

Supporting People Inspection Report

March 2006



# Supporting People

**Brighton and Hove City Council**

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## Supporting People Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 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 Brighton and Hove City Council is a unitary authority in the South East of England. The population of the area is 251,900 living in 114,476 households. The city has a relatively young age profile, with 42 per cent of residents in the 22 to 44 age group compared to 34.6 per cent in the South East. Twelve per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The city also has a significant lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community.
- 2 The city is ranked as the 89th most deprived authority on the Government's index of local deprivation (2004). Around 20 per cent of the City's household are estimated to house a person with a support need. Research undertaken in 2001 estimated that the city had the highest prevalence of injecting drug use in the UK.
- 3 The level of home ownership in the city is low, with just 59 per cent of homes owner-occupied compared to an average of 70.5 per cent in the South East. The city has the largest private rented sector in the country (20 per cent).
- 4 The Council comprises 54 councillors. Labour is the largest party with 23 seats. The Council has been controlled by Labour minority administration since May 2003, with support from the Green Party (6 seats) and the Liberal Democrats (3 seats). The remaining seats are held by the Conservative Party (20) and Independent members (2). A Leader and committee system governs the business of the Council.
- 5 The Council's net revenue budget for 2005/06 is £289.5 million. The budget for adult social care in 2005/06 is £31.4 million. The Council employs 3,892 staff, excluding schools staff.
- 6 The Council was assessed as a 'three-star' authority (out of a possible four) by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2005, with a current score of 3 out of 4 for adult social care. In terms of direction of travel<sup>1</sup>, the Council is judged to be 'improving well'.
- 7 The Council received a Supporting People grant of £12,913,931 in 2005/06 and carried forward a cumulative under-spend of £624,483 from the previous year. In addition, the Council received an administration grant of £218,051.
- 8 There are 59 different providers in the City, with 92 contracts, providing 145 Supporting People services. These services provide 3,763 units of supported accommodation (including 726 community alarms) and 1,019 units of floating support.
- 9 Brighton and Hove City Council 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 contracted services and the outcomes for vulnerable people.

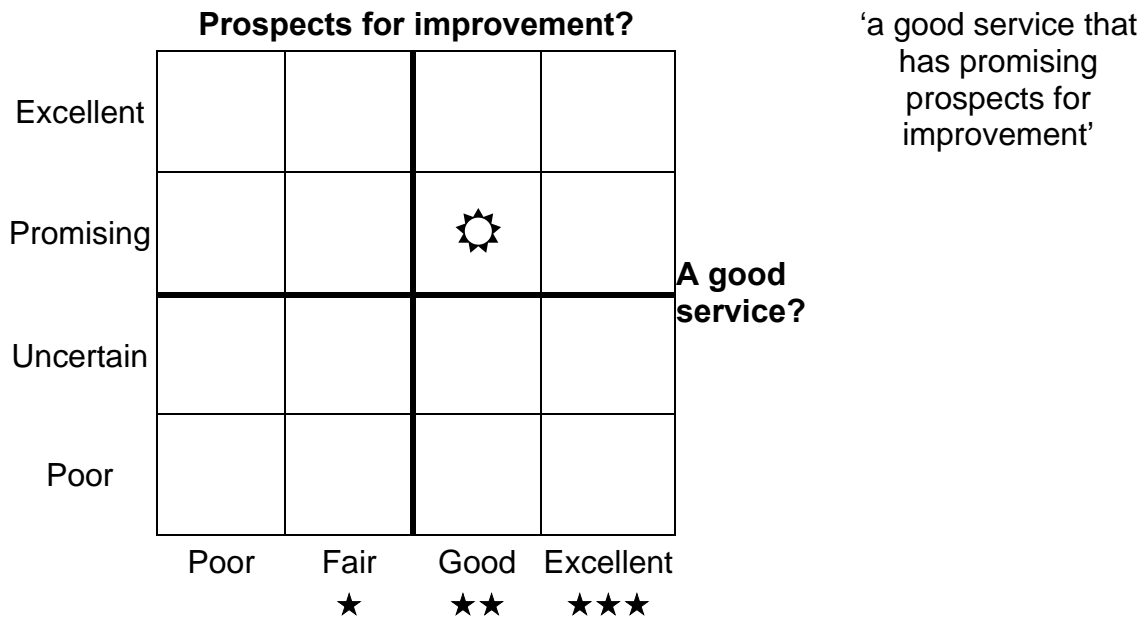
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<sup>1</sup> The direction of travel assessment was added to the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2005 and measures how well the Council is improving.

## Scoring the service

- 10 We have assessed Brighton and Hove City Council as providing a ‘good’, two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

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



Source: Audit Commission

<sup>2</sup> The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the 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.

11 We have assessed the Council's administration of the Supporting People programme to be good because of the following.

- There is a good range of up-to-date information on the Supporting People programme for service users and providers, including published leaflets, a provider newsletter and a dedicated website.
- A 'fairer charging' policy has been well-promoted, leading to a good level of assessments.
- The Council's housing options team is providing an effective gateway into a number of Supporting People services and improving the efficiency of supported housing placements.
- There are effective governance arrangements in place. The commissioning body has shown a willingness to take difficult decisions and the programme is generally well-reflected in the Council's wider plans for the delivery of support to vulnerable people.
- The Supporting People team has developed effective links with key service commissioners through the core strategy group and other fora, helping to promote partnership working.
- Lead members are kept informed about the development and delivery of the programme.
- The capacity of the Supporting People team has been strengthened to ensure effective implementation of the programme.
- Service providers are generally satisfied with the day-to-day support and advice provided by the Council.
- A new five-year strategy has been developed, with clear commissioning priorities agreed to determine future investment in services for vulnerable people.
- Progress has been made to re-model services for single homeless people and rough sleepers, with a focus on improving move-on arrangements and the quality of provision.
- Financial management of the programme and budgetary control are sound and payments to providers have been made on time.
- There is a comprehensive service review procedure in place. The service review timetable is on target to meet the ODPM deadline of April 2006. Service providers are largely positive about the Council's approach to service reviews and the related outcomes.
- There has been a focus on achieving value for money. Comprehensive value for money guidance has been developed and identifiable savings have been made through reducing contract values and de-commissioning services.
- There have been some positive outcomes for service users from the Supporting People programme. New services have been commissioned and improvements in the quality of existing services have ensured better support for service users.

## 8 Supporting People | Scoring the service

- All services visited during our inspection had support plans in place for each service user.

### 12 However, we found a number of less positive aspects of the programme.

- Service user participation in the delivery of the programme is underdeveloped. Although service users have been routinely involved in service reviews, links with established fora that cover Supporting People client groups and service user input into the governance fora need to be strengthened.
- There has been limited consultation with service providers about the development of the Supporting People five-year strategy.
- Working relationships between the Supporting People team and the Supporting People Provider Forum require further development to promote better joint working.
- Service providers have mixed views about some aspects of the Council's administration of the programme, with a significant minority expressing dissatisfaction with its approach to contract negotiation, value for money and consultation.
- The commissioning body is yet to agree local eligibility criteria to support the transparent management of the programme.
- Risk management arrangements for the programme do not fully reflect the range of risks and challenges facing the programme and are not yet fully embedded.

- 13 We have judged that the Supporting People programme has promising prospects for improvement.
- The overall aims of the Council reflect a commitment to supporting vulnerable people and there is evidence of a wider corporate track record of delivering improvements.
  - There is strong corporate and political support, and commitment, to taking forward the Supporting People programme.
  - Governance arrangements for the programme provide effective leadership of the programme and there is clarity about roles and responsibilities among those involved.
  - There is strong and effective partnership working with key commissioning areas and with external statutory partners.
  - The Council is committed to building a more positive working relationship with service providers and service users, through the use of external support and implementation of a new communication and consultation strategy.
  - The programme of service reviews has already shown that it can deliver improvements in the quality and value for money offered by services.
  - The Supporting People team has well-motivated staff who are committed to delivering further improvements in the administration of the programme.
  - The future priorities for the programme have been clearly set out in the five-year strategy and are generally supported by key commissioners.
  - The annual and team plans for the Supporting People team are broadly 'fit for purpose'. There are also clear arrangements in place for monitoring the performance of service providers, with an increasing focus on monitoring service outcomes.

14 However, there are some areas in which the Council needs to improve.

- The Council has been slow to address weaknesses in its partnership working with service providers.
- Some of the current range of Supporting People plans lack clear milestones and outcomes, making it difficult to monitor and measure progress effectively.
- The governance fora do not systematically monitor the Supporting People annual plan to ensure that progress remains on track.
- There is a need to improve members' understanding of the strategic objectives of the Supporting People programme in the city.
- Staff in the Supporting People team need to develop their contract and negotiation skills to address some provider dissatisfaction with their current approach.
- There is not yet a systematic approach to learning from complaints.
- Risk management of the programme needs to focus more closely on the risks posed by major local initiatives, such as the development of the integrated service pathway for homeless people.

