 contracts, providing 316 Supporting People services in Lambeth. These services provide 6,578 units of supported accommodation (including 2,558 community alarms) and 752 units of floating support.
- 10 The London Borough of Lambeth was inspected in the third year of the Supporting People programme. This report therefore reflects the current context for the Council as it continues to deliver the programme and focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery, the value for money offered by the contracted services and the outcomes for vulnerable people.

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<sup>I</sup> Office of National Statistics (ONS); mid-year estimates 2003.

<sup>II</sup> ODPM Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2004: Average Ward Score.

<sup>III</sup> Census 2001.

<sup>IV</sup> Census 2001. Averages shown are for England.

## Scoring the service

- 11 We have assessed London Borough of Lambeth as providing a ‘good’ two-star service that has excellent prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

**Table 1 Scoring chart<sup>1</sup>:**

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

### *Audit Commission*

- 12 We have assessed the Council's administration of the Supporting People programme to be good due to the following.
- There are effective governance arrangements in place. The Commissioning Board has provided clear leadership and has shown a willingness to take strong decisions.
  - There is a skilled and experienced Supporting People team which has implemented the programme effectively and is well regarded by partners and service providers.
  - A comprehensive five-year strategy and action plan has been developed and agreed.

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

- There has been a focus on achieving value for money from the Commissioning Board and the Supporting People team. A value for money methodology has been developed and publicised, and identifiable savings and service improvements have been achieved.
- There is strong partnership working with a number of internal and external partners. Lambeth is actively involved in cross authority work, particularly with other south London boroughs.
- The SNAP (Support needs assessment and placement) team is providing an effective gateway into supported housing services, carrying out consistent assessments and improving the efficiency of placements.
- There is a good range of information for service users and providers, including information on the Council's website.
- There are sound financial management arrangements and payments to providers have been made on time.
- A savings plan is in place to address reductions in funding. Targets within the plan are being met.
- Local eligibility criteria have been agreed, following consultation with service providers.
- A 'Fairer Charging' policy is in place and has been widely promoted.
- Service providers are positive about the Council's implementation and administration of the programme.
- There are comprehensive procedures for service reviews and these include a focus on achieving value for money. The service review timetable is on schedule to complete ahead of the ODPM deadline.
- There have been positive outcomes for service users as a result of the service review programme and remodelling of schemes.
- An emergency and contingency plan is in place and a risk assessment and action plan is included in the five-year strategy.

**13** However, we found a number of less positive aspects of the programme.

- There has been inconsistent involvement in the Core Strategy Group from a number of partners and the group has not always had a clear role or focus.
- There is a need to further improve service user participation in the programme and to provide feedback on the outcomes of the reviews of their services.
- There is no system in place to disseminate examples of good practice collected through service reviews.
- There is a need to improve the quality of information given to telephone callers by the Council's frontline staff and the availability of information from public offices.

## 8 Supporting People | Summary

- The lack of move-on accommodation is limiting the efficient use of some of the supported accommodation in the borough.
- 14 We have judged that the Supporting People programme has excellent prospects for improvement due to the following.
- There is a strong track record of implementing the Supporting People programme. Governance and delivery arrangements were put in place at an early stage and key targets have been met.
  - There is strong leadership and ownership of the programme from senior officers, managers and the lead councillor.
  - The Supporting People team has the skills and experience to deliver further improvements. The early completion of the service review programme will also free up extra capacity.
  - The five-year strategy is comprehensive and sets out the future priorities for the programme, including specific commissioning priorities.
  - The Council has carried out a financial risk-assessment of the options for investment in current and future services, based on best and worst-case future funding scenarios.
  - The Council has shown a willingness to work with and learn from other organisations. There is particularly strong and effective partnership working with other south-east London local authorities.

## Recommendations

- 15 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>1</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 customers, service providers and councillors, and addresses all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

*R1 Improve access to services and standards of customer care by:*

- *ensuring that leaflets and information are widely distributed and available for existing and potential service users;*
- *reviewing the content of the website and expanding it by, for example, including minutes and agendas of meetings; and*
- *ensuring that all frontline staff can respond effectively to calls from people who may require housing support, and can signpost them appropriately.*

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- increased customer satisfaction; and
- Improving access to information and services for potential applicants.

The implementation of this recommendation would have **medium** impact and **low** costs.

This should be implemented by **March 2006**.

*R2 Improve the opportunities for service user involvement by:*

- *ensuring that a mechanism is in place to give service users from all client groups input into the governance of the programme;*
- *ensuring that there is a systematic approach to extend the involvement of service users from all client groups in the development of the programme and the delivery of services; and*
- *ensuring that service users receive feedback on action taken following service reviews or following other consultation activities.*

<sup>1</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 costs is over 5 per cent.

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- increased ability for the programme to learn from the experiences of service users;
- increased responsiveness of service providers to the needs of their clients; and
- increased customer satisfaction.

The implementation of this recommendation will have **medium** impact with **low** costs.

This should be implemented by **February 2006**.

*R3 Improve the effectiveness of governance arrangements by:*

- *completing the review of the Core Strategy Group and ensuring that its future format maximises involvement from key partners and provides effective support to the Commissioning Board;*
- *updating the Memorandum of Understanding and ensuring that its requirements, such as for the quorum, are followed and minuted; and*
- *promoting and explaining the Supporting People programme to the wider body of councillors.*

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- improved partnership working through the Core Strategy Group (or its successor);
- a reduced workload for the Commissioning Board;
- clarity of Commissioning Board procedures for all partners; and
- increasing awareness of, and support for, the Supporting People programme from Council members.

The implementation of this recommendation will have **medium** impact with **low** costs.

The first two elements of this recommendation should be implemented by **March 2006 and the third by June 2006** (following the election of the new Council).

*R4 Take action to address all other weaknesses identified in this report.*

- 16 We would like to thank the staff of London Borough of Lambeth and in particular David Worrall and Ann Skinner, who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

Dates of inspection: 19 and 24-28 October 2005

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# Report

## Context

### The locality

- 17 The London Borough of Lambeth is the largest of the inner-London boroughs. It is the fifth most densely populated authority in the country, with a population of 268,500<sup>I</sup> which is forecast to continue to rise over the coming years.
- 18 The borough has a very diverse community, with 38 per cent from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities – the seventh highest nationally<sup>II</sup>; the largest non-white groups being Black Caribbean (12.1 per cent of the population) and Black African (11.6 per cent). Approximately 132 languages are spoken in the borough, with Yoruba and Portuguese the most common among students after English<sup>III</sup>.
- 19 The borough contains extremes of prosperity and deprivation. The borough is ranked as the 23rd most deprived of the 354 English local authorities<sup>IV</sup>, with three wards in the ten per cent most deprived nationally. Unemployment, as measured by the claimant count, stood at 5.1 per cent in September 2005, above the London average of 3.4 per cent, and the national average of 2.3 per cent<sup>V</sup>.
- 20 Lambeth has a young age profile, with 45 per cent of the population aged between 20 and 40 (compared to 28 per cent nationally) and only nine per cent aged over 65 (compared to 18.5 per cent nationally)<sup>VI</sup>.
- 21 Despite this relatively young age profile, Census figures show that the number of Lambeth residents with a long-term limiting illness rose from 12 per cent in 1991 to 14 per cent in 2001, close to the London average of 15 per cent<sup>VII</sup>.
- 22 Lambeth has a low level of home ownership (36 per cent, compared to 68 per cent nationally) but has levels of social housing (42 per cent) and private rented housing (18 per cent) that are double the national averages<sup>VIII</sup>.

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<sup>I</sup> Office of National Statistics (ONS); mid-year estimates 2003.

<sup>II</sup> Census 2001 (ONS).

<sup>III</sup> Lambeth Pupil Survey, 2003.

<sup>IV</sup> ODPM Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2004: Average Ward Score.

<sup>V</sup> Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), NOMIS, September 2005.

<sup>VI</sup> Census 2001.

<sup>VII</sup> Census 2001.

<sup>VIII</sup> Census 2001. Averages shown are for England.

## Lambeth Council

- 23 The Council comprises 63 councillors. Labour is the largest party with 29 seats, but the Council has been controlled by a joint Liberal Democrat (27 seats) and Conservative (7 seats) administration since May 2002. A leader and executive model governs the business of the Council. There is an overview and scrutiny committee with four cross-cutting sub-committees, including the Housing and Adult Social Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee. There are also five local area committees.
- 24 The Council's net revenue budget for the year 2005/06 is £411 million, compared to £382 million in 2004/05. The adult social services budget in 2005/06 is £122 million, compared to £116 million in 2004/05.
- 25 The Council employs just under 4,000 staff, excluding school staff. There are seven departments within the Council, including a new 'Adults and Community Services' department which includes the Supporting People team.
- 26 The Council was assessed as a 'poor' authority by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2002 and again in 2003. This score was upgraded to 'weak' in December 2004.
- 27 The Council's care services were rated as one-star (out of a possible three) by CSCI in November 2004. CSCI found that the Council's adult social services were 'serving some people well', with 'promising prospects for improvement'.
- 28 The borough's Housing Strategy and its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan have both been rated as 'fit for purpose' by the Government Office for London (GOL).
- 29 The Council and the Local Strategic Partnership ('Lambeth First') have agreed a Community Strategy 2004-2015 with seven themes. These are:
- creating a cleaner and greener environment;
  - making safer communities;
  - investing in children and young people;
  - better homes and sustainable communities;
  - encouraging enterprise, employment skills and culture;
  - supporting healthy communities; and
  - delivering the strategy for our customers.
- 30 The 'Lambeth Improvement Plan' sets out the Council's plans for the next three years to 2008. It details what the Council will do to deliver its parts of the Community Strategy and the key priorities of the Council. This plan replaces the CPA Recovery Plan.

## The service

- 31 The Council acts as the Administering Local Authority (ALA) for the development and delivery of the Supporting People programme in its area.

- 32 The Supporting People programme is designed to meet the housing related support needs of vulnerable people, including homeless people, older people with support needs, people with a learning disability, people with mental health problems, those with substance misuse problems, refugees, travellers and ex-offenders.
- 33 Lambeth's shadow Supporting People strategy was produced in 2002 and evaluated by the ODPM as 'good' overall, with the content rated 'excellent'.
- 34 A five-year strategy for 2005-2010 has now been produced. This includes the Council's mission statement for the Supporting People programme in the borough:

*'To improve the health, well-being and quality of life for vulnerable residents of Lambeth by targeting efficiently a wide range of responsive, innovative and cost effective housing-related support services. Services will be developed through partnerships in response to assessed local need and aim to promote choice, independence and diversity. We will ensure the effective delivery of the Supporting People programme in line with national and local strategic objectives.'*<sup>1</sup>

- 35 There are five strategic objectives within the five-year strategy:
- promoting and sustaining independence;
  - investing resources to meet identified need;
  - engaging with users and providers;
  - improving access to Supporting People services; and
  - partnership working and joint commissioning.
- 36 The total amount of Supporting People grant available to the Council in 2005/06 is £20,998,429 plus a cumulative under-spend of £590,345 carried forward from the previous year. In addition, the Council received an administration grant of £349,114 to fulfil its role as the administering authority. An additional £408,318 was allocated by the Council in 2005/06 to cover administrative costs (and sums of £350,807 in 2003/04 and £353,022 in 2004/05).
- 37 There are 72 different providers with 143 contracts, providing 316 Supporting People services in Lambeth. These services provide 6,578 units of supported accommodation (including 2,558 community alarms) and 752 units of floating support. In 2004/05 there were 53 cross authority services and 43 jointly-commissioned services.
- 38 The breakdown of spending across client groups in November 2003<sup>II</sup> was:
- 30.2 per cent for single homeless people;
  - 18.7 per cent for people with mental health problems;
  - 7.8 per cent for older people with support needs;
  - 5.9 per cent for people with alcohol problems;

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<sup>I</sup> 'Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010', L.B. Lambeth.

<sup>II</sup> ODPM 'platinum cut' figures, November 2003.

- 5.7 per cent for rough sleepers;
- 5.7 per cent for people with learning disabilities;
- 4.6 per cent for offenders;
- 4.2 per cent for women at risk of domestic violence;
- 3.8 per cent for generic services;
- 3.6 per cent for young people at risk;
- 2.1 per cent for frail older people; and
- under 2 per cent for all other groups.

39 The London Borough of Lambeth was inspected in the third year of the programme. This report therefore reflects the current context for the Council as it continues to deliver the programme and focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery, the value for money offered by the contracted services and the outcomes for vulnerable people.

## How good is the service?

40 The assessment was based upon the following key issues:

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

### Governance

41 Governance arrangements for the Supporting People programme in Lambeth were established at an early stage and are generally working well. The Commissioning Board is a strong body which has taken difficult decisions, with full engagement from both health and probation partners. The Core Strategy Group is also well-established and includes representatives of service providers. It also has a number of sub-groups which have contributed effectively to the development of the five-year strategy. However, the Core Strategy Group has had inconsistent involvement from a number of partners and it has not always had a clear role or focus. Lambeth is actively involved in cross authority work, particularly with other south London boroughs. The Accountable Officer has been effective in championing the programme and there is strong commitment to the programme from senior officers and the Council's portfolio holder.

- 42 The ODPM has set out the following structural arrangements for the governance, development and delivery of the Supporting People programme:
- Accountable Officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process;
  - 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; and
  - Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.
- 43 Supporting People commissioning bodies are a requirement under grant conditions for non-excellent authorities and must have senior representation from the administering local authority, the local health services (usually one representative from each primary care trust) and the area probation service. In two tier areas each district council is entitled to one representative. Each named representative has one vote, although the administering local authority has a veto where there is a demonstrable financial risk to the administering local authority.

#### **Commissioning Board (Commissioning Body)**

- 44 Lambeth's Commissioning Body, known as a 'Commissioning Board', was set up in 2002. It meets every six weeks and has six members:
- **Council:** Executive Director, Adults and Community Services (Chair)  
Assistant Director, Adults and Community Services (Accountable Officer)  
Divisional Director of Housing (SP champion within Housing Department);
  - **Lambeth Primary Care Trust:** Assistant Director of Strategy and Commissioning;
  - **Probation:** Assistant Chief Probation Officer; and
  - **Lambeth Local Strategic Partnership (LSP):** Head of Community Safety (Lambeth Police).
- 45 Meetings are also attended by the Lead Officer (Head of Supporting People) as an observer, and other staff as required.
- 46 The Commissioning Board has appropriate levels of senior representation from the Council, health and probation sectors, plus representation from the LSP, which provides a link to the wider community strategy. The Board is strongly chaired by the Executive Director, Adults and Community Services (who was also acting Chief Executive at the time of the inspection).