## 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>3</sup> and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context, the inspection team recommends that the Council shares the findings of this report with customers, service providers and councillors, and addresses all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

### **Recommendation**

*R1 Improve standards of customer care by:*

- *updating the Supporting People complaints leaflet to include clear timescales for handling complaints made to the Supporting People team;*
- *reviewing the content of the Supporting People website to ensure that sensitive information is not publicly disseminated; and*
- *ensuring that any new leaflets about the programme are informed by consultation with service users and providers.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- increased customer satisfaction; and
- improving the quality of information provided to service users.

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

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

**Recommendation**

- R2 Improve opportunities for service user involvement in the programme by:*
- developing appropriate mechanisms to give service users from all client groups input into the governance of the programme;*
  - strengthening links between existing service user for a, local community and advocacy groups and the Supporting People programme; and*
  - ensuring that outcomes from service reviews are systematically reported back to all service users concerned.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- increased ability of the Supporting People programme to learn from the experiences of service users; and
- increased customer satisfaction and understanding of the programme.

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

**Recommendation**

*R3 Improve partnership working between the Supporting People programme and service providers by:*

- *reviewing the role of the Supporting People Provider Forum to ensure that it can effectively inform the development of the programme and engage all providers effectively;*
- *ensuring that all key strategies, plans and procedures relating to the Supporting People programme are subject to full and early consultation with service providers;*
- *setting, and publicising, clear value for money benchmarks to guide the contract negotiation process, in consultation with service providers; and*
- *taking steps to strengthen the Supporting People team's contract negotiation skills and improve service providers' understanding of the Council's approach to value for money, through appropriate training and development.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improved channels of communication between service providers and the Supporting People governance fora;
- an increased ability to learn from, and maximise, provider expertise in the development of the programme;
- a better understanding of the Council's approach to contract negotiation and value for money among service providers; and
- more effective joint working between providers and the Supporting People team around contract negotiations.

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

**Recommendation**

*R4 Strengthen the approach to service and improvement planning and risk management by:*

- *ensuring that local eligibility criteria for the Supporting People grant are agreed by the commissioning body and circulated to all service providers;*
- *updating all Supporting People action plans to include detailed milestones for major areas of work and promote better links across the planning framework;*
- *monitoring overall progress against the annual Supporting People plan at each meeting of the commissioning body and core strategy group;*
- *reviewing the risk log for the programme to ensure that it reflects the full range of risks, including those related to proposed tendering of single homelessness services, and sets out clear contingency plans;*
- *ensuring that both the commissioning body and core strategy group regularly consider reports outlining all risks facing the Supporting People programme and related contingency plans;*
- *ensuring that the commissioning body receive regular reports on outcomes from complaints and routinely consider any wider policy implications; and*
- *ensuring that all councillors fully understand the local strategic objectives of the Supporting People programme.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- more clarity about what activities and services will be funded through the Supporting People programme locally;
- an increased ability to identify slippage on key activities at an early stage and keep the delivery of the programme on track;
- an improved ability to manage the risks and financial challenges posed by the Supporting People programme;
- an improved ability to learn from complaints and customer feedback; and
- increased understanding of the strategic focus of the Supporting People programme from councillors.

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

- 16 We would like to thank the staff of Brighton and Hove City Council, particularly Andrew Wilson and Diana Bernhardt, who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

Dates of inspection: 12 January 2006 and 16 to 20 January 2006

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# Report

## Context

### The locality

- 17 Brighton and Hove City Council is a unitary authority in the south east of England. The population of the area is 251,900<sup>4</sup> living in 114,476 households. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has estimated that the city's population will increase to 288,900 by 2026<sup>5</sup>. Those aged over 80 will increase by almost 60 per cent to 2026, leading to 5,500 more people in this age group.
- 18 The city has a relatively young age profile, with 42 per cent of residents in the 22 to 44 age group compared to 34.6 per cent in the south east. Twelve per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, with the white other group (4.6 per cent) being the largest individual group. The city also has a significant lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community.
- 19 The city is ranked as the 89th most deprived authority on the Government's index of local deprivation (2004)<sup>6</sup>. In October 2005, the unemployment claimant rate was 3 per cent compared with the south east average of 1.4 per cent<sup>7</sup>. Around 20 per cent of the city's household are estimated to house a person with a support need<sup>8</sup>. Research undertaken in 2001 estimated that the city had the highest prevalence of injecting drug use in the UK<sup>9</sup>. Poor health is a significant reason for homelessness acceptances in the city<sup>10</sup>.
- 20 The level of home ownership in the city is low, with just 59 per cent of homes owner-occupied compared to an average of 70.5 per cent in the south east. The city has the largest private rented sector in the country (20 per cent) and 43 per cent of the population live in single person households.
- 21 The average house price in the city was £219,066 in July to September 2005, below the south east average of £234,832<sup>11</sup>. However, prices are beyond the reach of many local households and a housing needs survey in 2005 identified a shortfall of 7,212 affordable homes in the city to 2011.

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<sup>4</sup> Office of National Statistics, mid-year estimates, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Office of National Statistics, sub-national population projections, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> NOMIS, December 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Brighton and Hove Housing Needs Survey, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Brighton and Hove Supporting People Five Year Strategy, 2005 to 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Brighton and Hove City Council, Housing Strategy Update, 2004 to 2007.

<sup>11</sup> HM Land registry residential property prices, July to September 2005.

## The Council

- 22** The Council comprises 54 councillors. Labour is the largest party with 23 seats. The Council has been controlled by Labour minority administration since May 2003, with support from the Green Party (6 seats) and the Liberal Democrats (3 seats). The remaining seats are held by the Conservative Party (20) and Independent members (2). A leader and committee system govern the business of the Council, which includes a Housing Committee and Adult Social Care Committee.
- 23** The Council's net revenue budget for 2005/06 is £289.5 million. The budget for adult social care in 2005/06 is £31.4 million. The Council employs 3,892 staff, excluding schools staff.
- 24** The Council was assessed as a 'three-star' authority (out of a possible four) by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2005, with a current score of 3 out of 4 for adult social care. In terms of direction of travel<sup>12</sup>, the Council is judged to be 'improving well'.
- 25** The Council set up an integrated children's service (education and social care) and a separate adult social care service in 2002. The social services annual performance review in 2005 rated the Council as a two-star service (out of a possible three). Both adult and children's services are now assessed as 'serving most people well, with promising prospects for improvement'.
- 26** The Council's housing strategy and its housing revenue account (HRA) business plan have both been rated as 'fit for purpose' by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). An appraisal of options available to the Council for its housing stock of around 15,000 homes, including 2,000 leasehold properties, has recently concluded that a large scale voluntary transfer of its stock to an external provider is the best option. Tenants will be asked to vote on this in May 2006.
- 27** The Council's corporate plan for 2004 to 2007 sets out its key priorities and indicates that it will focus on four themes:
- delivering a prosperous and sustainable community;
  - liveability (improving quality of life for people in the city);
  - social wellbeing and caring for vulnerable people; and
  - thriving 14 year olds able to participate in city life.

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<sup>12</sup> The direction of travel assessment was added to the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2005 and measures how well the Council is improving.

## The service

- 28 The Council acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the development and delivery of the Supporting People programme in its area.
- 29 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.
- 30 Brighton and Hove's shadow Supporting People strategy was produced in 2002 and evaluated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as 'good' overall. A new five-year strategy for 2005 to 2010 has now been produced. This sets out the following vision for the Supporting People programme in the city:
- 'to enable local people who need support to improve the quality of their life by promoting independence and individual wellbeing through the provision of well planned, high-quality and value for money support services'*
- 31 There are five key objectives within the five-year strategy:
- to plan and commission services that meet local needs and priorities;
  - to commission services which contribute to national and local priorities and targets;
  - to ensure services meet the needs of diverse groups;
  - to promote integration and partnership working at all levels; and
  - to monitor and review implementation of Supporting People at a local level.
- 32 The total amount of Supporting People grant available to the Council in 2005/06 is £12,913,931 plus a cumulative underspend of £624,483 carried forward from the previous year. In addition, the Council received an administration grant of £218,051 to fulfil its role as the administering authority. An additional sum of £225,000 was allocated by the Council in 2005/06 to cover administrative costs, of which £175,000 was for Supporting People team salary costs. This amount was much higher than the sum invested by the Council in 2004/05, when the allocation totalled £29,537, of which £9,840 related to staffing costs.
- 33 Recent ODPM announcements of future levels of Supporting People grant show that the Council's level of funding will decline in the next two years. The Council will receive a Supporting People grant of £12,690,619 in 2006/07 and £12,056,088 in 2007/08.

- 34** There are 59 different Supporting People providers in the city, with 92 contracts, providing 145 Supporting People services. These services provide 3,763 units of supported accommodation (including 726 community alarms) and 1,019 units of floating support. In 2005/06, there were also four cross-authority services recognised by ODPM as catering for people from beyond the city boundaries. Three of these services are for people with drug problems and one is for women experiencing domestic violence.
- 35** The breakdown of spending across client groups in January 2005 was:
- 26.7 per cent for single homeless people;
  - 17.6 per cent for people with mental health problems;
  - 13.1 per cent for rough sleepers;
  - 11.5 per cent for people with learning difficulties;
  - 9.4 per cent for older people with support needs;
  - 4.2 per cent for offenders;
  - 8.7 per cent for young people at risk;
  - 4.6 per cent for people with drug problems; and
  - less than 1 per cent each for: people with alcohol problems; homeless families; older people with mental health problems; people with physical or sensory disabilities and teenage parents.
- 36** At the time of our inspection, the highest cost Supporting People service was £540.74 per week for an accommodation-based service for people with learning difficulties. The lowest cost service was £0.69 per week for a community alarm service for older people.
- 37** Brighton and Hove City Council 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 contracted services and the outcomes for vulnerable people.

## How good is the service?

38 The assessment was based upon the following key issues:

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

### Governance

39 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.

40 Governance arrangements in Brighton and Hove were established at an early stage and are generally working well. The commissioning body has an appropriate level of senior representation, with full engagement of both health and probation partners, and has demonstrated its ability to take difficult decisions. The core strategy group provides appropriate policy support to the commissioning body and has ensured strong linkages between the programme and wider service priorities. The Accountable Officer (AO) has been effective in championing the programme and councillors have been kept informed about its development. However, there is scope to improve councillors' understanding of the strategic objectives of the programme. The governance fora also need to develop a stronger focus on systematically monitoring progress against key Supporting People plans and communicating key decisions to service providers.

### **Terms of reference and memorandum of agreement**

- 41** A memorandum of understanding has been developed, helping to clarify the role of the Council as the administering local authority (ALA) and the commissioning body. The memorandum covers issues such as quorum, voting rights and decision-making. The veto rights of the ALA in relation to financial and compliance matters are made clear in the agreement and there is a dispute procedure in place.
- 42** Terms of reference (TORs) for the commissioning body and core strategy group make their respective roles and responsibilities clear. For example, the commissioning body is responsible for approving the five-year strategy and annual plan, while the core strategy group is responsible for their development. Minutes of all core strategy group meetings are presented to the commissioning body and vice versa, helping to promote a joined up approach.
- 43** Although the memorandum and TORs were broadly clear, we identified some practices which were either inconsistent with ODPM guidance or out of step with the Council's focus on partnership working. For example:
- the memorandum had not been signed by all members of the commissioning body and did not reflect the current membership of the group;
  - the Accountable Officer was included as a voting member of the commissioning body. This could give rise to a potential conflict of interests, with this officer responsible for both approving the work of the Supporting People team and making decisions based on its work; and
  - the TORs for the core strategy group had not been updated to reflect the recent addition of a provider representative and did not fully clarify how voting arrangements would work in the absence of a consensus decision.
- 44** During the inspection, the Council provided updated copies of relevant documents which showed that these issues have now been satisfactorily addressed. This will help to ensure that there are codified and agreed arrangements in place if consensus decisions cannot be reached.

### **Commissioning body**

- 45** Supporting People commissioning bodies are a requirement under grant conditions and must have senior representation from the administering local authority, the local health services - usually one representative from each primary care trust (PCT) and the area probation service. 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.

- 46 The commissioning body in Brighton and Hove has appropriate levels of senior representation from key partner organisations and meets on a quarterly basis. The group is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive and includes an Assistant Chief Probation Officer from the Sussex Probation Area and the Director of Performance and Development from Brighton and Hove PCT. The Accountable Officer also sits on the group, ensuring a clear link to the core strategy group which he chairs. The seniority of commissioning body representatives means that they are able to make decisions about the pattern of spend and strategic priorities without due delay.
- 47 All partner organisations consider that an effective partnership has developed. There has been a high level of attendance at meetings from all partners and all representatives indicated that meetings were well-managed and inclusive, with a focus on joint working and strategic decision-making. There has been an emphasis on making decisions by consensus, and it has not yet been necessary for a vote to be taken. The group receives effective support from the Supporting People team who provide detailed reports with clear recommendations.
- 48 The information presented to the commissioning body is appropriate to the level of decision making. Examination of papers presented to the group and interviews with its members demonstrated that the group has taken a series of decisions about service reviews and budget matters and played a role in shaping the five-year strategy. However, while the Supporting People annual work plan has been agreed by the group, its progress has not been systematically monitored. A stronger focus on monitoring progress against the plan would help to identify slippage on key tasks and keep work on track.
- 49 There is evidence of the commissioning body taking a number of difficult decisions. For example, a decision was taken to de-commission a homeless persons' night shelter that was considered to provide an unsatisfactory level of support and standard of accommodation, with the related savings earmarked for investment in a new rehabilitation service. This was agreed despite some community opposition and representations to local councillors. Decisions have also been taken to de-commission services that are not considered to be effective or strategically relevant following service reviews, with 19 services de-commissioned or re-modelled since April 2003.
- 50 Commissioning body members' links with other strategic partnerships has promoted integration of the programme into wider corporate initiatives. For example, the Chair also sits on the local strategic partnership and is leading a review of the local health economy and the PCT representative chairs the drug action team (DAT) commissioning group, helping to ensure that wider health and city priorities are reflected in the development of the programme. The Council's draft local area agreement (LAA) is also seeking a number of flexibilities around the Supporting People programme, such as the removal of monitoring and grant restrictions to enable funds to be linked with probation resources to assist people leaving prison to obtain accommodation and get resettled. It also includes a target to increase level of move on accommodation by 50 units, which aims to address the pressures experienced by many Supporting People providers.

### Core strategy group

- 51** The core strategy group meets on six-weekly basis and is chaired by the Assistant Director for Housing Strategy, who is also the Accountable Officer (AO) for the programme. The group brings together representatives from several key commissioning areas, including learning disabilities and mental health, and includes the managers of single homeless and rough sleeper services and the youth offending team (YOT). Probation and PCT representatives attended the majority of core strategy group meetings (12 out of 14) between May 2004 and September 2005 and make an effective contribution to its work.
- 52** The core strategy group has played a key role in shaping the strategic direction of programme. The group has led the development of the five-year strategy, with commissioners overseeing strategic service reviews and related needs assessments for their areas, ensuring synergy with wider commissioning priorities. The group has also worked together to tackle under-performing services and develop new provision for key client groups. Several representatives cited a better understanding of other service areas as a positive benefit of their participation in the group, leading to improved joint working.
- 53** Outcomes of service reviews, budget matters and service provider performance have also been routinely considered by the group, though there has been less focus on systematically monitoring progress against the Supporting People annual plan. Additionally, while the group has made a clear contribution to the development of the programme, a specific work plan for the group has only just been finalised. However, this now contains clear targets for key areas of work and a focus on monitoring the annual plan.
- 54** Although some service areas are not directly represented on the core strategy group, effective linkages are in place. For example, the YOT representative covers children's, families and schools services and there are links with priorities in the youth justice plan, as well as with young people's asylum and leaving care services. Equally, the DAT co-ordinator reported a strong interface between the DAT treatment plan and the Supporting People priorities for substance misusers, due to her wider links with Supporting People staff and representatives on the governance fora.
- 55** In contrast, links between the core strategy group and the wider provider body require further development. Although the City's Supporting People Provider Forum asked to be represented on the core strategy group in July 2004, the chair of the forum was only invited to join the group in summer 2005, with delays reflecting core strategy group members' concerns about involving providers in sensitive discussions. However, the lack of provider involvement limited opportunities to raise providers' concerns' directly and caused some providers to feel distant from the strategic development of the programme. Some providers who responded to our questionnaire and attended our focus group also felt that key decisions about the programme were not always communicated effectively. Although the SP team do communicate some decisions via newsletters and meetings of the provider forum and other fora, provider feedback suggests a need for a more systematic approach.

- 56 There is currently no mechanism for user involvement in the core strategy group, though some members do have links with existing fora, such as those for people with learning disabilities and young people. However, there are plans to develop more effective linkages covering all client user groups as part of a new SP consultation strategy (see section on service user involvement below).

#### **Accountable officer**

- 57 The Assistant Director for Housing Strategy is the Accountable Officer for the programme. In addition to chairing the core strategy group and attending the commissioning body, he manages the Head of Supporting People and Independent Living, ensuring that he is well-informed about the programme. He has also championed the programme corporately, through presentations to the Director of Education's and Chief Executive's management teams.
- 58 The Accountable Officer's involvement in a wide range of housing and social care groups has provided essential links to other key strategies. This has helped to meet some identified gaps in housing support without reliance on Supporting People funding. For example, through the development of its ten-year private sector leasing initiative designed to tackle the lack of affordable housing in the City, the Council secured 50 additional units of supported accommodation for people with mental health problems, with support provided by the PCT-funded community mental health team.