- 47 All partner organisations consider that an effective partnership has developed. There has been a high level of attendance and involvement by health and probation partners; the Primary Care trust (PCT) has attended 11 of the 12 most recent meetings and Probation has attended ten (but with four different representatives). Although attendance has been high, the use of substitute members has sometimes limited the consistency and seniority of representation. However, arrangements that should ensure more consistent attendance by the above post-holders have recently been put in place. For example, a new permanent Assistant Chief Probation Officer has been appointed and has joined the Commissioning Board.
- 48 Clear terms of reference for the Commissioning Board were agreed in 2004 and have recently been updated. Conflict of interest procedures are also in place.
- 49 A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by all members, although this needs updating to reflect the current membership. The Memorandum covers issues such as the quorum, decision making and voting rights. The Probation, Health and Council partner representatives have voting rights and the quorum consists of 'all of the Representatives'. However, three of the last 12 Board meetings have not been attended by all partners, and so were inquorate according to the conditions set out in the Memorandum - but this is not noted in the minutes of those meetings. The Council has stated that it will update the Memorandum to address these issues and ensure that future minutes note when a meeting is inquorate.
- 50 Members of the Board consider it to be strong, inclusive and business-like, with open and frank discussions. It is expected that decisions will be made by consensus, and it has not yet been necessary for a vote to be taken. The Board is supported by officers from the Supporting People team who provide detailed and comprehensive reports.
- 51 There is evidence of the Board taking a number of difficult decisions, by consensus. For example, decisions have been taken to decommission services that are not considered to be effective or strategically relevant. In these cases, the Board has also considered the implications for service users if schemes are to be closed and ensured that safeguards are in place to re-house them. Although the Board has approved all decommissioning proposals, it has provided a challenge to the Supporting People team's recommendations when appropriate.
- 52 Meetings initially concentrated on operational issues, reflecting the requirements of the early implementation phase of the programme. In 2004 the Board began to take a more strategic role, particularly with its work in developing the five-year strategy and considering future service provision. For example, a Board away-day was held in May 2005 to consider how the five-year strategy will be delivered. This included SWOT<sup>1</sup> analyses of governance and partnerships, user involvement, value for money, finance and contracts. This was a useful exercise which led to a number of actions to take these issues forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

- 53 Examination of papers presented to the Commissioning Board, minutes of meetings and interviews with Commissioning Board members confirmed that the group provides effective strategic leadership. For example, the September 2005 meeting considered a risk assessment of the options for future investment in services, against the background of continued reductions in Supporting People grant. An outcome of this was an agreement in principle to fund four pilot projects at a total cost of £237,000 and a newly commissioned extra-care scheme with a Supporting People contribution of £88,000.

### **Core Strategy Group**

- 54 The Core Strategy Group was established at an early stage in Lambeth, meeting regularly since 2001. The Group has a large membership, with 34 members listed, including 22 Council employees. There is a smaller 'core' membership which includes two provider representatives; the PCT; Probation; and Lambeth Crime Prevention Trust.
- 55 Terms of reference are in place for the Group and were last updated in June 2005. The Group meets every six weeks, prior to the Commissioning Board.
- 56 The Core Strategy Group has regularly looked at key issues including user involvement and move-on accommodation. The Group acted as a steering group for the development of the five-year strategy, with a number of strategy sub-groups for specific client groups (with provider representation) carrying out useful work and feeding into the final strategy. The Group now receives formal reports of Supporting People performance against performance indicators, via a 'Performance Monitor'. However, this is a recent development, with the first quarterly performance report considered at the August 2005 meeting. Some development of the Monitor has been requested by members, such as the inclusion of 'traffic light' indicators.
- 57 There has been patchy or poor attendance by some partners at Core Strategy Group meetings, including the PCT, Probation, Youth Offending Team (YOT) and housing neighbourhoods. Total attendance at the last 11 meetings (September 2003 - September 2005) has varied from 7-12, with the majority being Council officers. The PCT has been represented at two meetings (and none since November 2003) and Probation at four meetings. Links with these partners is however maintained through other strategy groups, joint commissioning groups and partnership boards.
- 58 Although attendance by the PCT is sporadic, senior PCT managers believe that the various mechanisms in place allow for continuous debate and discussion. They consider that the views and priorities of the PCT and other partners are taken into account, and that much of the work is done on the ground outside of the Core Strategy Group. This is evidenced through the many work and action plans.

- 59 Other partners, such as teenage pregnancy services and learning disability services, also stated that they feel well integrated into the governance arrangements via the Core Strategy Group and its sub-groups. The view of commissioning managers we interviewed was that the Lambeth Core Strategy Group compares favourably with other boroughs which they cover. However, there is a view that Children's Services are not adequately represented on the Group - although this is being addressed through the current review of membership (see below).
- 60 The two elected provider representatives have a good record of attendance at the Core Strategy Group. They will raise issues brought to their attention by Lambeth providers and give feedback during the closed provider session at the Three-Borough Provider Forum (see 'Delivery arrangements', below). However, there is not a clear systematic procedure for providers to raise issues or receive feedback.
- 61 The Council is in the process of transforming the Core Strategy Group into a 'Housing Partnership for Vulnerable People'. This will enhance the Group's status by placing it on a par with the other partnership boards (such as the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board), which agree commissioning proposals for client groups. This transformation is welcomed by partners as it brings Supporting People formally into the LSP structure and forges closer links with other partnerships, such as the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- 62 The membership and chairing of the Group is being changed to match the new role. For example, the Group is currently chaired by the Assistant Director of Adult Services, but the Housing Partnership for Vulnerable People will be chaired by the Divisional Director of Housing. Membership is likely to be extended to include the YOT, young people's services and the police. These changes are welcomed by partner organisations. This is a sensible development which is likely to address the present inconsistency of attendance and clarify the role of the Group.
- 63 There is currently no mechanism for user involvement in the Core Strategy Group, however plans are in place to develop a user engagement panel, which will feed into the Housing Partnership for Vulnerable People (see 'Service user involvement' below).

#### **Accountable Officer**

- 64 The Assistant Director of Adults and Community Services is the Accountable Officer for Supporting People; he attends the Commissioning Board and is chair of the Core Strategy Group. He also directly line manages the Head of Supporting People and reports to the Executive Director - who is chair of the Commissioning Board. These links ensure that he is well integrated into the governance structures and well informed about the delivery of the programme.
- 65 The Accountable Officer is clear about his role and responsibilities; he acts as a 'champion' for Supporting People within and outside the authority and provides an essential link to other key strategies.

- 66 The Accountable Officer does not have line management responsibility for any services funded by Supporting People; this avoids potential conflicts of interests.

### **Corporate commitment**

- 67 There is a clear corporate commitment to the programme from councillors and senior officers, and an understanding of the Council's responsibilities in administering the programme. The Council has given substantial financial support over the first three years of the programme to ensure that a strong and skilled team has been recruited and retained (see 'Delivery arrangements' below). The Council's Executive receives periodic reports and a member of the Executive holds the Supporting People portfolio and reports to the Executive on performance. The portfolio holder is well informed about progress through regular meetings with key officers.
- 68 Strong links exist with the local strategic partnership - Lambeth First. An LSP representative sits on the Commissioning Board and there are a number of other links through senior officers, partner organisations and partnership boards.
- 69 There is scope to strengthen awareness of the Supporting People programme across the wider body of councillors. Council members are generally aware of certain high profile issues, such as the review of sheltered housing, but less aware of other issues or the full extent of the programme. Methods of increasing awareness among councillors should be considered, such as publicity packs or a road-show.

### **Delivery arrangements**

- 70 The Council has established effective delivery arrangements for the programme. A skilled and well-resourced Supporting People team was set up at an early stage and is valued by partners and providers. Local eligibility criteria have been agreed and a steady state contract has been developed with input from providers.
- 71 There are robust systems for financial management and monitoring service providers. Payments to providers are made on time and a 'Fairer Charging' policy is in place.
- 72 Relationships with providers and partners are good and there has been constructive working with other local authorities.
- 73 The five-year Supporting People strategy is comprehensive and was developed with input from stakeholders. The strategy has identified gaps in provision and future priorities. However, financial pressures caused by the reduction in funding mean that few new services have been commissioned, although a number of schemes have been remodelled.
- 74 The shortage of move-on accommodation is an obstacle to the effective use of existing provision, although there are plans in place to address this and some actions have already been taken.

## Supporting People team

- 75** The Council was keen to ensure that the programme was set up early to ensure it could meet the requirements of the ODPM. The Supporting People team was formed in 2001 and became a Business Unit in April 2003.
- 76** The Council invested its own resources in each of the first three years to supplement the administration grant - an additional £408,318 was allocated by the Council in 2005/06. This investment has resulted in a strong and skilled team which has had the capacity to implement the programme effectively. However, this level of investment may not be sustainable in the longer term (see 'Does the service have the capacity to improve' later in this report).
- 77** The team has 15 substantive posts, led by a Business Unit Manager (the 'Head of Supporting People'). The other posts are:
- a team manager and administrator;
  - a service review team of five, including a manager;
  - a contracts monitoring team of three, including a manager;
  - a finance manager and finance officer; and
  - a planning and commissioning manager and project officer.
- 78** There are also three temporary posts within the team: a strategy co-ordinator; projects officer; and a service review officer working specifically on reviews of sheltered housing.
- 79** Leadership of the team is strong. The lead officer has considerable experience and is a member of the ODPM stakeholder group; this officer takes a lead on strategic and governance issues. An experienced team manager is responsible for much of the day-to-day delivery of the programme.
- 80** We received consistently strong feedback on the team's effectiveness in delivering the Supporting People programme from partners, providers and other stakeholders. For example, we carried out a survey of the 72 service providers and received 21 responses (29 per cent). The survey found that:
- 95 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the provision of information about Supporting People for users and applicants;
  - 100 per cent were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the arrangements for involving providers in the delivery and development of the programme; and
  - 95 per cent were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the advice and support available to providers from the Council.
- 81** Providers we spoke to that are working with more than one authority considered Lambeth to be more advanced in implementing the programme, and to have a more 'business like' approach. There were also positive views of the team by internal partners, including housing.

- 82 There are effective performance management arrangements in place (see 'How does the service manage performance', below) and the team has a clear annual work programme with appropriate prioritisation of tasks, and targets which are monitored and reviewed.

### **Eligibility criteria**

- 83 Lambeth has appropriate local eligibility criteria in place. The criteria were first developed in 2004, following consultation with providers, and benchmarked with other boroughs through the sub-regional and Association of London Government (ALG) strategic forums.
- 84 The eligibility criteria are contained in the five-year strategy that was widely consulted upon, including consultation at a Three-Borough Provider Forum meeting in October 2004. The criteria were reviewed and updated in 2005 to incorporate examples of good practice from another authority.
- 85 The eligibility criteria are published on the Council's website. A short version of the criteria has also been produced, to ensure its principles are readily understood. We consider this to be good practice.
- 86 Our provider survey found that 80 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's grant eligibility criteria. Fifteen per cent were dissatisfied and five per cent (one provider) very dissatisfied.

### **Contracts**

- 87 All interim contracts have been signed. A significant amount of work has gone into designing and implementing the steady state contractual arrangements. Senior managers wanted a standard contract that was flexible and could be used to incorporate the views of each provider. The Council has looked at best practice from other authorities, consulted with providers and involved the chair of the Three-Borough Provider Forum.
- 88 A contract pro-forma is now in place and providers are in the process of completing individual contracts. Steady state contracts will be issued to 'core services' once the announcement of future funding arrangements has been made by the ODPM. This is a sensible and pragmatic approach.
- 89 Our provider survey found that 84 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's contract negotiation arrangements.

### **Development of the five-year strategy**

- 90 Administering local authorities were expected to produce a shadow supporting people strategy to cover the early years of implementation. Lambeth's shadow strategy was produced in 2002 and was widely disseminated. The shadow strategy was rated 'good' overall by the ODPM, with the content rated as 'excellent'.

- 91 The shadow strategy noted the need to expand floating support and to increase the supply of move-on accommodation for hostels and refuges. A further key issue identified by the Council was the outdated nature of sheltered housing in the borough.
- 92 Authorities were then required to develop a five-year supporting people strategy (2005-2010) and submit this to the ODPM by March 2005. Lambeth's strategy was approved by the Council's Executive and submitted to the ODPM in March 2005.
- 93 In developing the five-year strategy, authorities were expected to involve and consult their partners, service users and other stakeholders, and to analyse the levels of supply and need for housing support in their areas.
- 94 In Lambeth, the Core Strategy Group acted as a steering group for the development of the five-year strategy. A wide range of consultation and strategy sub-groups for specific client groups fed into the strategy. These included provider representatives. There was also considerable user consultation during the development of the strategy, including questionnaires, focus groups and individual meetings.
- 95 The Council put in additional staff resources to co-ordinate and drive the strategy implementation plan. A needs analysis was commissioned from experienced consultants in 2004 and this produced comprehensive data.
- 96 A draft of the five-year strategy was circulated to providers for comment and a number of providers told us that their comments had been taken on board.
- 97 The Council is aware that needs mapping is an ongoing process and has firm plans in place to update and strengthen the information through the SNAP (Support needs assessment and placement) team. The SNAP team acts as a gateway to Supporting People-funded services and is therefore well placed to gather information on the housing support needs of the people it assesses. This information is then passed to the Supporting People team (see also 'Access to services and information' later in this report).
- 98 The Council has produced a strong strategy and action plan, supported by needs and supply information that is generally robust. The final strategy has identified the following gaps in housing support that need to be addressed:
  - models of floating support appropriate to particular client groups;
  - services for 'excluded groups';
  - services for young people across all relevant client groups; and
  - services for people with multiple and/or complex needs.

- 99 Partners agree with the priorities in the five-year strategy. Provider representatives rated Lambeth's five-year strategy and its approach to needs mapping highly. In particular, they welcomed a willingness by the Council to amend the strategy in response to survey results. For example, the Council was willing to recognise that some people with mental health problems prefer to remain in shared housing, rather than to live in self-contained housing, and built flexibility to allow for this into the strategy.
- 100 There are clear links between the five-year strategy and other strategies. For example, an updated Homelessness Strategy for 2005-10 was approved by the Executive in July 2005. This has strong and consistent links with the five-year Supporting People strategy, including links through the work of the SNAP team, which is assessing the support needs of statutorily homeless people.

### **Delivery of the five-year strategy**

- 101 The Council and its partners have begun to address a number of priorities identified in the five-year strategy. A number of significant issues remain to be tackled, including the need for more move-on accommodation and the inappropriateness of some sheltered housing, but good progress has been made in addressing these.
- 102 For example, there is a particularly high level of teenage pregnancy in Lambeth. The borough's response is being addressed through the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board, which the Supporting People team attends. The gaps in housing support have been recognised and Supporting People funding has been used to commission a teenage pregnancy floating support scheme, which opened in June 2005, and to fund a pipeline scheme for teenage parents. This has resulted in a significant increase in the percentage spend on this client group since 2003/04.
- 103 Another priority area for change is sheltered housing for older people. The Council is aware that its present stock is not 'fit for purpose' as much of it is outdated or unsuitable and does not meet the aspirations of many older people with support needs. It is also likely to be uneconomical to renovate much of the present stock. These issues are being addressed in a systematic and comprehensive manner. An all-party 'Commission' has been set up which includes Supporting People, the housing department and service users; this will make recommendations to the Council on the way forward, including the levels of floating support, sheltered and extra-care housing required.
- 104 Service reviews of the 88 Supporting People funded services for older people are underway and this includes a programme of resident consultation events. We attended one of these events and found the consultation was open and comprehensive – giving residents the opportunity to comment, often critically, on their scheme and the level of support received.