#### **Corporate commitment**

- 59 There is a clear commitment to the programme from senior officers and councillors. The Council has committed substantial financial support to the programme in the past two years to ensure it is delivered effectively. This is discussed later in this report. The Chair of the Adult Social Care Committee, who acts as the portfolio holder for the programme, and the Chair of Housing receive regular briefings on the programme. Reports on the programme are also regularly presented to the Housing Committee, covering issues such as service reviews, contract extensions, provider performance and options for future savings.
- 60 Our discussions with lead councillors demonstrated an understanding of some of the operational aspects of the programme and a strong commitment to driving up the quality of services. However, the strategic objectives of programme, such as its links with the Council's approach to reducing homelessness, were sometimes less well understood. Methods of increasing councillors' awareness of the overall aims of the programme should therefore be considered so that they can champion the programme and related strategic and financial decisions effectively.

### **Cross-authority working and partnership protocols**

- 61** There are good links between the regional Supporting People structures and Brighton and Hove Supporting People programme. The lead officer for Supporting People in Brighton and Hove attends meetings of the South East Regional Implementation Group (SERIG) which aims to develop a strategic approach to the implementation of the programme in the south east region. The group has made some progress in developing a joint approach to value for money to guide future contract negotiations and have agreed a joint accreditation process to reflect sub-regional decisions on 'passporting' services.
- 62** The lead officer for Supporting People in Brighton and Hove also chairs a cross-authority working group, bringing together relevant partners from East and West Sussex, Kent, Surrey and Medway. A cross-authority statement has been produced, covering issues such as information sharing and joint commissioning. The group is also looking at a range of issues, including benchmarking and contracts, and undertaking some work to map the previous location of service users and identify gaps in services. As the first meeting of the group was only held in July 2005, outcomes are relatively modest, but this forum provides opportunities to develop consistent approaches and share good practice.
- 63** Effective multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA), allowing agencies to assess, share and manage information about risks posed by dangerous offenders, are in place. A new protocol is also about to be signed with the Supporting People team covering the re-housing of specific public protection cases. The Supporting People team has agreed in principal that it will take cases without a local connection, and this requirement was recently lifted to house one offender who could not be accommodated elsewhere. The probation service has also worked with the Supporting People team to arrange specific intensive floating support for three specific high risk cases.
- 64** The Council is working with the PCT to minimise delays in hospital discharge times for older people. A postholder with a joint health and housing remit, reporting to the Accountable Officer, has led the development of a fast track procedure into sheltered housing for up to 15 older people who either require assessment or rehabilitation in a non-hospital setting or who are waiting to access longer-term care provision. Supporting People funds are used to provide housing related support as necessary, as part of an overall care package, leading to some positive outcomes for clients.
- 65** A joint protocol between children's and young people's services, housing and the Supporting People team is providing a more flexible, user focussed approach to meeting the needs of children leaving care. Previously, an 18 year-old leaving care had to present as homeless within one month of their 18th birthday to access accommodation, leading to some inappropriate placements. Under the new protocol, a wider range of options are now possible: for example, care leavers can now access supported accommodation anytime between 18 and 21 years of age. Benefits cited by children's services staff included better tailored and care and greater clarity about funding arrangements.

## Delivery arrangements

- 66 Delivery arrangements for the programme are broadly effective, though there are some weaknesses which need to be addressed.
- 67 The Supporting People team has recently been re-structured to increase capacity and is making good progress against its service plan for 2005/06. There are robust arrangements for financial management and a fairer charging policy has been implemented successfully.
- 68 The development of the five-year strategy has helped to build an understanding of gaps in services and future priorities. Imbalances in the pattern of services are being tackled through the development of new schemes and services are being re-modelled to ensure a stronger focus on independent living.
- 69 However, the working relationship between the Supporting People team and providers requires improvement and consultation on the five-year strategy did not maximise provider expertise and feedback. Local eligibility criteria for the programme have not yet been agreed and risk management is underdeveloped.

### Supporting People team

- 70 The Supporting People team is based in the Council's Housing and City Support Directorate, which covers adult social care, housing strategy and neighbourhood services and helps to ensure effective integration between the programme and wider housing and social care priorities. The team is led by the Head of Supporting People and Independent Living and includes 16 other staff (14.3 full-time equivalents):
- a Supporting People Manager;
  - a service review team of four staff, including a team manager;
  - a contract procurement team of six staff, including a Finance Officer and team manager; and
  - a quality and performance team of five staff, including a team manager.
- 71 The capacity of the team was strengthened in summer 2005 by the appointment of five additional staff, reflected in the current staffing profile outlined above. This has helped to reduce the line management responsibilities of the Head of Supporting People and Independent Living, allowing a greater focus on strategy development. The re-structuring has also ensured sufficient resources to manage key aspects of the team's work and led to greater clarity about roles and responsibilities. Despite some reliance on temporary and seconded staff, the team has sufficient skills and expertise to drive the programme forward.
- 72 The Council has provided additional resources to support the growth of the team, with a total sum of £225,000 allocated in 2005/06 to cover additional costs. However, while this investment has clearly helped to strengthen the team and offset reductions in the administration grant provided by ODPM, there was no value for money assessment to support the increase in resources (see 'value for money' later in this report).

- 73 Effective performance management arrangements for the team are in place. The team has an agreed annual team plan, with individual officer responsibilities clearly defined. This shows satisfactory progress on most tasks for 2005/06, though links with some of the more strategic work outlined in the Supporting People annual plan are not always fully reflected in the team plan (see 'How does the service manage performance', below). Staff reported that they had regular supervision and appraisal sessions, with good access to training.
- 74 The team has good access to specialist support where necessary. For example, corporate finance officers meet with the Lead Officer on a monthly basis to monitor the Supporting People grants and staff from the legal and democratic services team have provided procurement advice on the interim and steady state contracts and attended some appeal hearings following service reviews.
- 75 Feedback from providers indicated that most are satisfied with the support provided by the team. We carried out a survey of the 59 providers and received 25 responses (42 per cent). This found that 17 out of 25 were satisfied or very satisfied with the advice and support available from the Council. However, there were a small number of negative comments about delays in responding to queries and frequent staff changes. There were also higher levels of dissatisfaction with the team's approach to contract negotiation, value for money and consultation - these issues are explored later in this report.

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

- 76 All Supporting People administering authorities had to submit a five-year strategy to the ODPM by 31 March 2005. The Council met this deadline and the strategy<sup>13</sup> was agreed by the commissioning body in January 2005 and by the Council's Housing Committee in March 2005. The strategy has been structured in line with ODPM guidance and an executive summary has been produced.
- 77 The five-year strategy makes links with priorities identified in a wide range of local strategies and plans, including the mental health accommodation strategy, the City's 2020 Community Strategy, the community safety and crime reduction strategy and the joint commissioning strategy for older people. Reference has also been made to national targets, such as those covering homelessness, re-offending and hospital discharges. This helps to show how Supporting People supports the wider aims and targets of the Council and its partner organisations.

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<sup>13</sup> Supporting People five-year strategy, 2005 to 2010, Brighton and Hove.

- 78 The Council carried out a supply and mapping exercise to inform its 2003/04 shadow strategy and undertook further work to inform the new document. Examples of work undertaken include the following.
- A snapshot survey of housing support needs was undertaken October 2003. Survey forms were distributed at over 150 locations in the city and identified the often complex and multiple support needs across all client groups, including 279 people with a learning difficulty; 631 homeless people with additional needs; 672 people with mental health problems; 437 substance misusers and 192 offenders.
  - Strategic service reviews were undertaken by a number of commissioning areas, highlighting gaps in provision for key client groups, value for money issues and analysis of existing services.
  - Obtaining more qualitative input from key commissioning areas and service providers through needs mapping feedback seminars held in January 2004 and a feedback questionnaire publicised alongside the draft strategy.
- 79 The views of service users were identified using existing information derived via feedback from existing consultative fora and strategy development work, some of which was rather dated. However, service users' views are consistently reflected in the document and some gaps were addressed through additional consultative work with hard to reach groups, such as gypsies and travellers. Feedback was also sought from some advocacy groups, including Age Concern, MIND, lesbian and gay groups and the Racial Harassment Forum, though it is not always clear how their views were reflected in the final document.
- 80 There are mixed views about the five-year strategy consultation process. Commissioners and statutory partners were generally positive, with all feeling well-engaged and able to influence priorities. In contrast, 14 out of 25 service providers who responded to our survey raised concerns about lack of consultation and/or short timescales for responding to proposals. This reflects weaknesses in the Council's approach to provider consultation, with early work to promote involvement in needs mapping not supported by a wider programme of engagement. Although a visioning event has recently been held to promote the strategy to all stakeholders, more extensive consultation at an earlier stage would have ensured greater ownership and better understanding of providers' concerns.
- 81 Despite some weakness in the approach to consultation with providers, we concluded that the needs mapping work was generally robust and provided sufficient understanding of gaps to inform future priorities. However, we identified some areas for improvement. For example, while commissioners often explained how some gaps in provision were being met via other funding streams and wider service developments, this is not made explicit in the five-year strategy, making it hard to see the relationship between the Supporting People programme and other health and Council initiatives.

- 82** As the results of the needs mapping exercise found a need for growth in services across most client groups, the core strategy group adopted a pragmatic approach to meeting identified priorities. This took into account the distribution of current spend, overall size of each client group and the client group priorities. Floating support was subsequently identified as the most important priority, as it promotes choice, offers flexibility and, in the context of reducing budgets, can deliver services to more people. Although the rationale for this approach is not fully spelt out in the five-year strategy, proposals for the re-distribution of funds are clear, with a focus on:
- expanding provision for teenage parents and increasing floating support for vulnerable families and young people;
  - commissioning low level preventative support for particular client groups; and
  - commissioning a housing-related support for a new extra care sheltered housing scheme.
- 83** Service commissioners generally agree with the priorities in the five-year strategy. Our discussions with PCT and probation service staff and service commissioners indicated that they were supportive of the proposed priorities, though probation raised concerns about gaps in floating support for offenders.
- 84** The provider survey showed a more mixed response, with 12 out of 18 respondents expressing satisfaction with the priorities and 6 expressing dissatisfaction. Recent feedback from providers involved in consultation around the integrated pathways models for single homelessness services has also raised concerns about the focus on moving to floating support, the related impact of separating housing management and support functions and the financial impact on housing associations if they have to remodel current supported housing accommodation. This suggests that the overall risks of new approach need to be mapped more comprehensively to ensure its implications are fully understood.
- 85** As the implementation of the strategy will be dependent on releasing some resources from existing provision, the strategy places an equal emphasis on re-modelling and modernising existing services, improving access to existing provision and de-commissioning services which are not strategically relevant. Based on this approach, the Council has already produced detailed options for savings and growth in the programme to 2007/08, outlining anticipated changes in levels of funding and units of support by client group.
- 86** Work to support the implementation of the five-year strategy is clearly detailed in a five year plan and annual plan, with a wide range of tasks identified to take forward key priorities. These plans are discussed more fully later in this report.

### Delivery of strategy priorities

- 87 There are significant imbalances in the level of Supporting People funding across client groups, 39.8 per cent of the budget is currently spent on services for the single homeless and rough sleepers, though many of these people will have other needs, including substance misuse and mental health problems. In contrast, a number of groups receive less than one per cent of the budget. These are: people with alcohol problems, homeless families, older people with mental health problems, teenage parents and people with physical or sensory disabilities.
- 88 There are currently gaps in floating support services for a number of groups and no Supporting People provision for travellers, mentally disordered offenders, refugees, and people with HIV/AIDs.
- 89 The Council has started to make progress in addressing imbalances in provision, with an initial focus on initiatives designed to improve the quality of homeless and rough sleepers' services and secure efficiencies. Examples of this include the following.
- Carrying out a tendering exercise for rough sleepers services (94 units) to raise standards of provision and promote a stronger focus on move-on through the development of tiered services.
  - Developing an integrated support pathway for single homeless services funded by the programme, designed to improve integration with wider care and support services, remove duplication in existing provision and achieve a better balance between low level preventative floating support services and high level accommodation based services to prevent 'silt up' of existing services. A stronger focus on moving people through the range of services is fundamental to the approach, supported by targets. Although implementation of the model is still being discussed with providers, it is envisaged that it will form the basis of a re-tendering exercise for all single homeless services in 2006/07, with annual estimated savings of £525,000 to the Supporting People budget.
  - Developing a wider move-on strategy to reduce pressures in existing services. Although this work is at an early stage and not yet supported by a clear action plan, a draft strategy includes a focus on making greater use of private sector accommodation and changing users' expectations. Changes have already been made to the Council's choice based lettings systems to give high priority to people in supported housing to promote move-on.
- 90 The re-configuration of the Council's homelessness services, which now provides closer integration of prevention and advice, tenancy relations and homelessness assessments, is also supporting move-on objectives by placing a stronger emphasis on assessing housing-related support needs at an early stage to increase the suitability of placements and thereby promote better outcomes (see, Access to services and information, later in this report).

- 91 Good links with the PCT through the governance fora and wider partnership working is supporting the re-modelling of provision and ensuring that wider funding opportunities are being maximised. For example, the PCT has worked with the Council to jointly commission a direct access hostel for people with mental problems to replace a poor quality privately-run Supporting People funded service, with community care, housing and Supporting People funding now covering support and accommodation costs. The PCT commissioner for mental health services is also planning to work with the Supporting People team to develop an integrated pathway for mental health services.
- 92 Another priority area for change is sheltered housing for older people. The Council is aware that much of its present stock is not fit for purpose and some is now difficult to let. Additionally, while the Supporting People budget currently funds a range of support for older people, there is a recognised need for a wider range of medium and low level support to support the wider preventative agenda, as well as the further development of extra care housing.
- 93 To address these issues, the Council agreed an extra care housing strategy for older people in November 2005. This focuses on developing purpose-built extra care and reviewing eligibility criteria for sheltered housing to ensure that allocations reflect the need for support. Proposals have been supported through consultation with a number of community groups, including the Council's Older People's Council and the Sheltered Housing Tenants' Action Group. Although its implementation is at an early stage, the strategy will help to ensure more effective targeting of Supporting People funding for older people, including those with higher level support needs.
- 94 Although new service development is constrained by wider budget issues, a number of new pipeline schemes and remodelled services are extending provision to some groups.
- Pipeline funding has been used to expand and improve the standard of accommodation at a women's refuge. The refuge previously had just 5 bedrooms, all with shared facilities. There are now 15 self contained units, 12 of which are located in a new build block, and extensive childcare facilities targeted at different age groups. Three units for women with higher support needs mean that refuge can now house women experiencing domestic violence with mental health problems.
  - The Council, in partnership with Hanover Housing Association, was awarded £2.3 million by the Department of Health to develop 37 new extra care flats in February 2005. This provision will come on stream in May 2006, with housing-related support funded by the programme.
  - New accommodation based provision for teenage parents (8 units) has been developed by re-modelling a service for people with substance misusers that was not considered effective. The scheme was developed in partnership with the PCT's teenage pregnancy co-ordinator and has links with a range of other employment and support services.

- 95 Effective linkages between the Supporting People team and key commissioning areas in the areas of learning difficulties, mental health, teenage pregnancy, children's and young people's services, substance misuse, older people's services and homelessness services were evident during our inspection and will provide a firm basis for future joint working.

#### **Relationships with providers**

- 96 Our provider survey found mixed views about providers' involvement in the delivery and development of the programme. While 16 out of 25 providers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement, 9 said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. A majority commented positively on the approach to service reviews and overall support provided by Council. However, written concerns about a lack of consultation on wider strategy and service issues or limited timescales for responses were made by 15 respondents (though 5 of these also acknowledged some improvements over the past 12 months).
- 97 Providers were involved in the early development of the programme via an existing Supported Housing Forum (now the Supporting People Provider Forum). However, when the programme began in April 2003, its relationship with the Supporting People team became less clear and the Forum evolved into a provider-led group.
- 98 Feedback from both providers involved in the Forum and the Supporting People team acknowledged that there had since been difficulties developing a constructive working relationship. Although the Lead Officer has attended most quarterly meetings of the Forum to provide updates, most meetings held in 2004 and 2005 were spent debating structural arrangements for consultation between the Supporting People programme and providers, with little sustained focus on wider strategy and programme development issues. Attendance from providers has also been low (usually around 12 providers), limiting opportunities for wider engagement.

- 99 Although some provider dissatisfaction with the programme could reflect the Supporting Team's focus on challenging the quality and delivery of services in a previously unregulated market, the Council has acknowledged a need to strengthen working relationships and improve consultation with providers, with a greater focus on early involvement. Some action has already been taken to secure improvements. This has included:
- working with the National Housing Federation and Supporting People Provider Forum to clarify and improve relationships between the Supporting People programme and the governance fora;
  - inviting the chair of the Supporting People Provider Forum to attend the core strategy group;
  - holding a visioning event on the five-year strategy for all stakeholders in October 2005. This was attended by over 80 stakeholders, including around 30 providers, and offered workshops to discuss issues such as the move-on strategy and communication arrangements; and
  - formally inviting comments on the integrated pathway proposals for single homeless people via the Forum (though feedback from a number of providers we spoke to still felt this should have happened at an earlier stage).
- 100 A number of providers who responded to our questionnaire and attended our focus group cited these developments as evidence of an improving working relationship. The recent development of a consultation and communication strategy for the programme, which includes proposals to use an external consultant to facilitate the provider forum, also aims to achieve further improvements. This is discussed more fully later in this report (see, 'Does the Council have the capacity to improve').
- 101 A new learning disabilities provider forum has recently been formed which will meet quarterly and inform the development of the commissioning strategy for people with learning difficulties. This will link to the Supporting People programme through the wider provider forum and the core strategy group representative covering learning difficulties. Twenty providers attended the first meeting and terms of reference are currently being agreed.