- 105 A 'bricks and mortar' review of housing stock is also taking place, with input from the Supporting People team. The outcomes of this review and the service reviews will feed into the Commission. Past reviews of sheltered housing have not led to decisive action, but our interviews with senior officers and councillors showed a high level of commitment to taking firm decisions following the Commission's recommendations.
- 106 The need to address the shortage of move-on accommodation is also a priority within the five-year strategy. This problem is common across inner-London boroughs and causes significant difficulties for service providers, who are unable to move people to more appropriate accommodation and create vacancies for new residents. Our survey of Lambeth's service providers found that 50 per cent were either dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied, with the arrangements for accessing appropriate and timely move-on accommodation for service users. This was the most negative response received to the survey questions. Staff of service providers we spoke to during our visits confirmed that some residents are ready to be moved, but suitable accommodation is not available.
- 107 The Council has plans to address the shortage of move-on accommodation and some actions have already been taken. A move-on needs survey has been conducted and an action plan has been developed. A working group that looks at increasing options for move-on accommodation has been set up. The group is made up of partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. Achievements made by the group include an agreement to increase the number of annual social lettings for move-on clients to 80, and facilitating move-on accommodation in the private sector through 'Lettings First', a partnership between Lambeth's housing department and a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).
- 108 The lack of move-on accommodation for offenders has been a particular obstacle. In response to this, a floating support service for offenders moving in to private lettings has been agreed by the Commissioning Board. The imminent recruitment of a probation housing worker post, to work within the SNAP team, will also facilitate move-on among offenders.
- 109 Service providers are involved in the move-on strategy group and view it as a shared challenge. One provider and Homeless Link (an umbrella homelessness organisation) nominated Lambeth to work with them to pilot and evaluate a move-on plan to unblock hostel beds for homeless people. This project has been awarded £184,000 from the Government's Homelessness Innovation Fund. Lambeth was chosen from a number of authorities to be one of ten pilot areas for the project.
- 110 The formation of the SNAP team forms part of the Council's response to the lack of move-on accommodation. The team has increased the suitability of placements into supported housing and holds information on vacancies in supported and independent accommodation (see 'Access to services and information' below for further details). The SNAP team has also begun to compile a picture of need which is being collated quarterly and used to inform service delivery.

- 111** There are, however, also areas where delivery of the strategy is slow or has significant obstacles to overcome. The Commissioning Board agreed that due to the risks to the current budget and uncertainty over next year's grant, few new services could be commissioned in 2005/06 until future funding was secure. The Board's strategy is to continue re-modelling services to make strategic changes, and work to increase move-on as a means of improving the effectiveness of current schemes.
- 112** No new schemes were commissioned in the first half of 2005/06, although funding has now been agreed for an extra-care scheme and four short-term pilot projects, funded by estimated cash savings of £611,000 by 31 March 2006. Real savings (above contractual obligations) available for longer-term commissioning priorities from April 2006 were estimated at £326,000 in August 2005<sup>1</sup>.
- 113** There were delays in the opening of some pipeline schemes in 2003/04 and 2004/05. This contributed to the savings achieved in those years.
- 114** Currently, there are no Supporting People services specifically provided for travellers. There is one official travellers' site in the borough and the local housing office assists with housing-related issues. Lambeth is working with the south east London regional group of authorities to assess the need for jointly commissioning a regional floating support service for travellers.
- 115** A number of Supporting People services have been joint-commissioned and there are plans to joint-commission further services in the future. Examples include:
- a floating support service for people with HIV/AIDS jointly commissioned with the health service and LB Southwark;
  - a Portuguese support worker based at a rough sleepers service for homeless people with complex needs, jointly funded by Supporting People and the DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team);
  - a scheme for women with complex needs including substance misuse, domestic violence, sex-working and homelessness; jointly funded by Supporting People and the DAAT; and
  - Lambeth was involved in the planning and commissioning of a floating support scheme for BME elders with LB Southwark although it has yet to purchase places for Lambeth residents.
- 116** There is a low level of provision of accommodation for people with physical disabilities in the borough, and this is a weakness reflected in the assessments of Lambeth's social services' performance. All 130 people receiving physical disability care with accommodation are placed outside the borough in expensive residential placements. A strategy is being developed to reverse this trend and to enable some service users to move back to Lambeth. There is currently a floating support scheme which provides support for 20 people in this client group, but there will inevitably be pressure for Supporting People to fund further support services for this group.

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<sup>1</sup> Financial risk for grant spend on current and future services, from 'Report for Supporting People Commissioning Board', 31 August 2005.

### **Financial and performance monitoring**

- 117** The Council has budget monitoring systems in place which were introduced in 2002. These include a three-year budgeting process across the Council, together with financial monitoring requirements.
- 118** A robust financial monitoring and management structure is in place within the Supporting People programme and regular financial briefings are provided to the Commissioning Board. The Supporting People team's finance manager is responsible to the Lead Officer for the day-to-day management and monitoring of grant expenditure. The finance manager reports monthly to the senior financial officer for Adults and Community Services. The assistant director of finance signs off all monthly payments.
- 119** Monthly expenditure is reported to the departmental management team. Reports are submitted that track expenditure against services and the administration grant. Six-monthly budget review meetings also take place.
- 120** Regular reports are submitted to the Council's Executive on the progress of the programme and these include the reporting of financial management and risk. Each report is signed off by the Council's corporate finance department before submission. At the end of the last financial year a 'Financial savings report' was submitted to the Executive and Scrutiny Committee.
- 121** Payments to Supporting People service providers are accurate and paid on time. There are also comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that all service providers are able to complete and submit workbook (performance) information on time. The Supporting People team offers training and development for any provider who needs support or guidance.
- 122** Local performance indicators have been developed for Lambeth providers. These set targets and are monitored quarterly.
- 123** Providers we spoke to confirmed that they are well informed and understand the contracting arrangements. Our provider survey found that 95 per cent of respondents are either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the advice and support available from the Council.
- 124** The Council ensures that contractual arrangements for internal providers are managed in the same way as those for external providers. For example, internal providers are required to return their workbooks to the Supporting People team by the same deadlines.
- 125** There is a contract monitoring team comprising a manager and two contract monitoring officers (CMOs). We found the team to be experienced, knowledgeable and fully incorporated into the Supporting People team structure. The CMOs have a good relationship with service providers, which has been built up over time. Their role is not only to validate the information submitted by providers, but also one of enabling and support. They have regular contact with providers which includes attending the Three-Borough Provider Forum, visiting schemes, and assisting with service reviews. This relationship has helped the team to quickly resolve any potential conflicts or complaints.

- 126 In addition to their specific roles, CMOs have been involved in wider service development issues, such as work with particular client groups and attendance at partnership boards.

### **Fairer charging**

- 127 A Fairer Charging policy has been in place since 2002 and has recently been reviewed. One thousand, six hundred and fifty four assessments were completed in the first four months of 2005/06. A designated officer deals with enquiries and has maintained a charging enquiries log, which has been used to improve the system.
- 128 Leaflets about Fairer Charging have been produced for service users and providers. Information on Fairer Charging is also available from sheltered housing wardens as part of their support service; from a Fairer Charging Freephone Helpdesk; or from the website. Presentations and workshops took place across all sheltered housing services for both wardens and tenants.
- 129 A unified assessment form is in use for Supporting People and homecare services. The Council's Fairer Charging Team carries out assessments and income collection and regular meetings are held with the Supporting People team.
- 130 There have been some delays in billing. The Supporting People IT Strategy includes plans for an interface between the team's IT System and the new Social Services case management system, to ensure that there is improved information sharing. This should resolve the delays which have been experienced.

### **Relationships with providers**

- 131 A 'Three-Borough Provider Forum' meets quarterly and is open to all Supporting People service providers working in the boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. Around 100 providers often attend. We attended a meeting of the forum and found it to be informative and valued by providers. The forum has strong leadership from its chair and vice-chairs.
- 132 Forum meetings include a closed provider-only session and workshops and presentations on key issues such as eligibility criteria. Officers from the three boroughs are supportive of the forum and provide presentations when requested to do so. The venue and administrative support is rotated between the three boroughs. A group of BME providers hold a separate pre-meeting to discuss common issues - such as the impact of Supporting People monitoring requirements on small providers.
- 133 Client-specific sub-groups in each of the boroughs feed into the full three-borough forum meetings. Lambeth has nine sub-groups, plus the Core Strategy Group, which can raise issues via their chairs.

- 134** The view of providers we surveyed and spoke to is that the benefits of a three-borough forum far outweigh the disadvantages. Many providers operate across two or three of the boroughs and find it helpful to discuss issues collectively. There is also a benefit in spreading best practice between the boroughs. If issues arise that are specific to one borough, separate one-off events are held. For example, Lambeth held an event for Lambeth providers as part of the consultation on the five-year strategy.
- 135** All 21 providers that responded to our survey were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's arrangements for involving providers in the delivery and development of the programme. Of these, 60 per cent had been involved in the provider forum.
- 136** Initially the forum was minuted, but this was discontinued; this meant that providers that did not attend meetings were not kept well informed. However, minuting has been resumed for the last two meetings and these minutes have been circulated to all providers.
- 137** We held a focus group of six providers and visited 11 schemes run by service providers. These elicited positive feedback on the Council's relationship with providers, including: an approachable Supporting People team; a more 'joined-up' approach from the Council and its partners; a 'fundamental change' in the relationship with providers through the implementation of Supporting People; praise for SNAP team; and service reviews are seen as professional and helpful.
- 138** These results were corroborated by positive results from the Council's own survey of providers, which was carried out as part of a recent consultation exercise.
- 139** Good relationships with providers have been built up over time by the contract monitoring, service review and SNAP teams. A provider we spoke to had taken the SNAP team to view six of its projects to give the team a fuller understanding of how they operate.
- 140** Providers welcome the professionalism of the team and objectivity of decision-making. For example, providers we spoke to that had not received an inflation increase in funding, welcomed the clarity of how the decision was reached and regarded the criteria as fair. Similarly, providers we spoke to that had received critical service reviews generally accepted the conclusions and thought they had been arrived at fairly. In some cases providers welcomed the critical review reports as a tool to remodel and improve their services.

### **Partnership and cross-authority working**

- 141** Lambeth is in the unique position of being a member of both the south-west and south-east London Supporting People lead officer groups. In addition, a joint meeting of the south-east and south-west boroughs takes place every six months. This has brought advantages in terms of information sharing and learning from best practice. There is also close partnership working with Southwark, who share the same health authority. An example of this work is the joint-commissioning of two services with Southwark - an HIV floating support pilot scheme and a floating support scheme for BME elders.

- 142** There is strong evidence of partnership working through a range of fora. Members of the Supporting People team attend the various partnership boards, joint commissioning groups and other client-specific sub-groups. For example, the team is regularly represented at the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board and the Physical Disabilities Partnership Board, and is viewed as a key player by these groups.
- 143** Strengths in joint commissioning include work in the areas of learning disabilities, mental health, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence, homelessness and with the DAAT. There is, however, still a recognised need to continue to bring Supporting People commissioning and social care commissioning closer together.
- 144** A MAPPA<sup>1</sup> protocol for high-risk offenders is in place. However, this has not been updated since June 2003 and does not mention or make links to the Supporting People programme.
- 145** Links with the LSP are strong, and include LSP representation on the Commissioning Board. As discussed earlier in this report, these links should be further strengthened through the transformation of the Core Strategy Group into a 'Housing Partnership for Vulnerable People' (see 'Governance' above).
- 146** An example of partnership working is a scheme for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds which has been provided in partnership by Supporting People and the housing department. A provider has ring-fenced 35 of 83 units of accommodation for this age group and support is provided by a Young Tenants Support Project. This was a direct response to the increase in demand from this age group following the extension of priority need groups in the 2002 Homelessness Act. A joint liaison group ensures effective linkages between all partners, including the SNAP team.
- 147** Supporting People is also bringing together commissioning partners for young people's services, to provide advocacy, mediation and support services for this group to replace a provider from which Social Services withdrew funding.
- 148** There has been steady partnership working with health and probation services at an operational level. Links with probation will be further strengthened through the appointment of a probation housing assessment officer post within the SNAP team, which has been agreed by the Commissioning Board. A probation conference is being held in Lambeth in November 2005 and the Supporting People team will be taking part; this will also mark the launch of the new SNAP team post.
- 149** The view of the PCT is that the Supporting People team has been effective in promoting the health agenda by bringing together all the key players in the supported housing arena.

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

## Risk management

- 150** There has been an appropriate level of attention to identifying risk and preparing contingency plans. Each department in the Council maintains a risk register, which contains an overview of threats that may affect services.
- 151** A risk assessment and action plan is included in the five-year strategy<sup>i</sup>. This is a comprehensive plan, containing possible risks; consequences; a 'score' of risk level; actions to manage the risk; and the person or body responsible for managing the risk.
- 152** Financial progress and risks have been regularly reported to the Commissioning Board and regular reports are submitted to the Council's Executive on the progress of the programme, including financial management and risk. Each report is signed off by the Council's corporate finance department before submission.
- 153** An example of the management of financial risk is the current savings plan. At the end of 2004/05 cash savings were funding £416,000 of contractual obligations – presenting a risk in meeting future contract obligations if 'real' contract savings were not achieved. A savings target for 2005/06 of £416,000 on top of the reduction in grant from the ODPM of £1.1 million has been set to address this, and performance against this has been monitored and is on target.
- 154** Members were advised of the achieved and proposed savings in a report to Executive in March 2005.
- 155** Risk-assessed options for grant spend on current and future services were outlined in a financial risk report to the Commissioning Board in August 2005. The Board agreed that steady state contracts should only be issued to 'core services' due to the uncertainty over future grant allocation. This decision was made following a financial risk assessment of a worst-case scenario, with Lambeth losing five per cent of grant funding year on year.
- 156** An emergency and contingency plan is in place<sup>ii</sup>. This includes responses to major incidents and emergencies, as well as the response to the closure or sudden failure of a Supporting People service provider. Two providers for each client group have agreed to act as short-term alternative providers in an emergency. The Council has selected these through evaluation of service performance and quality. The agreement is not contractual, but is supported by an expression of interest, which details price, standards and expectations of joint working arrangements in the short-term emergency period.

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<sup>i</sup> 'Lambeth SP programme risk assessment and action plan 2005-2010', Five year Supporting People Strategy, chapter 20.

<sup>ii</sup> 'Lambeth Supporting People Programme - Dealing with Emergencies and Contingency planning', (undated).

- 157 There has been one sudden breakdown of an organisation's management committee that threatened service delivery. The Council responded well, by contacting another organisation that was able to provide an emergency role in managing the front-line staff. Following a series of meetings with the management committee and the owning RSL, improvements were agreed and the organisation was given another opportunity to improve, under strict inspection, until the service review could be brought forward.