### **Financial and performance monitoring and contracts**

- 102 The Council has 107 interim contracts in place, covering 145 services with 59 different providers. In terms of monetary value around half of the funding is invested in services provided by registered social landlord and 14 per cent with charitable organisations. Only 19 per cent of the funding supports Council provision.
- 103 At the time of our inspection, all interim contracts had been signed by providers and the Council, with formal variations routinely issued following service reviews. A 'steady state contract' has been developed, following consultation with providers and work to identify best practice with other authorities and the regional cross authority group. Steady state contracts will be issued to services for two years as appropriate from 1 April 2006, now that future funding has been confirmed by the ODPM. This is sensible and pragmatic approach.

- 104 A significant proportion of service providers lack confidence in the Council's approach to contract negotiations. Thirteen out of 23 respondents expressed satisfaction with the approach, but 10 stated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, with issues raised including poor communication, the absence of long-term contracts, and an insufficient focus on outcomes and service risks.
- 105 In response to these concerns, the Council has provided evidence of its approach to contract negotiations, demonstrating that meetings are held to discuss contracts with providers and negotiate changes. We were also provided with examples where the Council had changed its original position following feedback from service providers or agreed to fund service above upper quartile levels either to reflect the overheads of small providers or to minimise risks. However, based on the negative feedback, we judged that the Council needs to work more closely with service providers to clarify its approach to contract negotiation and to further develop the contract negotiation skills of Supporting People team staff.
- 106 Clear financial and monitoring arrangements are in place for the Supporting People programme. The Lead Officer has monthly budget monitoring meetings with corporate finance officers and regular briefings on the grant budget and future financial forecasts are presented to the commissioning body. However, we could not identify any evidence that the administration grant budget is presented to the commissioning body and judged this to be a gap.
- 107 There is a specialised IT system that monitors the Supporting People programme and enables staff to monitor grant expenditure and payments. While staff raised some concerns about its flexibility, payments to providers have been timely and there have been no budget shortfalls due to late payments. All providers who attended our focus group expressed satisfaction with the payment process.
- 108 There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that providers are able to complete and submit workbook (performance) information on time. Support has been provided to help service providers complete the performance returns, initially through training workshops and, more recently, on a one-to-one basis. Action has also been taken by the team to address non-returns, with the majority of default notices (26) issued by team relating to non-return of workbook data. ODPM data checks have only raised one minor concern about the workbook returns and this has now been resolved.
- 109 Some progress has been made in developing performance outcome indicators for Supporting People services. An outcome pilot project was run by the Supporting People team in 16 services for rough sleepers and offenders in 2004 and service commissioners have worked with the team to produce draft outcome indicators across all client groups. Providers have also been involved in discussions about outcome monitoring through workshops. This work has helped to develop an understanding of risks and benefits of the approach and some outcome indicators, covering retention, move on and employment, have already been included in the rough sleepers' tender prepared by the team.

### **Eligibility criteria**

- 110** The Council has been slow to agree local eligibility criteria for the programme. Although the service review procedure sets out the ODPM grant conditions, the core strategy group only agreed to develop local criteria for individual client groups for inclusion in service specifications in July 2005, with consultation with providers not scheduled to take place until February 2006. Lack of clear criteria increases the risk that 'grey areas' will be treated inconsistently and challenged by providers.
- 111** Despite this gap, the review team understood the need to challenge cases where funding appeared to be used to discharge a statutory duty and eligibility is addressed in service reviews. Our visits to 12 services also found provision to be eligible under the terms of the grant. However, we had some concerns about ineligible support being provided to support children at a women's refuge, which the Council has now agreed to review.

### **Fairer charging**

- 112** Brighton and Hove introduced a 'fairer charging' policy in 2002. The policy, which reflects Department of Health guidance, was agreed by both the commissioning body and the Housing Committee in November 2002. The policy includes an appeals procedure and was recently updated to better address concerns about late notifications from providers.
- 113** Although all providers received notification of the charging policy in February 2003, consultation prior to its implementation was limited, with only one consultation meeting held in a sheltered housing scheme. However, the policy has now been widely promoted via leaflets and information is also available on the Council's website.
- 114** Service providers are generally aware of the policy and take-up is relatively high. A survey of nine providers recently undertaken by the Supporting Team found that 89 per cent were aware of how to get a fairer charging assessment for service users when needed. Since the introduction of the policy, there have been 56 assessments, with nine users required to pay for all or part of their support.

### **Risk management and savings**

- 115** The approach to managing risks associated with the programme is underdeveloped. A Supporting People risk assessment log has recently been developed under the Council's corporate risk management policy. This lists potential risks associated with the programme based on the Audit Commission's key lines of enquiry. However, it does not spell out how risks associated with the sudden closure or failure of a Supporting People provider would be managed and lacks a focus on risks posed by high profile local initiatives, such as the proposed re-modelling of homelessness services. The commissioning body only agreed to review the risk assessment log bi-annually in October 2005. This is not frequent enough to identify and account for emerging risks in a rapidly changing environment.

- 116** There has been a stronger focus on the financial risk posed by the programme. Both the commissioning body and core strategy group receive regular updates on progress against savings and efficiency targets. Detailed proposals to achieve savings of £755,467 in 2006/07 have been developed to meet overall reductions in the level of grant, with a future savings target of £306,516 in 2007/08. Savings are expected through service reviews, the re-modelling and re-tendering of existing provision, and reduction of unit costs to below the regional upper quartile.
- 117** The commissioning body agreed to award no inflationary uplift to providers in 2004/05 and 2005/06 due to concerns about potential reductions in grant. Although all providers received written notification of these decisions, there is no evidence of wider consultation with providers to inform these decisions. However, providers were given the opportunity to appeal against the decision and four were subsequently awarded an increase.

### **Service reviews**

- 118** ODPM guidance requires ALAs to review all services funded through the Supporting People programme within three years, starting from 1 April 2003. ALAs are required to produce a service review timetable together with a rationale to explain how reviews have been prioritised.
- 119** The delivery of the service review programme in Brighton and Hove has been a strength. The service review timetable is on track for completion by March 2006, with 106 reviews completed and the remaining 53 in progress. There is a clear procedure for carrying out reviews and providers reported high levels of satisfaction with both the conduct and outcomes of reviews.
- 120** Reviews are carried out by a skilled service review team. The team has experience of managing supported housing services, covering a range of client group specialisms. The team also benefits from support from legal services, contracts, procurement and finance.
- 121** Additional expertise has been secured by involving other stakeholders in the service review process. For example, the accommodation manager from Southdown NHS Trust was involved in a review of a service for homeless people with mental health problems and the PCT's teenage pregnancy co-ordinator provided advice when a review resulted in the re-modelling of a service to support teenage parents.
- 122** Stakeholder involvement in reviews of in-house services has also ensured some objectivity when reviewing Council services. The Chief Officer for Probation was involved in a review of Council provided high-support hostel for homeless people and the accommodation manager from Southdown NHS Trust participated in a review of a Council provided floating support service.

- 123** The prioritisation of service reviews shows a focus on tackling areas of high expenditure and driving up standards. For example, homelessness and rough sleepers' services were reviewed first because of the overall budget commitment and concerns about quality, due to the lack of previous regulation. This was followed by older people's services, which were also previously unregulated and account for almost half of the funded units. However, while this is a rational approach, it has also meant that reviews of some services with high unit costs, such as those for people with learning difficulties, have yet to be concluded.
- 124** Procedures for carrying out reviews are clear and comprehensive. A review procedure, which was updated in 2005, reflects ODPM guidance and covers strategic relevance, quality, performance and cost effectiveness. The majority of reviews have included a validation visit, with only eight having a 'desk-top review' only, of which seven were registered services which were subject to decommissioning. Outcomes from reviews are recorded in the ODPM review workbook and our examination of a sample of these showed that information is properly recorded.
- 125** User's views are taken into account during the review process. The procedure includes a requirement for review officers to interview 10 per cent of service users. A range of methods is used to solicit feedback, including a questionnaire, one-to-one meetings and group discussions. A learning disabilities advocate has also been involved in some reviews. This is discussed more fully later in this report (see, 'Service user involvement').
- 126** Action plans are developed following reviews, with comprehensive follow-up by the Supporting People team. Providers are given up to one month to make improvements relating to health and safety and protection from abuse issues, and up to two months to deal with other issues. However, while this has ensured a focus on continuous improvement, feedback from some providers indicated that timescales were not always realistic, particularly where changes had to be made to wider organisational policies and procedures.
- 127** Recommendations from all reviews are presented to the core strategy group, the commissioning body and the Housing Committee for agreement. Providers can challenge the outcome of the procedure through an agreed and transparent appeals procedure, which includes an opportunity for providers to make representations to the commissioning body. There have been two appeals to date, one of which upheld the review decision. The other overturned the decision due to lack of evidence of user consultation, though the service was de-commissioned following further work by the review team.