### **Service reviews**

- 158 The delivery of the service review programme has been a strength. The programme of reviews is on schedule and the procedures for carrying out reviews are robust. Providers are generally satisfied with the conduct and outcomes of service reviews.
- 159 An appropriate timetable for service reviews is in place. A prioritised timetable was agreed in 2002; this was re-prioritised following ODPM guidance to authorities in 2004, to bring forward the four highest cost client groups.
- 160 All reviews are scheduled to complete by December 2005, three months ahead of the ODPM deadline. At the time of this inspection the review programme was on target, with 165 reviews (covering eight client groups) completed and reported to the Commissioning Board, a further 128 reviews underway (including 88 services for older people with support needs), and 25 reviews yet to commence.
- 161 There is an experienced and skilled team of three service review officers and a manager. A separate temporary postholder is undertaking the sheltered housing reviews and consultation as a specific project (see 'Delivery arrangements' above for further details). The review officers have client group specialisms, but also work on reviews in other areas. Reviews are generally carried out by two officers, with the second often being a contract monitoring officer.
- 162 The review procedure is comprehensive. All reviews include a validation visit; none use only a 'desktop' approach. The review procedure also includes a pre-review meeting, if the provider wishes to have one.
- 163 The service review officers demonstrated a good understanding of the Supporting People value for money methodology. During service reviews, officers follow the ODPM principles on value for money and the Lambeth value for money methodology (see 'Value for money' below). Eligibility is assessed during the review, in accordance with ODPM grant conditions and the local grant eligibility criteria.
- 164 Operational issues around service reviews are discussed at a regular internal 'Service Review Panel' which includes managers and staff from across the Supporting People team.
- 165 We reviewed a number of service review files. This confirmed that the review procedure is followed and properly recorded. Information can be cross-referenced against the computer system.

- 166** There is a full range of user consultation. For example, satisfaction forms are sent to all clients in advance of the review and the form is returned anonymously to the team; meetings are held with service users as a group, or individually if preferred. Meetings are generally held at the scheme, but can be held elsewhere if service users prefer - and this has occasionally happened. However, there is no systematic approach to giving feedback to service users on the outcome of reviews. Feedback by, for example, newsletters, posters or leaflets can provide useful information to service users on the planned improvements to their service, and demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.
- 167** Procedures allow for partners to be involved in reviews for relevant client groups and there is evidence of this happening across a range of services. For example, the teenage pregnancy co-ordinator, street population co-ordinator and the probation housing adviser have all taken part in service reviews for their client groups. All stakeholders, including carers, are also consulted by means of a questionnaire.
- 168** The Commissioning Board receives a summary report for services in each client sector, plus full review reports for services where major change is recommended. This is an appropriate method of focussing on the key issues, while limiting paperwork to the Board.
- 169** Verbal feedback is given to providers immediately following reviews, and verbal scores are given if all work has been completed. Written reports are sent to providers at least ten days prior to the Commissioning Board meeting which is due to discuss the review. The provider may then send in a response, which will be considered by the Board. Any substantial issues will be looked at on receipt of the response, to try to resolve them ahead of the Board meeting.
- 170** Any representations from providers are considered by the Commissioning Board and an outcome notification letter is sent within ten days of the Board's meeting. Any further 'appeal' must be through the Council's corporate complaints procedure. We consider this to be an open and transparent appeals process.
- 171** There was evidence from our provider visits of service reviews leading to a restructuring of services with improved support for service users. There was evidence, from one provider visited, of regular and effective monitoring by the Supporting People team of progress against a service review action plan - with three follow-up visits in 2005. This has led to improvements in the service and in the level of housing support.
- 172** Our provider survey found that:
- 85 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's processes and arrangements for service reviews;
  - 90 per cent were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the involvement of users and stakeholders in service reviews; and
  - 72 per cent were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the outcome of their service review.

- 173 Some providers also said that they found the content of the review reports meaningful and helpful.
- 174 The service review team are in a unique position to view practice across all providers, and to identify best practice. There are examples of the team pointing providers to good practice examples elsewhere, but this is not done systematically and there is potential to develop the collation and sharing of good practice.
- 175 Some providers reported delays in receiving their service review reports in 2004/05. This was due to high workload following the strategic reviews of the four high-cost client groups. Since then, reports have been issued promptly, unless outstanding information is required.
- 176 One provider we visited had a poor experience of a validation visit carried out by a locum worker early in the programme. There was poor communication with service users, the locum's behaviour was regarded as unprofessional and judgements were not considered to be balanced. This was reported to the Supporting People manager and the learning disabilities manager who reviewed and dealt with the issue, resulting in a higher rating for the service.
- 177 Two providers that we visited, who receive both Supporting People and social care funding, said that they would welcome joint reviews and contract discussions, to minimise administration and workload.
- 178 A system for the joint accreditation of providers is in place across the five south-east London sub-regional authorities, and an information-sharing protocol is in place across south-east and south-west London service review teams.

### **Value for money**

- 179 The Council has increased the value for money obtained from the Supporting People programme. There is evidence of a focus on value for money from the Commissioning Board and the Supporting People team. A clear value for money methodology has been developed and publicised. Issues of costs and quality have been challenged through the service review process and identifiable savings and service improvements have been made.

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

- 180 Comparisons of unit costs with London and England are set out in the data appendix. Overall, at the outset of the Supporting People programme in 2003, the Council had higher unit costs in comparison with other Councils in Greater London and England.

**Table 2 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)**

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit – excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
L.B. Lambeth	£1.60	£55.39	£82.78	£136.82
London	£0.97	£42.37	£48.73	£68.40
England	£0.70	£28.30	£34.71	£76.37

*The data quoted is taken from ODPM sourced material 2003/04*

- 181** These figures should be treated with some caution as there have been a number of changes since the platinum cut data was produced and the comparison is with all London boroughs, rather than those in inner-London. Although Lambeth is well above the London and national averages for unit costs, the costs are around average when compared to other inner London boroughs.
- 182** The ODPM platinum cost profiles for individual client groups reveal some high cost areas: unit costs for supported accommodation were in the highest 25 per cent nationally for: mentally disordered offenders; rough sleepers; young people at risk; single homeless people; homeless families; people with physical or sensory disabilities; and generic services<sup>i</sup>.
- 183** Costs of floating support were in the highest 25 per cent nationally for: people with learning disabilities; teenage parents; women at risk of domestic violence; and people with physical or sensory disabilities<sup>ii</sup>.
- 184** Updated comparative data was not yet available at the time of this inspection.

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

- 185** The programme has focussed on achieving value for money and there is evidence that this has delivered cost savings and improvements in the level and quality of services.
- 186** The Commissioning Board has maintained a consistent focus on achieving value for money in terms of costs and quality of services, and achieving savings targets in line with reductions in grant funding. An appropriate level of information on value for money is provided to the Board and our interviews and the minutes of meetings confirm that there is an appropriate level of discussion and interrogation of data.

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

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

- 187** The Commissioning Board has been keen to over-perform on creating savings, in the light of the current uncertainty over future funding. The imposed ODPM savings for 2005/06 were £1,113,691. A 'savings action plan' has been reported to the Executive and is on target, with total savings to date of £1.19 million. Savings that are made in different quarters of 2005/06 will provide a full year's saving in 2006/07 - the latest figure for projected full year savings is £2,439,587. This total comprises: savings from de-commissioned schemes of £799,385; value for money savings of £666,923; capping savings of £112,682; residential care home savings of £860,597<sup>1</sup>.
- 188** The Board has not just looked at reducing payments to providers, but has focussed on savings and efficiencies that can be achieved through the joint-commissioning of schemes and identifying complimentary funding.
- 189** The Council has substantially re-modelled a number of services. For example, one provider has had nine individual services re-modelled into two services under one contract, which will release savings of £30,000 by January 2006. Another provider will have seven services re-modelled into four under one contract, releasing £40,000 by January 2006. Other projects have been re-modelled and reviewed in a similar manner.
- 190** The lack of move-on accommodation (see 'Delivery arrangements' above) is limiting the effective use of many schemes and reducing their value for money. This has therefore been made a key priority in the five-year strategy and for the SNAP team. SNAP have begun to facilitate moves between schemes as part of the development of a local move-on strategy.
- 191** The Supporting People team carried out an initial assessment of the cost of each scheme in 2003. Desktop reviews of the value for money and strategic relevance of the four highest spend client groups<sup>11</sup> then took place in 2004/05; the individual services in these groups later received full service reviews, including validation visits.
- 192** A comprehensive value for money methodology is in place and has been shared with the south-east and south-west London regional authorities. This looks at the value of a service as a whole, not just in terms of costs, although price is a starting point. Key components of the methodology are:
- cost effectiveness analysis: grouping providers offering similar services and comparing costs; establishing levels of support (high medium and low); calculating the number and cost of support hours per week; a score card system to identify those services requiring further analysis;
  - cost benefit analysis: assessing the value of a support service by its outcomes, such as: contribution to strategic priorities; meeting demand; delivering good quality; and satisfying service users and stakeholders. This is done mainly through service reviews;

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<sup>1</sup> Figures in this paragraph were provided by the Council in November 2005 to update those in the Supporting People five-year strategy, page 150.

<sup>11</sup> The four highest spend client groups are: Learning disabilities, mental health, older people and homelessness. Together these make up more than 70 per cent of the Supporting People budget and 80 per cent of units.

- rate of move-on: taking account of the type of service and target length of stay;
  - costs of failed placements;
  - stakeholder feedback about a service; and
  - service reviews: including strategic reviews and QAF<sup>1</sup> results.
- 193** All providers received an analysis of their schemes based on the cost per unit and cost per hour. Providers who scored in the high category, or about whom there were particular concerns, were written to and asked to submit budgets detailing the staffing structure and overheads for their support service. Providers have been encouraged to meet with the Supporting People team individually to discuss their costs and to provide explanations for high comparative pricing, in terms of the specific benefits to the service user in achieving a greater level of independence.
- 194** The cost per hour has been a starting point for negotiations, coupled with the associated cost of overheads. Overhead costs vary from one organisation to another and if it is considered 'reasonable' (10-15 per cent) and does not adversely affect the hourly cost of support, it has been accepted by the Council.
- 195** Contract price reductions, that have contributed to the savings figures shown above, have been achieved through a process of negotiation. The outcomes of service reviews and performance information (from quarterly workbook returns) have been taken into account in these negotiations. Ongoing cost reductions have been agreed with some providers while they seek alternative sources of funding. Other services have been restructured and cost reductions have been negotiated with new models of support.
- 196** The Council's policy is that it may apply 'capping' where unit costs are above £400 per week. This has not been implemented to date; although negotiations with one provider whose costs are above this level are taking place.
- 197** The value for money methodology is transparent and has been shared with providers; the methodology is published on the Supporting People pages of the Council's website. The methodology is also broadly accepted by providers. Our provider survey showed that:
- 80 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's approach to determining the value for money of their services;
  - 75 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's approach to determining the strategic relevance of their service; and
  - 84 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's contract negotiation arrangements.

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<sup>1</sup> Quality Assessment Framework (QAF).

- 198** The Council has developed a value for money benchmark sheet that defines types of services and costs. This has been adopted by the ALG which is planning to share this information with other London boroughs. Lambeth's benchmarks were developed following discussions with other south-east and south-west London boroughs; comparisons are made with those authorities and with a benchmark group of similar authorities to Lambeth across London.
- 199** A bid for funding has recently been made to the Centre of Excellence in Procurement to link value for money to service user outcomes. This bid is sponsored by the ALG and aims to develop a model to be applied across the south-west London sub-region, and across London if successful.

### **Service user involvement**

- 200** Although there are a number of examples of service user involvement in the Supporting People programme, there is not yet a systematic approach and arrangements are not yet in place for service users to feed into the governance arrangements. Outcomes of service reviews are not fed back to the service users concerned.
- 201** Examples of service user involvement in the Supporting People programme have included:
- user involvement in service reviews (see 'Service reviews' above);
  - consultation with service users as part of the strategic reviews of the four highest spend client groups in 2004/05;
  - service users were consulted during development of the five-year strategy; through events, conferences and interviews. Users were invited to the launch events in July 2005 and these were well attended;
  - our provider visits showed that there is generally a good level of user involvement in schemes through house meetings, surveys etc;
  - input from users who are involved in existing fora, such as partnership boards; and
  - a programme of resident consultation is underway with residents of sheltered housing schemes. This consultation is open and comprehensive.
- 202** The user consultation that took place when reviewing the four high-spend client groups was particularly effective. The Supporting People team worked with a consultant who looked at the four best practice models from around the country for consulting with the particular client groups. This led to the methodology used, with one-to-one interviews with three of the groups (mental health, homelessness and older people) and a facilitated conference for people with learning disabilities.

- 203** This level of preparation paid dividends in terms of outcomes. Participation in the consultation was generally good - for example, 75 older people and 49 rough sleepers took part. Findings from the consultation included the fact that a third of female rough sleepers had experienced domestic violence. This has since been recognised as a priority by the Council and is being addressed through the promotion of domestic violence service provision.
- 204** The partnership boards and user subgroups represent an approach to user involvement that has been in place since 2001. Although there is user involvement in some of the Partnership Boards, this is not always the case.
- 205** There are currently no arrangements in place for service users to feed into the governance arrangements. The Council recognises that service users are not sufficiently involved and that this needs to be developed carefully without 'tokenism'. The user engagement strategy 2005/06, which was agreed at the August 2005 meeting of the Core Strategy Group, includes plans to address this through a service user panel which is due to meet from January 2006 and will feed into the new Housing Partnership for Vulnerable People (see 'Governance' above).
- 206** Some of the service users that we spoke to on our provider visits did not feel that their provider listened to, or took action to address, their concerns. There is also no systematic approach to feeding back outcomes from service reviews to service users - this is left to the discretion of the provider.
- 207** There is not currently a newsletter for service users, although one is planned for later in 2005.

## **Access to services and information**

### **Access**

- 208** There is generally good access to services and information about the Supporting People programme. The SNAP team has helped to improve access to services and streamlined referrals and assessments. Leaflets for service users are of good quality, although availability from public offices is patchy. Information about the programme is included on the Council's website. There is a need to ensure that frontline staff are adequately informed and equipped to respond effectively to enquiries on sensitive issues.
- 209** Access to appropriate services has been improved through the establishment of the SNAP team. The team has been fully operational since March 2005 and is improving the effectiveness of referrals to service providers, although this work is still developing. The team provides a single point of referral and assessment to most services, excluding services with special arrangements with other partners, such as rough sleepers and probation. The beneficial outcomes from the team include increased move-on opportunities; more appropriate initial placements; moving people to more appropriate services; and building up a needs database.

- 210** Referrals to SNAP mainly come from the Homeless Persons Unit, but can be made by other agencies or directly from the public. The team includes a mental health hospital discharge post (appointed February 2005) and funding has been agreed for a young persons specialist worker and for a probation housing assessment officer.
- 211** However, one provider we visited had five vacancies in a 15-bed scheme, despite a recorded level of demand in the borough. This suggests a need to continue to refine referral arrangements. This project did once receive referrals from SNAP but it was considered more appropriate that they act as move-on accommodation from another scheme for rough sleepers. The provider is now discussing the possibility of taking further referrals from the SNAP team. The Council told us that referral arrangements to this scheme will be reviewed to avoid unreasonably high void rates.
- 212** There is scope for some other services which are not currently making use of the SNAP team to do so. A development plan contains actions that will increase the number of providers that will be served by the team.
- 213** One provider we visited reported that the young people referred to the service from social services are not always able to benefit from the service. Also, the provider's view is that some young people have been moved on from the service before they are ready to do so. The service is hoping to negotiate a rebalance between accepting care leavers and accepting older young people from the Homeless Persons Unit.
- 214** As part of our reality checking, we made three 'mystery shopping' telephone calls concerning a domestic violence scenario to the Council. Two of the three calls received unsatisfactory responses. The first (to Social Services) told the caller the best option was to ring the Police. The second (to the Lambeth Service Centre) said the caller needed to ring Social Services. There was no offer to transfer these calls or to provide the phone number. No reference was made to the national domestic violence helpline or other services listed in the leaflets on domestic violence, nor to the domestic violence co-ordinator – whose number is given in the leaflet. The third call (to Social Services) was handled better, with two appropriate telephone numbers being provided.
- 215** These calls indicate a training and information need, to enable frontline staff to signpost callers more effectively. A draft Domestic Violence Strategy for the borough has been produced for consultation and this contains plans for a One Stop Shop, which may help to address this problem.