- 128** The service review procedure and related action planning is helping to raise the quality of services and promote value for money. Overall savings of £296,147 have been identified, 13 services have been re-modelled or merged and 19 have been de-commissioned or re-tendered. Examples of improvements identified, include the following.
- A review of an accommodation-based service for people with mental health problems run by a private provider identified a lack of support planning, an absence of clear procedures and poor quality accommodation. Following the review, the Council agreed to privately lease the accommodation, with support costs jointly met by the Supporting People programme, housing and community care, ensuring better standards of support.
  - Implementation of the service reviews has resulted in a higher level of Council nominations to existing support, increasing opportunities to refer appropriate placements.
  - Overall improvements in quality assessment framework scores have been achieved. 210 'D' grade scores were identified during initial validation visits to Supporting People services. Following implementation of action plans, 70 per cent of these score (147) have now been upgrade to a 'C', with 41 of the remaining 63 'D' scores relating to just two services.
- 129** Feedback from our provider focus group identified high levels of satisfaction with the service review process. Most commented favourably on the professional approach of review staff and the thoroughness of the approach. Results from our provider survey also confirmed high levels of satisfaction:
- 18 out of 25 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Council's processes and arrangements for service reviews;
  - 21 out of 23 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the involvement of service users and stakeholders in service reviews; and
  - 18 out of 22 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcome of their service review.
- 130** Where any dissatisfaction with the review process was raised by providers, comments tended to focus on a tendency for review officers to micro-manage, a lack of adherence to, or clarity, about timescales, and interpretation, and over-reliance on, the quality assessment framework.

### **Service user involvement**

- 131** Although there are a number of examples of service user involvement in the Supporting People programme, there is not yet a systematic approach to securing feedback from service users who are involved in existing Council fora or promoting service user input into the governance arrangements. Outcomes of service reviews are not fed back to the service users concerned.

- 132** There is a positive approach to involving service users in the service review process. Providers who attended our focus group said that review staff worked hard to put service users at their ease and ensure an appropriate, sensitive approach to consultation. This has helped to identify and make improvements to reflect service users' concerns. For example:
- a review of a young people's service found that many service users had concerns about the eviction policy. Following discussions with children's services, the provider and the Supporting People team, the policy was amended;
  - two homeless hostels have now introduced women-only sections due to safety concerns raised by female residents; and
  - an ODPM bid for capital funding has been submitted to provide additional cooking facilities at one scheme where service users highlighted concerns about the paucity of existing facilities.
- 133** Although some providers raised concerns about the approach to involving people with learning difficulties in reviews, advocates from a learning difficulties group (AdvoAct) had been involved in some of them. A new tailored questionnaire, developed in consultation with a local advocacy group for people with learning difficulties and a local provider, should also help to promote more effective feedback from this client group.
- 134** Service users involved in validation visits are offered an opportunity to give feedback on the review officers, through the circulation of a standard form. However, there is no systematic approach to informing service users of the outcomes of reviews.
- 135** All the schemes we visited placed some emphasis on user involvement, through house meetings, surveys and exit interviews. Although service users we spoke to expressed satisfaction with their involvement, most could not identify specific improvements due to consultation, though CCTV had been introduced at a service for rough sleepers in response to residents' concerns.
- 136** Service users have been involved in shaping the development of some new projects and initiatives taken forward by the Supporting People team, for example:
- members of the Supporting People team have attended three tenants' groups to discuss the rough sleepers' tender, with interviews with five users also helping to inform the service specification; and
  - a service user group has been involved in the development of the new extra care sheltered housing scheme, including local residents from the former residential home and representatives from local voluntary groups, including the Alzheimer's Society, Older People's Council and 60 plus Action Group. The group has shaped the use of communal space in the scheme and the provision of wider facilities, including local health facilities.

- 137 The Council has a range of partnership boards and user groups across social care services and children's service. However, while members of the core strategy group have some links with these groups, it is not clear what impact these arrangements have had on the overall delivery of the programme. Equally, work to identify any gaps in representation across Supporting People client groups has not yet been taken forward by the Supporting People team.
- 138 There are currently no arrangements in place for service users to feed into the governance arrangements. The Supporting People team recognise that service users are not sufficiently involved and this needs to be developed without duplicating existing work. The communication and consultation strategy includes plans to address this, through a service user steering group and developing more formal links between existing service user groups and members of the Supporting People team, with each team member covering a specific client group.
- 139 Although there was some service user involvement in research to inform the five-year strategy, this did not extend to all client users, with much reliance on existing data. There have so far been no events and conferences to promote the strategy to service users and there is currently not a newsletter for service users.

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

- 140 Access to services and information about the Supporting People programme is satisfactory. The introduction of a standard assessment procedure for supported housing applicants via the Council's Housing Options Service is helping to streamline the referral process and ensure appropriate placements. Published leaflets are generally of a good quality and information about the programme is included on the Council's website. However, we identified some concerns about the publication of sensitive information and scope to improve the management of complaints.
- 141 The majority of referrals for short-term and hostel type accommodation and floating support funded by the Supporting People programme are now made through and managed by the Council's Housing Needs Service. This service includes three geographically-based housing options teams bringing together prevention and advice, tenancy relations and homelessness and support assessments. This model has put an earlier emphasis on assessing people's support needs, ensured more appropriate referrals to supported housing services and contributed to reducing voids rates in supported accommodation, with referrals in place for all bar two voids at the time of out inspection.
- 142 A new housing needs assessment form is currently being piloted within the housing needs service and aims to build a full picture of an applicant's support needs. As part of its introduction, assessment staff received training in assessment skills and information about Supporting People services in December 2005, designed to promote effective signposting. When the new assessment procedure is fully rolled out, it should minimise duplication for service users, many of whom previously were assessed at several points in the process.

- 143** A comprehensive directory of Supporting People services, including details of services and contact details, is available on the website and in hard copy format. Copies of the directory are being distributed to a wide range of access points, including voluntary sector and advocacy service providers and the Council's public access points. The possibility of distributing copies at doctors' surgeries is also being explored.
- 144** There is a dedicated Supporting People website which is easily accessible and contains a good range of information. The website includes the directory of all Supporting People services and includes links to the ODPM Supporting People website. The site also provides general information about the programme; a secure area for providers, with information about service reviews and performance monitoring; information about the five-year strategy; and future events. Copies of the five-year strategy, an executive summary and Supporting People leaflets are available online.
- 145** We raised some concerns about the public dissemination of sensitive information during our inspection, after noting that the addresses of some services for ex-offenders were included on the website services directory. In response, the Council has now removed this information and has agreed to review the website to ensure that any other sensitive information is removed.
- 146** The Supporting People team has produced public leaflets setting out information about fairer charging and the Supporting People complaints procedure. We found the leaflets clear and accessible but raised concerns about the lack of timescales in the complaints leaflet. In response, we were advised that a new version of this leaflet will now be produced, indicating that complainants will be advised how their complaint will be handled in two working days and that complaints will be investigated in ten working days.
- 147** There is no evidence that providers and user views were sought to inform the new leaflets. However, providers were consulted on the draft specification for the website and the new format for the provider newsletter in July 2005, albeit with a limited response.
- 148** Service standards and service contact details for housing, social services and health services are well set out in the 'Better Care: Higher Standards' charter for 2005/06. The document is updated annually and includes a clear definition of Supporting People and details of the website link. However, it does not make reference to the Supporting People leaflets available or the complaints procedure.
- 149** Provider newsletters have been produced and include information about the programme. For example, a copy circulated to all providers in May 2005 included information about service reviews, fairer charging and the Council's in-house training courses on the protection of vulnerable adults. Feedback from the provider focus groups indicated that the newsletter was considered helpful.

- 150 An improved Supporting People complaints procedure was introduced in October 2005, spelling out how complaints will be dealt with and proposals to capture learning from complaints. As indicated, the procedure has been promoted by a public leaflet. This has increased the number of complaints made to the team, with eight recorded between April 2003 and September 2005, compared to six from October 2005 to date.
- 151 Our file checks showed that complaints were handled satisfactorily, with investigations of appropriate depth. However, the inclusion of Supporting People complaints in a file with wider service complaints and the absence of clear record sheet showing the chronology of actions made progress and outcomes difficult to track. In response, the Council has now agreed to file Supporting People complaints separately and monitor outcomes on a six-monthly basis in line with the newly agreed procedure.

## **Diversity**

- 152 A corporate commitment to promoting equality and diversity is reflected in the development of the Supporting People programme, though there remains scope for development. The needs of different communities have been assessed in the five-year strategy and the review procedure includes a focus on diversity. However, there is scope to strengthen links with community groups covering hard-to-reach groups. More work is also required to develop meaningful diversity targets for Supporting People services.
- 153 The Council has made progress in taking forward its equality and diversity agenda. Inclusivity is identified as one its key values in the Corporate Plan for 2004-2007 and an inclusive policy was agreed in 2004, with progress overseen by an Equalities Forum. Equalities impact assessments are being carried out under its race equalities scheme for 2002 to 2005, though the Supporting People team are not scheduled for review until August 2006. The Council has achieved level two of the Local Government Equalities Standard (LGES) and has set a target to reach level five by 2007/08.