### **Information**

- 216** The Council has produced a range of Supporting People information materials for the public. The information currently available includes:
- a 'Housing Support Services' leaflet;
  - leaflets on fairer charging, including one for people with learning disabilities;
  - a 'Contact card' with access information about the SNAP team and Supporting People services;

- a SNAP team leaflet;
  - a corporate leaflet about domestic violence;
  - a newsletter for service providers;
  - a booklet summarising the five-year Supporting People strategy;
  - summaries of the five-year strategy specifically covering the following issues: mental health; domestic violence; people with disabilities; vulnerable adults; young people and homeless families; older people; and socially excluded people; and
  - an 'Easy Read' version of information on the five-year strategy.
- 217** There has recently been a 'branding' of Lambeth's Supporting People materials, giving it a clearer identity, and the content of the information produced is comprehensive. The 'Information and Communications Plan 2005/06' includes plans for further client group-specific leaflets, posters and roadshows.
- 218** All Supporting People leaflets include a panel with six language straplines and a contact number for large print, Braille, audio tape or another language. A corporate leaflet about domestic violence does not contain this panel, but is available in translation.
- 219** The Supporting People newsletter, aimed at providers, is informative and well designed. Issues covered in the autumn 2005 edition include: steady state contracts; new pilot schemes; website development; and provider consultation.
- 220** The Council's 'Better Care: Higher Standards' publication does not currently refer to the Supporting People programme, although there are plans to update it.
- 221** The information about the five-year strategy is well designed and clearly presented; the leaflets explaining how the strategy applies to specific client groups are particularly effective. The Council launched the five-year strategy at a week-long series of lunchtime events aimed at different client groups and open to service users. These events were regarded as successful by staff and providers.
- 222** The Council informed us that it has distributed Supporting People information materials to advice agencies, libraries and other Council departments across the borough, and the contact card and user leaflets have been distributed to doctors' surgeries and health centres. However, we found limited availability at local public offices. No Supporting People information was found at Brixton Advice Centre, the Railton Road Health Centre, or the public offices in Olive Morris House (which accommodates the Supporting People team and other services).
- 223** The Supporting People team worked with the ODPM to trial the national hub directory of services<sup>1</sup>, via the national stakeholder user group. Lambeth was one of the first councils to pilot the directory. The directory of services in Lambeth is easily accessed from the Council's website and has recently been produced in hard copy, although this has yet to be distributed.

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<sup>1</sup> The ODPM's national directory of housing-related support services is available at [www.spdirectory.org.uk](http://www.spdirectory.org.uk).

- 224 Our provider survey found that 95 per cent of respondents were either satisfied, or very satisfied, with the Council's provision of information about Supporting People for service users and applicants.

### **Website**

- 225 There is a good range of information about the Supporting People programme on the Council's website. This includes: general information; leaflets; the five-year strategy and executive summary; details of emergency services; the SNAP referral form; results of consultation; provider information, including eligibility criteria and workbook guidance; and links to the local and national directories of services.
- 226 The website is accessible and has the 'Plain English crystal mark', and the information is clearly presented. However, the site does not contain agendas or minutes of meetings, such as the Core Strategy Group or Three-Borough Provider Forum.

### **Complaints**

- 227 A complaints procedure is in place and our file checks showed that complaints appear to be handled in a comprehensive way and within target times. A corporate review of complaints procedures is underway.

### **Diversity**

- 228 The needs of different communities and hard-to-reach groups have been assessed in the five-year Supporting People strategy and some services have been developed, or are planned, to meet those needs. Equality issues are considered in the service review process.
- 229 There are a number of mechanisms in place for consulting hard-to-reach groups. These are brought together in the User Engagement Strategy. Activities include:
- joint focus groups with victims of domestic violence and young people, (the former with the 'Domestic Violence Survivors' group);
  - a joint focus group with people with physical disabilities as part of the development of the community safety strategy;
  - face-to-face interviews with rough sleepers with complex needs during the strategic relevance review of homelessness;
  - work with the BME sub-group of the Three-Borough Provider Forum. This group meets prior to the full forum and gives providers an opportunity to discuss common issue. The group has contributed to strategic development, the service review methodology and user involvement; and
  - all client groups, including hard to reach groups, are consulted during the service review process. Following completion of the service review programme, an equalities impact assessment will be carried out.

- 230** The Supporting People team has also made use of the existing structures within the Council to contact hard-to-reach groups. For example, through the partnership boards and sub-groups.
- 231** A race equality impact assessment was undertaken in 2004 on the shadow strategy and outcomes were published on the Lambeth website. A revised impact assessment is planned at the end of 2005 on the five-year strategy and its progress to date. Both strategies identified gaps in provision through needs and supply analysis and consultation with stakeholders. The gaps identified include:
- a need for increased community based floating support across a wide range of client groups (a project in Brixton is piloting a service to address this);
  - floating support for older BME people; and
  - 'Sanctuary' arrangements for women experiencing domestic violence.
- 232** There is evidence of the Council addressing diversity issues in the commissioning of services, although there are still gaps in provision. Services include an HIV/AIDS floating support pilot scheme; a Portuguese support worker based at a rough sleepers' service for homeless people with complex needs; and a scheme for women with complex needs.
- 233** In addition, the Council is in the process of jointly commissioning a floating support scheme for BME elders across Lambeth and Southwark.
- 234** The five-year strategy includes contextual information which demonstrates the level of need among BME groups. For example, BME groups accounted for 73 per cent of homelessness decisions in 2003/04. Lambeth also has a high level of asylum seekers in comparison with other London boroughs.
- 235** Seven of the eight services for women facing domestic violence in the borough are targeted at specific BME groups.
- 236** The Supporting People team collates data which is used to monitor access to services. This shows, for example, that there are more Black Caribbean service users in Lambeth (16 per cent) than the London average (12 per cent), but fewer Black African service users (11 per cent) than the London average (15 per cent).
- 237** Performance indicators show that 40 per cent of service users were from BME groups in 2004/05 (this figure excludes access to sheltered schemes, which are not required to submit this information). This is below the target of 46 per cent (the size of the adult BME population in Lambeth). A reason given for this is the high turnover in rough sleeper services - a traditionally white client group. The BME percentage is expected to rise as referrals from the SNAP team increase.
- 238** A BME Supporting People strategy is being developed with health and social care partners and a meeting is planned with BME specialists across all stakeholders by the end of 2005 to draft the strategy and an action plan.

- 239 To reflect the high number of languages used in the borough, information for the public on Supporting People services is generally available in different languages and formats (see 'Access to services and information', above). Staff also have access to a translation and interpreting service, and this has been used by, for example, service review officers. In one case we encountered, an audio tape of Supporting People documents had been requested by a service user and had been supplied.
- 240 The Council achieved level one of the Equality Standard for Local Government in March 2005 and is aiming to achieve level two by March 2006 and level three by March 2008. Both housing and social services departments achieved level three of the CRE Standard for Racial Equality in Local Government in 2004.
- 241 There is evidence of the Commissioning Board paying attention to diversity issues. For example, the Board's awayday in May 2005 included a SWOT analysis of BME user involvement and a discussion on the future direction of BME services.
- 242 The Board has also been instrumental in developing a policy to cover faith-based providers. This arose from a sensitive issue concerning a faith-based provider. Following an open and frank discussion at Board level, a clear policy was developed and implemented.
- 243 The number of BME placements and move-ons is reported regularly to the Commissioning Board and Core Strategy Group. This has recently been incorporated into the quarterly 'Performance Monitor' which report all Supporting People performance information to the Board and Core Strategy Group.

### **Outcomes for service users**

- 244 Lambeth's Supporting People programme is delivering positive changes to a number of services it funds and, through this, to service users. A number of schemes have been remodelled to improve the level of support provided, and service users we spoke to are generally positive about the services provided to them. Some pilot schemes have been commissioned to address gaps in provision. However, the uncertainty over future funding means the Council is not currently in a position to commission new longer-term schemes to address the priorities in the five-year strategy. Also, the shortage of move-on accommodation is restricting the movement of residents into and out of many services.
- 245 Overall, Lambeth has higher levels of supported accommodation and floating support per head of population than the London and England averages - approximately 19 units of support per 1,000 households in the borough, compared to a regional average of 15 and a national average of 17.
- 246 However, there are also high levels of need in the borough, as identified by the needs-mapping carried out for the five-year Supporting People strategy. The strategy has identified the following gaps in housing support that need to be addressed:
- models of floating support appropriate to particular client groups;
  - services for 'excluded groups';

- services for young people across all relevant client groups; and
  - services for people with multiple and/or complex needs.
- 247** The Council has taken steps to address these gaps, although little has yet been done to address the need for services for people with multiple and/or complex needs.
- 248** The Council has also identified that move-on accommodation is limited and has begun to take steps to address this (see 'Delivery arrangements' above).
- 249** Services have been reconfigured or remodelled through the service review programme. This includes remodelling outdated shared schemes to more strategically relevant self-contained accommodation. Examples of remodelled schemes include:
- a scheme for BME service users with enduring mental illnesses. Following a service review this has been reconfigured to deliver self-contained supported accommodation and three studio flats to provide move-on accommodation with floating support. This came about through the joint work of Supporting People, Social Services, Housing and an RSL;
  - A legacy contract with one provider for nine different floating support services has been reconfigured to provide one generic tenancy support service with increased capacity, improved access and clearer definitions of expected outcomes; and
  - major change is planned for one of the borough's direct access homelessness hostels. The hostel was in poor condition and the Council has worked with the provider, the ODPM and an RSL to agree a plan for demolition and for a new building with 13 self-contained studios and communal training facilities, to be used as move-on from other hostels in the borough.
- 250** The Council has also developed a number of different floating support models. These include:
- a specialist floating support scheme for people with HIV/Aids, developed jointly with Southwark; and
  - a pilot floating support scheme for vulnerable council tenants of Brixton Area Housing Office, based in the housing office alongside a housing benefit officer.
- 251** There has been some reinvestment of underspends and savings. For example, in response to the high level of teenage pregnancy in the borough, Supporting People funding for a pipeline service for teenage parents has been increased and a tenancy support services for teenage parents has been commissioned. There has also been investment in a 'Keyring' service for adults with learning disabilities.

- 252** In some cases services have been decommissioned as they are either not strategically relevant, or are not providing an adequate service. In these cases the Commissioning Board wanted to see clear information on the implications for service users and how these were being addressed, before agreeing to decommission.
- 253** No new schemes were able to be funded in the first half of 2005/06 and, with the exception of one extra-care scheme, the service is currently only able to fund four short-term pilot schemes due to the uncertainty over future funding (see 'Delivery arrangements' above). Supporting People funding for the extra-care scheme and the four pilot projects totals £328,000.
- 254** During our inspection, we visited 11 services as a sample of the range, cost and quality of provision. Where possible, we spoke to service users and asked them for their views on the services provided. We generally found that service users were positive about their service providers and the level of support received.
- The visits provided further evidence of service reviews leading to higher service standards. For example, at one scheme we visited the residents noted an improvement in the quality of staff and level of support as a direct result of a service review.
  - There was evidence from one scheme we visited of successful housing support leading to six sustained move-ons over a 14-month period (from a 15-bed project).
  - A service user of a floating support provider we visited was well catered for and spoke highly of their caseworker. In the last 18 months this user had become more confident and is now studying at college.
- 255** Support plans were in place at all the schemes we visited and had been developed with the input of the service users.
- 256** Children's Services are actively involved in reviewing the care plans and adequacy of placement for individual young people. However, our provider visits showed that there is scope to improve the exchange of information gathered on individual case reviews and the provider service review.
- 257** A range of schemes are in place to meet the needs of offenders, such as the prolific offenders' scheme and the drugs intervention programme. Schemes such as these are designed to meet the needs of offenders and are examples of the Council's ability to commission and deliver complex services.
- 258** Mental health joint commissioning has contributed to a reduction in institutional care. Housing based services are seen as a major plank in the overall PCT strategy, with an increased focus on tenancy support.
- 259** Performance indicators show that the provision of domestic violence refuge places in the borough<sup>i</sup> is well above the set target and that the level of rough sleeping has continued to decline<sup>ii</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> 2.6 places per 10,000 of the population.

<sup>ii</sup> Seven rough sleepers were counted in the first quarter of 2004/05.

- 260** Service users are also seeing direct benefits from the work of the SNAP team - this has led to easier access and more appropriate placements (see 'Access to services and information' above). Prior to establishing the SNAP team, vacancies were often not taken by the most appropriate clients, or by those in the highest need. The SNAP team is now addressing this issue for new placements and reviewing placements on a regular basis. The team also facilitates moves between schemes to ensure more appropriate use of services.
- 261** The Council is working towards developing a system for monitoring outcomes for service users. It is looking to do this with its local partners. This work is at an early stage.
- 262** The Council is aware that its providers have not been catering sufficiently for local needs. Around 51 per cent of people taking up Supporting People funded places have a Lambeth connection - compared to a London average of 70 per cent. The Lambeth figure has increased from 45 per cent a year ago, due partly to placements made by the SNAP team. The Council has a target to continue to increase local placements, but not at the expense of cross-authority access. Progress against this target is being monitored.
- 263** Case studies illustrating the benefits of the Supporting People programme in Lambeth are set out below.

#### **Case study 1 - HIV/AIDS floating support scheme**

Tony (not his real name) was referred to an HIV/AIDS floating support scheme funded by Supporting People. He had been evicted from the hostel he had been living in for a number of months. Since his eviction he had been sleeping rough before being placed in a 'rolling shelter', which only allowed him to stay for three weeks before being placed in another hostel.

Tony had been rough sleeping for eight years and had been an intravenous drug user for over 21 years. In addition to being HIV positive, he also had Hepatitis C and deep vein thrombosis. When first referred to the service he was not engaging with any HIV clinic, drug services or other health providers. His spending on drugs was up to £200 a day.

Tony was not aware that he had options available other than staying in hostels. He wanted to start controlling his drug use and thought this would be more difficult through being in constant contact with other drug users. The support worker explained the options available to him and made him an appointment to make a homelessness application. The application was successful and he was placed in temporary self-contained accommodation.

A few months later, Tony moved to a permanent tenancy. He has been supported in applying for a Community Care Grant and has made his flat comfortable and homely. Donations of clothes and household items from a charity have also helped, and his benefits entitlements have been maximised. He has registered with a drug agency and is now prescribed methadone, and his drug use has greatly reduced.

He now engages regularly with the HIV clinic and has commenced combination therapy resulting in an overall improvement in his general health. Tony has adhered well to his medication and worked with his Support Worker to find ways of remembering to take his doses.

By engaging with the support service Tony also receives meal deliveries on a Sunday, has subscribed to a monthly HIV magazine, been referred to a transport scheme and registered with a GP. He receives support for attending appointments, receives weekly home visits and regular telephone calls and a wide variety of support adapted to his individual needs.

### **Case study 2 - Young persons 'foyer' scheme**

'Kate' is 19. She grew up in South London, but felt let down by her parents and family and gradually became estranged from them. Eventually she became homeless and was referred to a young persons 'foyer' by an emergency accommodation service.

Kate was a long term drug user. She also had difficulties controlling her emotions - she found it difficult to express herself and so often cried. Kate gets most upset when she speaks about her past, and prefers not to talk about it. However, as part of her support plan, Kate agreed to begin to have counselling sessions.

With the help of the foyer, Kate has begun to attend college in the evenings. She uses the IT training suite at the foyer to help with her course.

She has also become involved with a development programme run by the service provider; this is developing a group of young people to help to train staff. This has helped her with confidence and social skills, and at a residential weekend she received a prize for the commitment she has shown. Kate has also taken the opportunity to become a 'foyer representative', to participate in planning and running activities and be involved in the further development of the foyer.

Kate has reduced her drug use since coming to the foyer, and her confidence and ability to cope with her emotions has developed considerably. Despite her continuing estrangement from her family, Kate is now able to look towards the future with some confidence.

## Summary

- 264 We have assessed the Supporting People service provided by the London Borough of Lambeth to be a good, two-star service. The Council has successfully implemented and delivered the early phases of the programme. Governance structures are generally working well, with a strong Commissioning Board, although the involvement of some partners in the Core Strategy Group has been inconsistent and service users are yet to be effectively involved.
- 265 There is a skilled and well-resourced Supporting People team which has met its key targets. The team is valued by providers and other partners and has strong relationships with them. Service review procedures are comprehensive and the programme is on schedule to finish ahead of the ODPM deadline.
- 266 There has been a focus on achieving value for money and a clear methodology for this is in place. There is robust financial and performance management and savings targets have been achieved.
- 267 A five-year strategy has been developed which identifies gaps in provision and sets clear priorities for the future. A number of services have been remodelled, however, few new services have been developed due to the financial constraints.
- 268 There is good access to services via the SNAP team and a range of information materials have been produced, although their availability could be improved. Some improvement is also required to the signposting of telephone callers by frontline staff.

## What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

### What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- 269 The service has implemented the early stages of the Supporting People programme effectively and on schedule. There is evidence of improvement in the support services provided for service users, particularly as a result of the service review programme. There has been a focus on achieving value for money and this has delivered both savings and improvements in the quality of provision.
- 270 Corporately, the Council has demonstrated some improvement, from a low base. The Council was assessed as a 'poor' authority by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment in December 2002 and again in 2003. This score was upgraded to 'weak' in December 2004.
- 271 The Council's care services were rated as one-star (out of a possible three) by CSCI in November 2004. CSCI found that the Council's adult social services were 'serving some people well', with 'promising prospects for improvement'.

- 272** The Council has successfully implemented the early stages of the Supporting People programme. Governance arrangements were put in place at an early stage and are generally working well. A well resourced Supporting People team was also put in place and has delivered key elements of the programme effectively and on time. For example, a comprehensive five-year strategy was completed on schedule and the service review programme is on target to complete in December 2005 - three months ahead of the ODPM deadline.
- 273** There is, however, still work to be done to fully involve partners in the Core Strategy Group and to systematically involve and consult service users.
- 274** Financial systems have operated well and service providers are receiving timely payments. Contract monitoring and service reviews have also been carried out effectively (see 'Delivery arrangements' and 'Service reviews' above).
- 275** The Council has developed a value for money methodology, and there is evidence of its approach to value for money delivering savings and improvements in the quality of provision (see 'Value for money' earlier in this report). Savings targets required by the ODPM have been achieved and exceeded; this will assist in meeting future savings requirements.
- 276** A significant achievement in 2004/05 was the establishment of the SNAP team to provide a single gateway for assessments and placements (see 'Access to services and information' earlier in this report).
- 277** Our survey of service providers found consistently positive views of the Council's administration of the Supporting People programme from the 21 respondents, including:
- 100 per cent satisfaction with the arrangements for involving providers in the delivery and development of the programme;
  - 95 per cent satisfaction with the provision of information about Supporting People for users and applicants;
  - 95 per cent satisfaction with the advice and support available to providers from the Council; and
  - 85 per cent satisfaction with the Council's processes and arrangements for service reviews.
- 278** The service users we spoke to during our visits to 11 schemes were generally positive about their service providers and the support they received.
- 279** There has been progress against all the targets in the Supporting People Business Unit Plan 2005/06-2007/08 and there are currently no areas where targets for year one (2005/06) appear unlikely to be met; these include:
- implementing the user engagement strategy, including a service user panel which is due to meet from January 2006;
  - finalising and implementing the BME strategy; and
  - implementing the IT strategy, including development of the website and the SNAP client assessment system.

- 280 Progress against the five-year strategy action plan is on target, although the commissioning priorities set out in the plan are largely for future years. New pilot schemes have been introduced and some poorly performing services have been decommissioned or improved following service reviews.

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

- 281 Performance of the programme is being well managed. There are clear aims and priorities for the programme and these are linked to wider corporate and community objectives. Future plans are SMART and address the priorities identified in the five-year strategy. There is strong leadership from the Commissioning Board and senior officers and effective performance management arrangements in place. The Council is also open to learning from other authorities and organisations.
- 282 There is a clear set of aims and objectives for the Supporting People programme. These are set out in the five-year Supporting People strategy and are linked to the Council's corporate objectives and the themes of the Community Strategy<sup>1</sup>.
- 283 The five-year strategy and its action plan, together with the Supporting People Business Unit Plan for 2005/06-2007/08 set out the short-term and longer-term objectives and targets for the programme.
- 284 The timescales within these plans are realistic. Targets for 2005/06 generally concern strategic development and completion of the service review programme. During 2005/06 business plans are being developed for each client group.
- 285 The five-year strategy includes a five-year action plan by client group, together with specific commissioning priorities for 2005/06 - 2007/08, which include numbers of units and costs. The commissioning plan only includes three new initiatives for 2005/06 due to the current savings requirements. Similarly, the extent to which the commissioning priorities for 2006/07 and beyond can be met is dependant on the level of Government grant, which has yet to be announced. Risks have been assessed for future funding reductions and a savings plan is in place.
- 286 The plans address the weaknesses and gaps in provision identified in the five-year strategy. For example, plans are in place to continue to address the shortage of move-on accommodation (see 'Delivery arrangements' earlier in this report) and the need to increase the level of floating support to a number of client groups.
- 287 The plans within the five-year strategy are SMART and include links to strategic objectives; timescales; lead officers; and costs of commissioning priorities. The strategy also includes a risk assessment and action plan for 2005-2010, which includes a risk 'score' based on probability, impact and closeness.

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<sup>1</sup> These links are summarised in the action plan for the five-year strategy, and in the Supporting People Business Unit Plan for 2005/06-2007/08.

- 288 Lambeth has a corporate appraisal system for staff, with an annual appraisal and six monthly review. The staff we spoke to had all received appraisals within the last 12 months and this was confirmed by a review of a sample of appraisal files. Staff also have regular supervision meetings with line managers and team meetings. Staff have individual targets that are linked to the annual Business Plan.
- 289 There is strong leadership of the service from the Head of Supporting People and more senior Council officers. This is recognised by the staff and partners that we spoke to. The Commissioning Board has been strongly led and there have been good lines of communication between the Chair of the Board, the Accountable Officer, other relevant managers and the lead Council member.
- 290 The Council has provided effective leadership to partner agencies in jointly developing the Supporting People programme. There is a good shared understanding of priorities and risks.
- 291 There has been effective decision-making by the Commissioning Board and it has taken a number of difficult decisions by consensus. However, there has been a lack of clarity about the role of the Core Strategy Group and its relationship to the Commissioning Board; in terms of providing support to the Board and making recommendations where appropriate. The membership and role of the Core Strategy Group is currently in transition (see 'Governance' above).
- 292 Opportunities for service users to influence how performance is measured, monitored and reported are currently limited by a lack of input into governance arrangements. The user engagement strategy includes plans to address this through a service user panel which is due to meet from January 2006. There has, however, been a level of user involvement through the various partnership boards and user sub-groups.
- 293 There are sound performance and financial management processes. Performance indicators and targets are included in the five-year strategy and Business Unit plans, and performance reporting to the Commissioning Board and Core Strategy Group has recently been collated into a quarterly 'Performance monitor' - which includes targets to measure progress against the five-year strategy. There is also work underway to develop performance monitoring of outcomes for service users - although this is at an early stage.
- 294 The Commissioning Board makes quarterly reports to the Lambeth Executive Strategic Management Board and to the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 295 There has been a focus on achieving the required savings to the programme, partly though an improvement in the value for money of service provision. The savings targets are currently being exceeded and this has allowed for some reinvestment in existing services and in four new pilot services.
- 296 The Council has been open to learning from its own experiences and that of others. Examples include:
- changes were made to the five-year strategy following consultation with providers and service users;

- the user consultation that took place when reviewing the four high-spend client groups was particularly effective and generated information which will influence future service provision. For example, it highlighted the high number of women sleeping rough that had experienced domestic violence;
- the development of the Council's eligibility criteria and value for money methodology took account of best practice from other authorities; and
- there has been learning on Supporting People issues through partnership working with the other south-east and south-west London sub-regional authorities (see 'Delivery arrangements' earlier in this report). This has included benchmarking and information sharing.

### **Does the service have the capacity to improve?**

- 297** The Council has the capacity to continue to deliver improvement. There is strong management of the programme from the Commissioning Board and individual managers, and a skilled and well-resourced team of staff. There has been effective financial management which has delivered the required savings. Although the future level of investment in services is largely dependant on Government funding decisions, the Council has demonstrated an ability to deliver improvements in value for money, resulting in savings that are available for re-investment.
- 298** The strong management of the programme from an early stage has provided a sound basis for further improvement. A strong Supporting People team has been put in place with financial support from the Council to supplement the ODPM administration grant. This has paid dividends, including the achievement of savings requirements and a service review programme that is on schedule. If the early completion of service reviews (in December 2005) is achieved, this will increase the capacity of the team to follow up service review action plans in the following quarter.
- 299** The level of the Council's extra investment in the administration of the programme (£408,318 in 2005/06) may not be sustainable in future years, due to corporate financial constraints. However, the programme's record of forward planning and risk management give us confidence that this risk can be managed effectively.
- 300** Councillors, senior officers and managers, including the Accountable Officer, are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The roles of the Commissioning Board and Core Strategy group are set out in Terms of Reference and a Memorandum of Understanding, although these require some updating (see 'Governance' earlier in this report).
- 301** A comprehensive five-year strategy has been produced which identifies gaps in current service provision and contains future plans to address these. The plans are SMART and include specific and costed proposals for future commissioning across all client groups.

- 302** In addition to identifying savings, the Council and its partners have also identified potential sources of additional funding. A bid for funding has recently been made to the Centre of Excellence in Procurement to link value for money to service user outcomes. The Council is also a partner in a successful bid to the Government's Homelessness Innovation Fund for a pilot move-on project (see 'Delivery arrangements' above).
- 303** Although savings have been achieved, the Council and its partners have worked to minimise any adverse impact on service users. For example, adult learning disability services have managed the reduction in the Supporting People grant well, and there is evidence of strong plans to maximise resources across Supporting People and Social Care funding.
- 304** Managers receive appropriate levels of performance information and performance is regularly reported to the Commissioning Board. Computerised systems are used to manage and monitor performance. However, further developments in IT are required and these are included in the IT strategy. For example, the current housing department IT system used by the SNAP team is limited and unable to easily match needs to provision. A new system is due to be installed in June 2006 which should address this.
- 305** The Council as a whole has been accredited to the 'Investors in People' standard, as have individual departments. A corporate staff awards scheme was recently introduced.
- 306** An appropriate level of training is available for staff. Training and development needs are formally identified through the appraisal system, but also on a more regular basis through supervision or discussion with line managers. A learning and development plan for the Supporting People team, including costs where these are known, is included in the Supporting People Business Unit Plan.
- 307** There are effective partnerships in place and generally good relationships with service providers, as evidenced by our provider survey and focus group. There is a history of good joint working at a senior level between the Council and a range of partners and service providers. This has provided the foundation for the development of joint commissioning of housing related support. The relationship with the LSP has been strengthened through representation on the Commissioning Board.

## Summary

- 308** In summary, we judge the London Borough of Lambeth to have 'excellent' prospects for delivering further improvements in the management of its Supporting People programme.
- 309** The service has implemented the early stages of the Supporting People programme effectively and on schedule. There has been a focus on achieving value for money and this has delivered both savings and improvements in the quality of provision. The Council has managed the reduction in funding well, resulting in savings that are available for re-investment.

- 310** The five-year strategy is comprehensive and contains clear plans for addressing the identified priorities and gaps in provision.
- 311** There is strong leadership from the Commissioning Board and senior officers and effective performance management arrangements are in place. There is also a skilled and well-resourced team of staff. The Council is also open to learning from other authorities and organisations.

## Appendix 1 – Data appendix

### Demographic information

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

Measure	Lambeth	England
Population (mid-2003) <sup>i</sup>	268,500	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2003)	10.5	18.5
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2003)	37.6	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) <sup>ii</sup>	4.9	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) <sup>iii</sup>	23	-

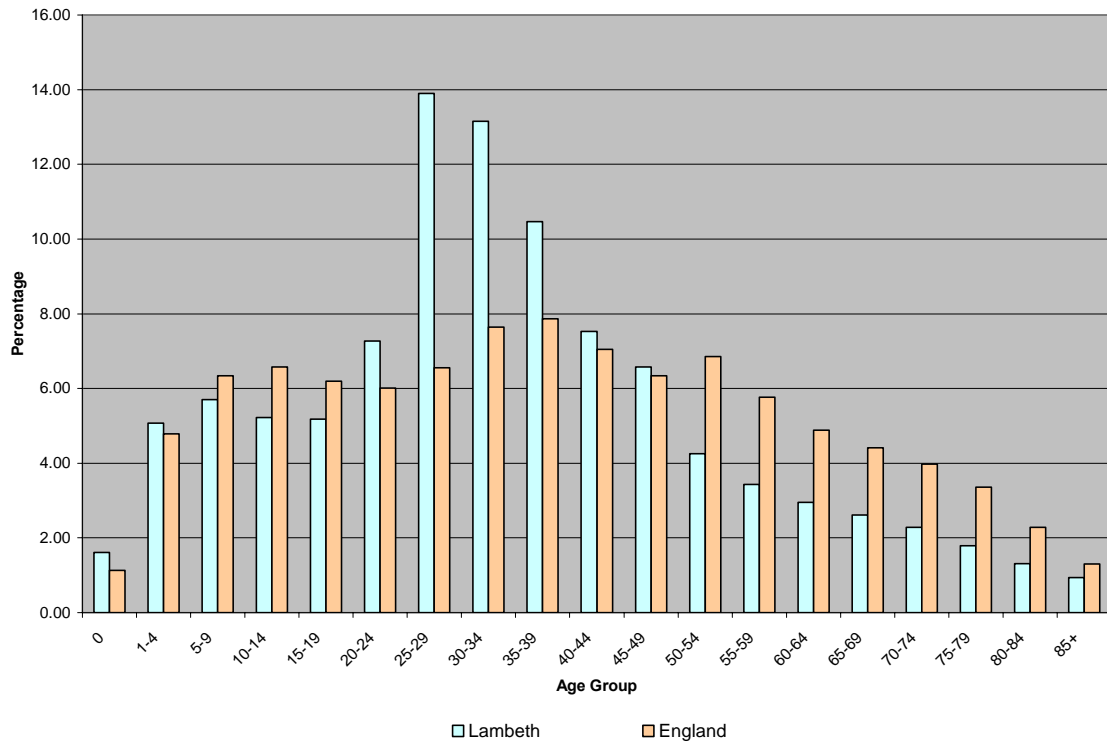
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<sup>i</sup> Source: midyear population estimates (2003)

<sup>ii</sup> Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (August 2005)

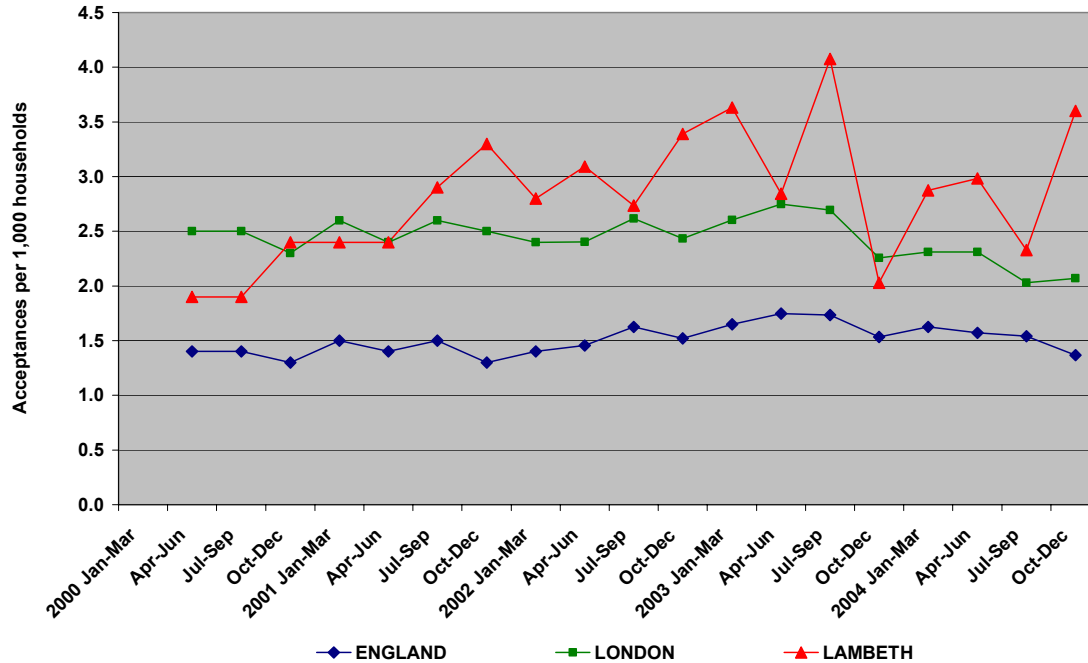
<sup>iii</sup> Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

## Percentage of the population<sup>1</sup> in each age group compared with England



<sup>1</sup> Source: midyear population estimates (2003)

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



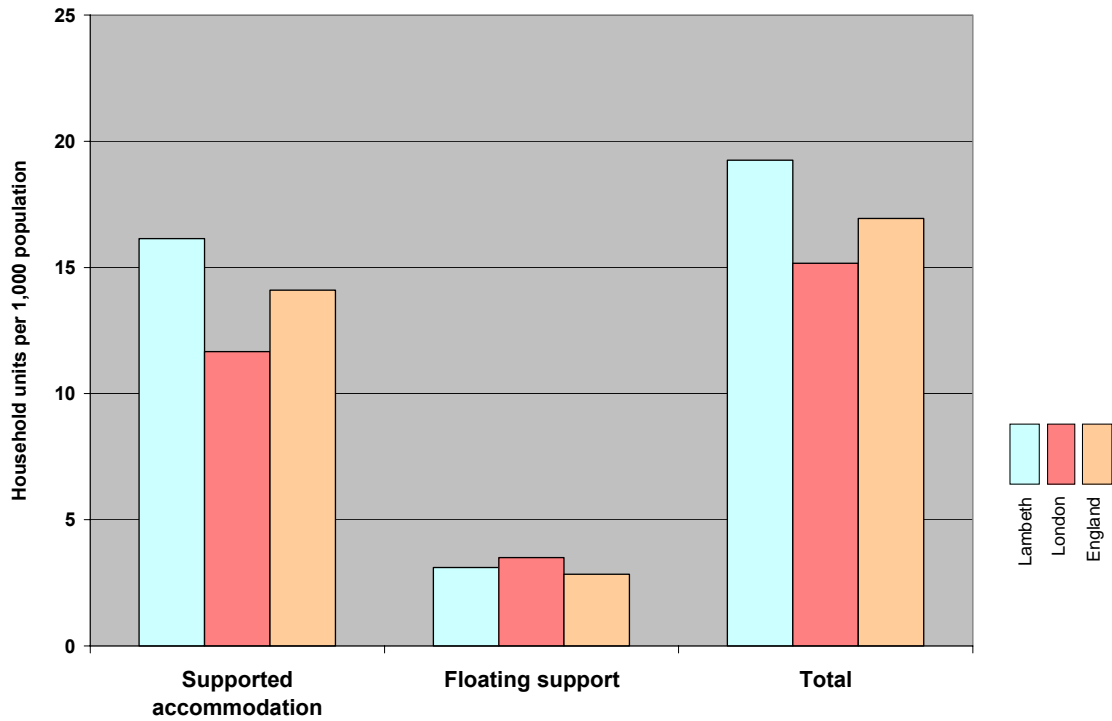
## Performance information

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

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

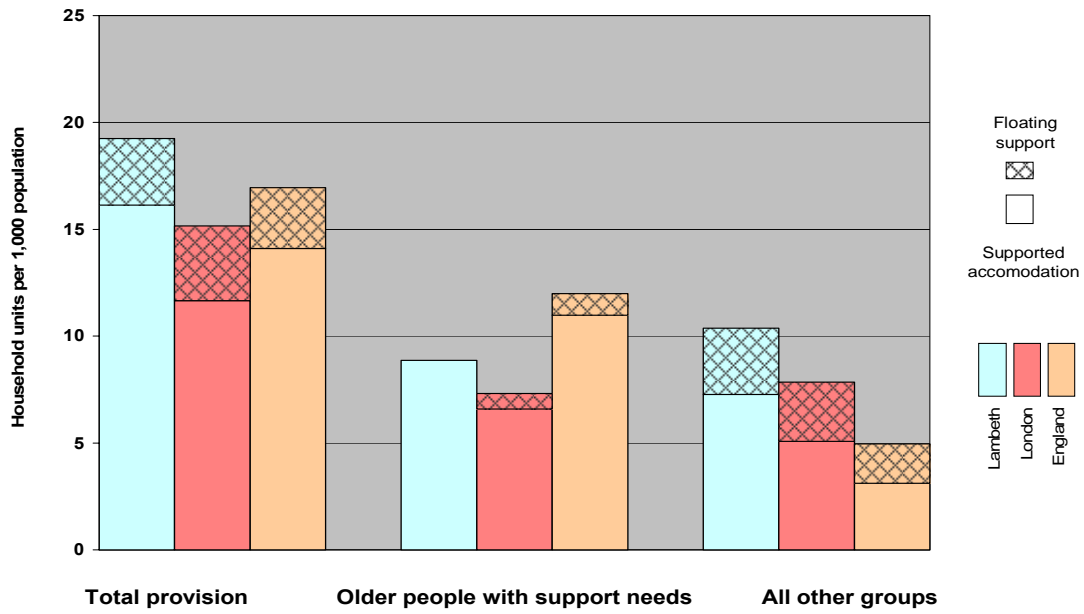
## Supporting People data

### Total service provision funded through Supporting People<sup>1</sup>



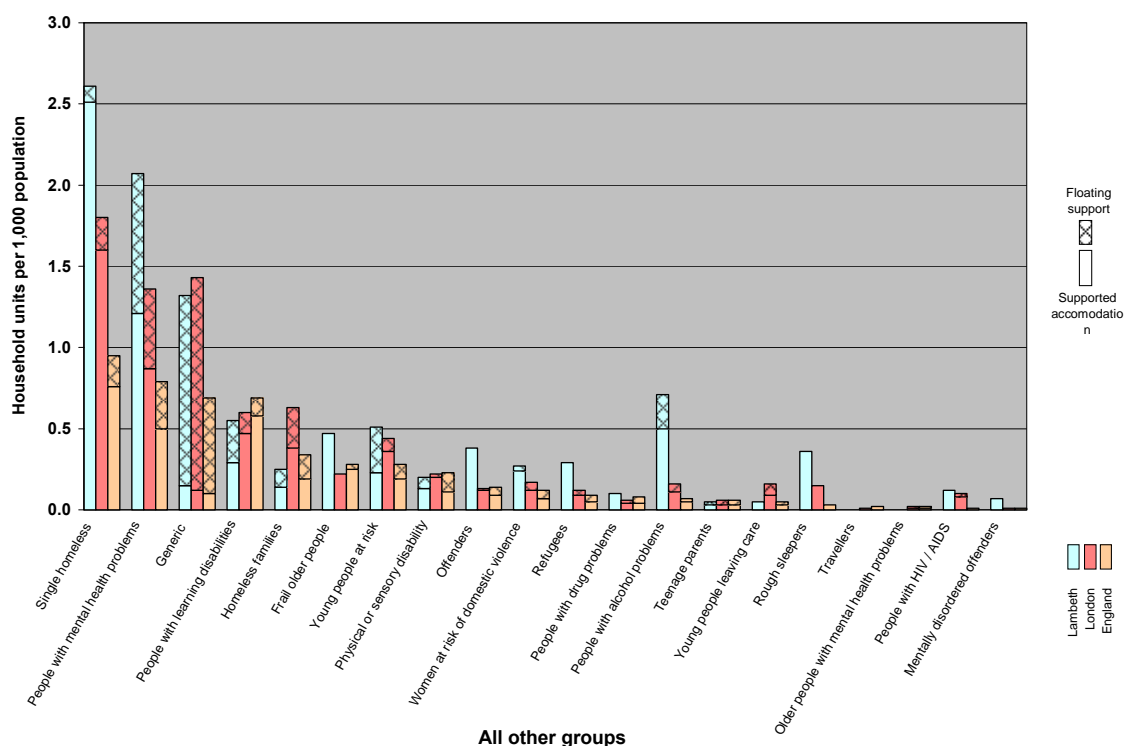
<sup>1</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

### Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

## Services for other groups compared with the region and England<sup>I</sup>



## Funding for Supporting People<sup>II</sup>

Lambeth	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£ 22,565,449	£ 22,112,120	£ 20,998,429
Pipeline allocation	£ 190,459	£ 244,707	£ -
Administration grant	£ 408,557	£ 422,952	£ 349,114

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

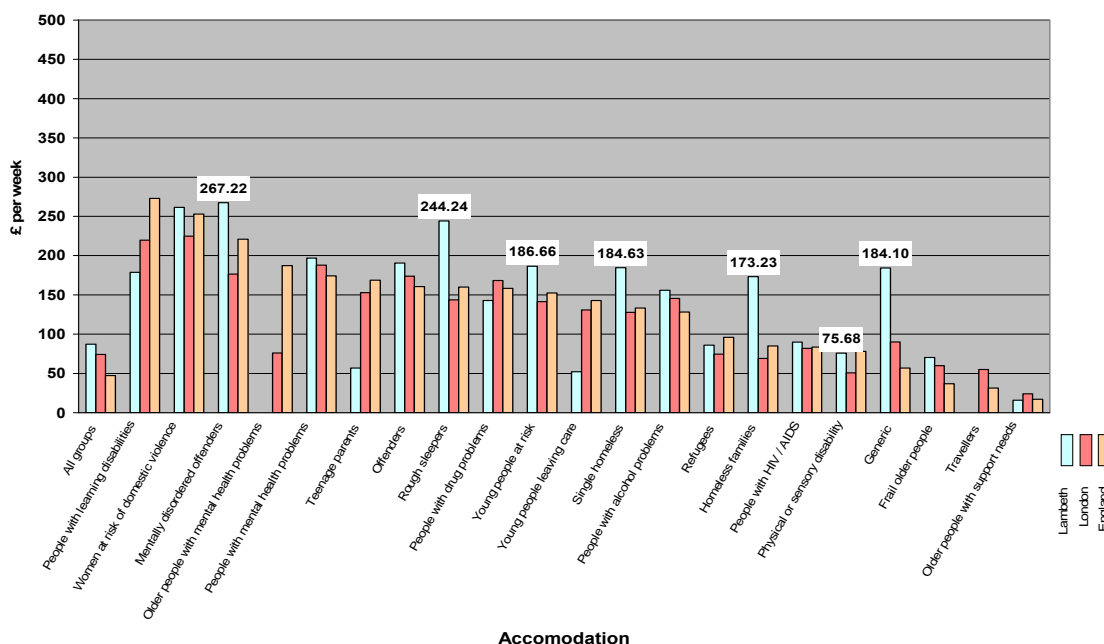
<sup>II</sup> Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

### Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)<sup>i</sup>

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms & sheltered housing
Lambeth	£ 1.60	£ 55.39	£ 82.78	£ 136.82
London	£ 0.97	£ 42.37	£ 48.73	£ 68.40
England	£ 0.70	£ 28.30	£ 34.71	£ 76.37

*'The data quoted is taken from ODPM sourced material 2003/04. This is the only data currently available. ODPM will be able to provide updated data from September 2005 and this will then be used.'*

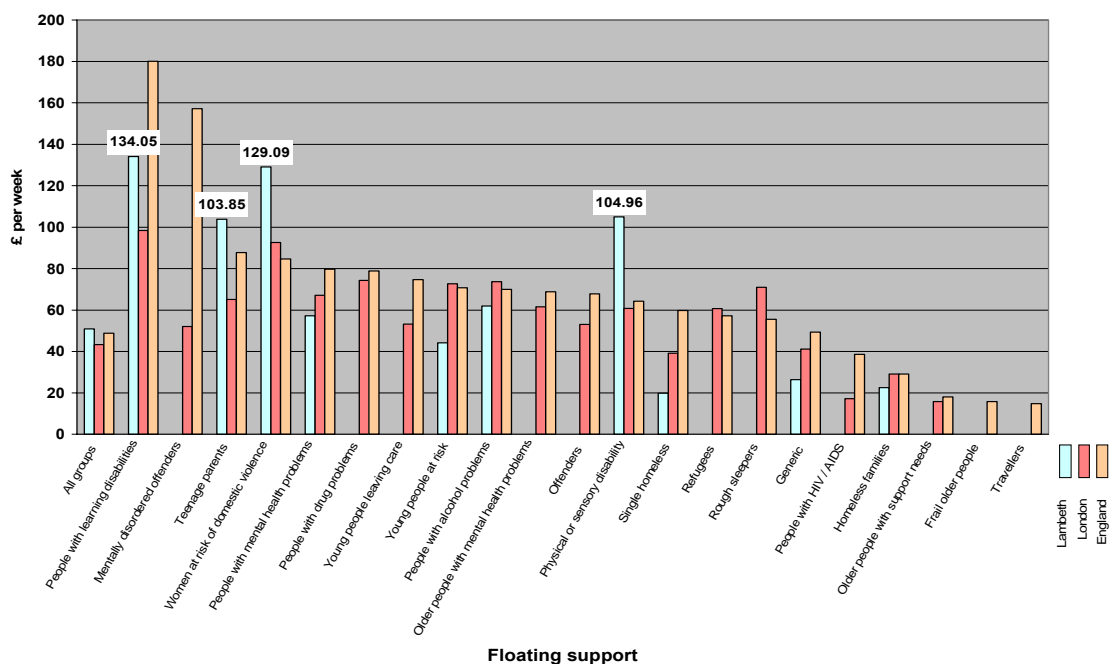
### Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>ii</sup>



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

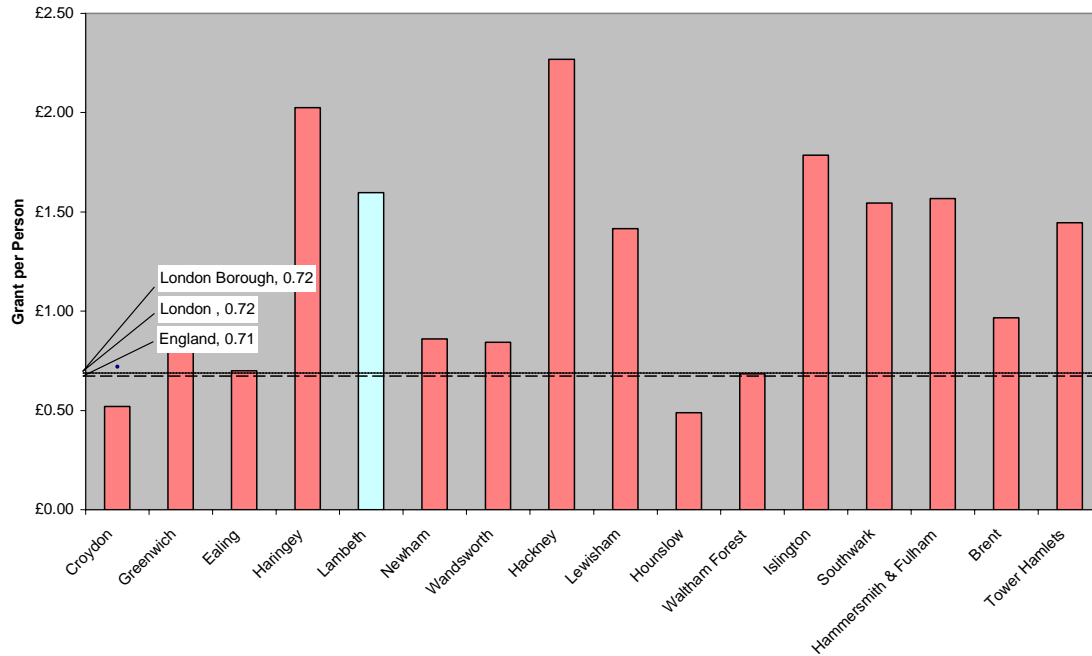
<sup>ii</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

## Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>1</sup>

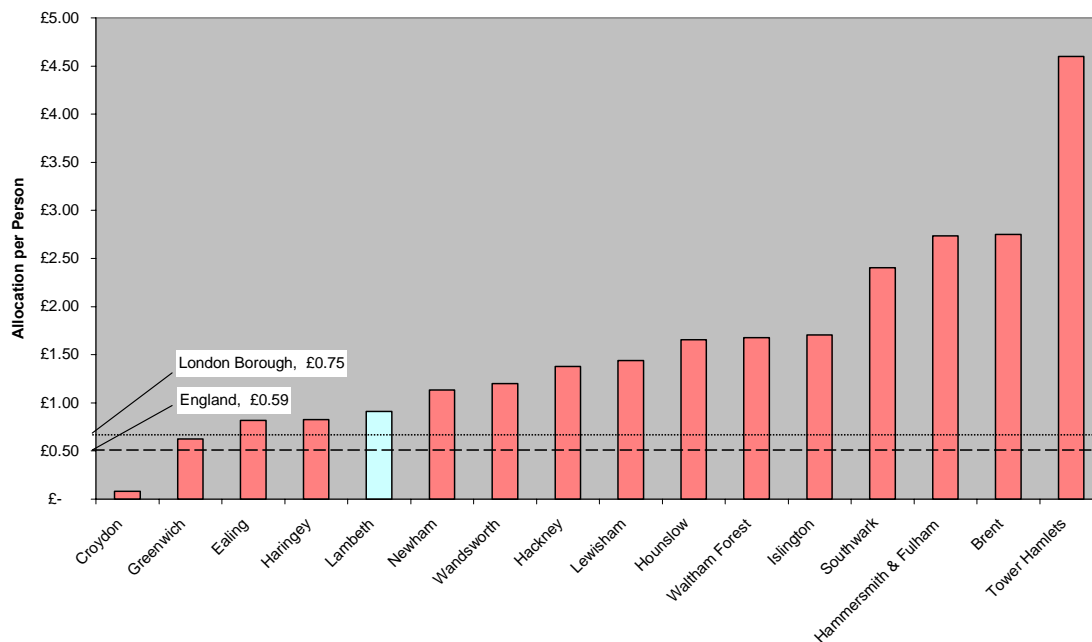


<sup>1</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

### Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours<sup>I</sup>, all London boroughs and all English councils (2004/05)



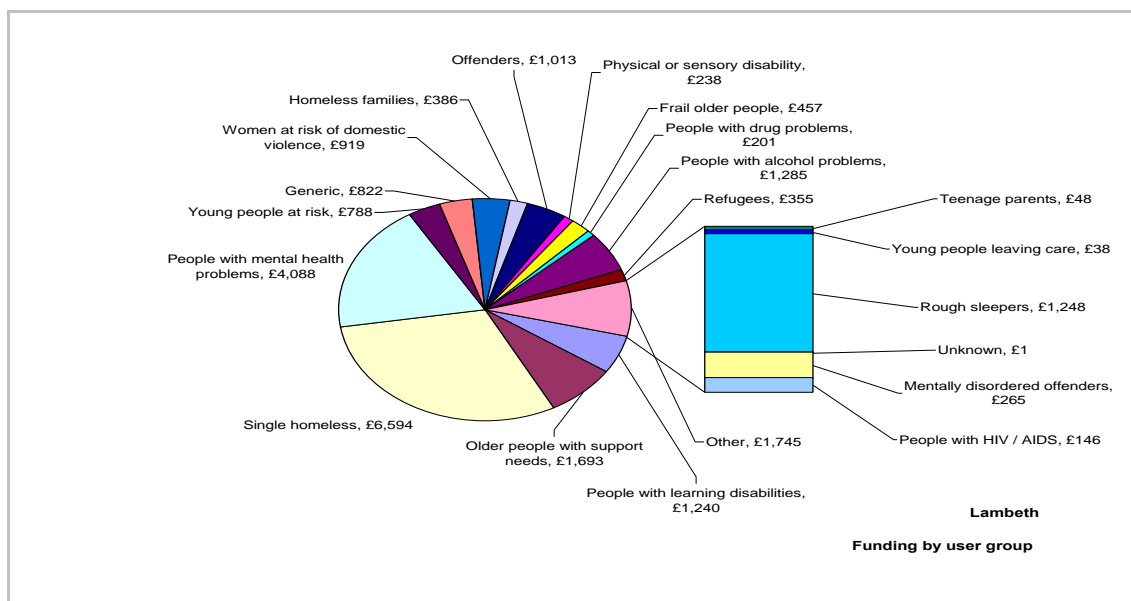
### Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours<sup>II</sup>, all London boroughs and all English councils



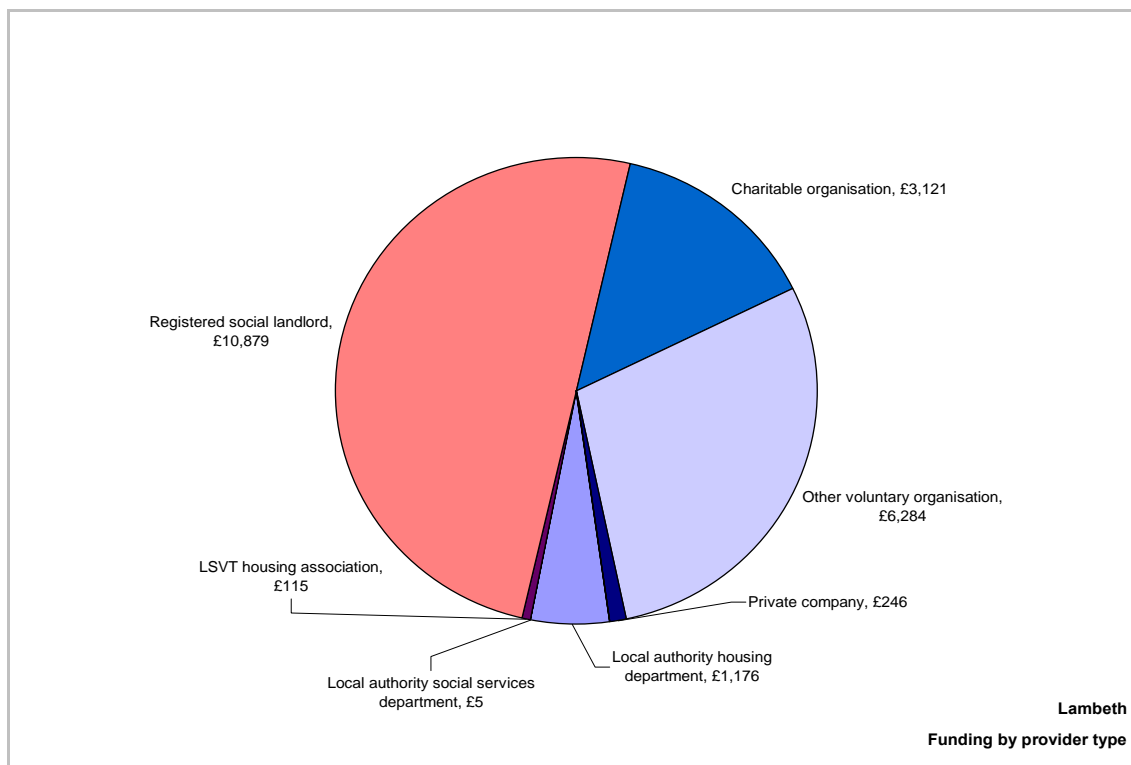
<sup>I</sup> A comparator group of similar councils.

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

### Share of spending between user groups (£000s)<sup>i</sup>



### Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)<sup>ii</sup>



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

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

## Social Services star ratings November 2004

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

	Serving people well?	Prospects for improvement?	Performance rating (CPA equivalent)
Adults' Services	Some	Promising	★ (1)
Children's Services	Some	Uncertain	

## Social services performance indicators

### Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04

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

Lambeth	
Significantly above average (●●●●●)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31). Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39). Older people helped to live at home (C32). Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that they can contact social services easily (D58).
Above average (●●●●)	Admissions of older people to residential/nursing care (C26).
Average (●●●)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40). Emergency psychiatric re-admissions (A6). Admissions of supported residents aged 18-64 to residential/nursing care (C27). Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30).

<b>Lambeth</b>	
	<p>Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30).</p> <p>Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31 March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51).</p> <p>Employment, education &amp; training for care leavers (A4).</p> <p>Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54).</p>
Below average (••)	<p>Percentage change on previous year in total emergency admissions to hospital (A5).</p> <p>Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29).</p> <p>Delayed transfers of care (D41).</p>
Significantly below average (•)	<p>Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that their opinions and preferences were always taken into account (D57).</p>

### Best value performance indicators

#### Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 compared with London boroughs

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

<b>Lambeth</b>	
Within the best 25 per cent	<p>Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63).</p> <p>Domestic violence refuge places (BV176).</p>
Average	<p>The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2).</p> <p>Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a).</p>
Within the worst 25 per cent	<p>Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).</p> <p>Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b).</p>

<b>Lambeth</b>	
	Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).

## Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed

- 1 Before going on site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that were provided for us. These included:
  - corporate documents:
  - Area and Council profile;
  - Community Strategy;
  - annual audit and inspection letters;
  - Better Care - Higher Standards Charter;
  - service documents;
  - self-assessment by the authority;
  - Supporting People shadow strategy, 2003/04 and ODPM evaluation;
  - Supporting People five-year strategy, 2005-2010;
  - service review timetable and reports from completed reviews;
  - minutes of the Commissioning Board and Core Strategy Group;
  - Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding for the Commissioning Board and Core Strategy Group;
  - homelessness strategy;
  - financial reports and ODPM data;
  - Service user leaflets and provider newsletters;
  - user engagement strategy;
  - value for money methodology;
  - eligibility criteria;
  - Supporting People reports to the Commissioning Board;
  - Supporting People reports to Council committees; and
  - Supporting People Business Unit Plan 2005/06 - 2007/08.

## Appendix 3 – Reality checks undertaken

- 2 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:
- interviews with key personnel, including Commissioning Board and Core Strategy Group representatives, members of the Supporting People team, senior managers, partner organisations and the lead councillor for the programme;
  - visits to 11 services funded by the Supporting People grant, including interviews with service users;
  - questionnaire to all service providers funded by the Supporting People grant in Lambeth;
  - mystery shopping telephone calls;
  - focus group with providers from a range of services;
  - meeting with provider representatives from the Core Strategy Group;
  - observation of a Three-Borough Provider Forum meeting;
  - observation of a consultation event with sheltered housing residents; and
  - review of service review files and complaints files.

## Appendix 4 – Positive practice

- 3 *'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).*

### **Support needs assessment and placement (SNAP)**

- The Council has set up a SNAP team which is providing an effective gateway into supported housing services, carrying out consistent assessments and improving the efficiency of placements. The team is also using the information it is gathering on the housing support needs of the people it assesses, to inform the mapping of needs and commissioning decisions.

### **Emergency and contingency planning**

- An emergency and contingency plan has been put in place. This includes responses to major incidents and emergencies, as well as the response to the closure or sudden failure of a Supporting People service provider. Two providers for each client group have agreed to act as short-term alternative providers in an emergency. The Council selected these through evaluation of service performance and quality.

### **Summaries of the five-year strategy**

- The Council has produced separate summaries of its five-year Supporting People strategy to specifically cover the following issues: mental health; domestic violence; people with disabilities; vulnerable adults; young people and homeless families; older people; and socially excluded people. These are well designed and provide accessible information for service users, providers and others. The Council has also produced an 'Easy Read' summary of the five-year strategy.