- 154** The five-year strategy includes separate assessments of the needs of BME and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) people, as well as outcomes of consultation with other excluded groups, such as offenders and rough sleepers. This has helped to identify some specific needs and issues. Examples include:
- over-representation of BME groups in supported housing services, with 22 per cent of people surveyed in the needs mapping exercise in 2003 from BME groups, which is almost four times higher than in the general population;
  - a need for amore proactive approach from the Council and other landlords to deal with issues of racial harassment;
  - problems of domestic violence between same sex male couples and a need for more support for male victims;
  - more accessible supported housing choices for older LGBT people, including sheltered accommodation;
  - a lack of service for older female rough sleepers with alcohol problems; and
  - a need for floating support for Travellers to help them understand providers' procedures and bureaucracy.
- 155** Further information about housing related-support needs has also been identified in the housing needs survey 2005 undertaken by the Council. This included face-to-face interviews with older people, young people, BME households, and people with learning difficulties. However, this information has yet to inform the five-year strategy, with results only recently made available.
- 156** Consultation with community and advocacy groups covering a number of hard-to-reach groups was undertaken as part of the five-year strategy, including the Domestic Violence Forum, LGBT Young Homelessness Group and Ethnic Minorities Council. However, as indicated earlier, it is not always clear how feedback from these groups influenced the priorities with the final document. There is a recognition that better links need to be made with relevant groups to ensure ongoing input into the development of the programme.
- 157** There are currently few culturally specific Supporting People services. Currently, the programme funds two services for Jewish people, providing supported accommodation for people with learning difficulties and older people. The five-year strategy places an emphasis on promoting the access and suitability of existing services, rather than developing specialised provision, with plans to undertake a programme of equality audits across services for each client group.

- 158** Implementation of the five-year strategy action plan will benefit a number of hard-to reach groups. The development of an integrated pathway for people with mental health problems will look at increasing the accessibility of services to women and there are plans to increase floating support to a wider range of groups, including teenage parents, parents of children at risk, and substance misusers. Gaps in services are also being addressed through wider partnership working. For example:
- the housing service is currently developing proposals for 'sanctuary' arrangements for women experiencing domestic violence;
  - a same-sex domestic violence working group is exploring options for improvement as part of the LGBT community safety strategy; and
  - the SP-funded floating support service for households in temporary accommodation is co-ordinating support for people with HIV/AIDSs.
- 159** The service review process has shown a focus on equality issues. The procedure includes guidance on addressing diversity in service reviews and encouraging feedback from under-represented groups. Although we were given few examples of diversity outcomes from reviews, it has helped to promote improvement in services, including the introduction of women only provision in homeless hostels and the provision of more culturally specific information.
- 160** The approach to setting equality targets in contracts and service specification needs further consideration. We were advised that under new service specifications, there will be a target to achieve 6 per cent of service users from BME backgrounds. However, this does figure not reflect patterns of use in existing services or any information about unmet demand. A more sophisticated approach is therefore required to ensure that targets are realistic and can drive improvements.
- 161** The Supporting People team collects information about the ethnicity and gender of all service users within funded schemes, helping to identify patterns of under-representation. However, examination of review workbooks did not demonstrate that this information was systematically used, with no profile of service users included in some. We also found that the ethnicity of complainants was not monitored. The team has said that it will revise its procedure to address this gap.
- 162** Public information about the Supporting People programme aims to meet the needs of different groups. For example, the website includes an overview of the programme and a summary version of the five-year strategy in five community languages. Supporting People leaflets also include straplines in nine community languages and indicate that people can request the information in large print, Braille or audio tape at Council offices.

## Outcomes for service users

- 163** The Supporting People programme in Brighton and Hove is delivering positive changes to a number of services it funds and, though this, to service users. Some new schemes have been introduced to meet specific needs and some poorly performing services have been tackled through de-commissioning and re-modelling. The quality of existing services has also been raised, with some strong evidence of improvements in support planning and better performance outcomes for service users. However, restricted levels of future funding mean that the Council is not in a position to tackle the full range of needs identified in the five-year strategy, leading to ongoing gaps for some client groups.
- 164** The implementation of the Supporting People programme has resulted some new services that have clear benefits for service users. For example, the women's refuge has been expanded from five to fifteen units, with enhanced facilities for children and women with mental health problems. Other examples include:
- the introduction of a 30 unit floating support service for private sector tenants;
  - pipeline funding was used to develop nine additional units of supported accommodation for young people moving from a hostel who need ongoing support prior to moving to independent accommodation; and
  - the funding of a post to support deaf and blind people, which has helped four disabled people to live independently at a cost of approximately £110 per person per week, compared to estimated residential care costs of £700 per person.
- 165** A number of services have also been re-modelled or de-commissioned through the service review process, to both tackle outdated, poor quality provision and meet strategic priorities. For example:
- an accommodation-based drugs service with inadequate levels of support for service users has been re-modelled to provide a service for teenage parents, with links to a number of health, education and social care services, helping to meet the gap in services for this client group;
  - a night shelter for single homeless men which provided poor service outcomes, poor quality accommodation and limited access for residents during the day has been de-commissioned, resulting in a future saving of £208,643 per annum. Savings are planned to be re-invested in a new rehabilitation centre for the same client group; and
  - a substance misuse service that was formerly a registered care home has been deregistered to provide a substance misuse service for former rough sleepers, with an additional funding provided through the DAT's pooled treatment budget. Unlike other drug services in the City, this focuses on harm reduction rather than abstinence and meets a gap in provision for this group.

- 166 The service review process has placed a strong focus on support planning, leading to greater emphasis on meeting clients' needs in a systematic way. For example, initial validation visits identified 29 services with inadequate support planning in place, but this has now fallen to 2 services, with one of these now being decommissioned. Providers who attended our focus group also acknowledged that the service review procedure had helped to promote more emphasis on service standards and moving people towards independence.
- 167 Support plans were in place at all schemes we visited and had been developed with the input of service users. Although most service users struggled to identify specific improvements since the introduction of the programme, we generally found that service users were positive about their service provider and valued the support received.
- 168 There have been improvements in the level of unplanned departures from services for many challenging client groups. For example, in 2003/04, 35 per cent of people in services for offenders left in an unplanned way compared with 13 per cent in 2004/05. Improvements were also evident for people with alcohol problems (unplanned departures falling from 88 per cent to 73 per cent); people with drug problems (unplanned departures falling from 19 per cent to 2 per cent) and people with mental health problems (unplanned departures falling from 11 per cent to 3 per cent).
- 169 Less positively, unplanned departures for older people with support needs increased from 3 per cent to 25 per cent between 2003/04 and 2004/05, though we were advised that there had been improvements between 2004/05 and the first two quarters of 2005/06 with the current level of unplanned departures now standing at 16.25 per cent. In the case of older people unplanned moves will also reflect moves to nursing care, long-term hospitals and hospices.
- 170 Feedback from some service commissioners also pointed to improvements following the introduction of the programme. For example, staff in children's services considered that the programme had made a difference to vulnerable young people in the area, with a stronger focus on stability, planned moves, and access to wider employment and training opportunities. Equally, the PCT commissioner for mental health reported that the expansion of housing based services had contributed to a reduction in institutionalised care, with an increased focus on tenancy support to promote independent living.
- 171 As indicated, the introduction of a more integrated gateway into supported housing support services in the City is designed to promote direct benefits to services users. Prior to the introduction of this model, vacancies were often not taken by the most appropriate clients and there were often delays in filling voids in supported housing schemes. The introduction of the fast-track system into sheltered housing is also ensuring appropriate community-based support for some older people who may otherwise need to remain in hospital.

- 172 Clearly, improvements in services need to be offset against continuing gaps in provision. As indicated earlier, the five-year strategy identified a number of gaps in services, including accommodation-based services for a wide range of groups, and some groups with high levels of needs, such as people with HIV/AIDs, mentally disordered offenders and refugees, are yet to benefit directly from the programme.
- 173 Some case studies of people who have already benefited from the Supporting People programme in Brighton and Hove are set out below (with names changed to protect confidentiality).

#### **Case study 1 - Fast-tracking into sheltered housing with tenancy and care support**

The Council has worked with Brighton and Hove PCT to develop a fast tracking scheme into sheltered housing for up to 15 referrals. The scheme aims to ensure that people who are 'fit for transfer' are not delayed from hospital or admitted unnecessarily, with housing related support funded by the Supporting People programme.

Mrs Jones was fast-tracked to a sheltered housing scheme with a package of care following discharge from a local assessment centre. She had been admitted to the centre following adult protection concerns, as her husband had indicated he could no longer cope. She is diabetic and has mild learning difficulties. Her husband had previously assumed responsibility for the management of their day-to-day finances.

Although it was initially felt that Mrs Jones may need residential care, the placement in sheltered housing has proved very successful. The scheme manager has ensured that she mixed with other residents and became involved in local activities. She also receives support from home care, money advice and attends a local day service. As a result, she has grown in confidence and is becoming increasingly independent. She has recently started using a local bus to go shopping on her own and now needs less support from the warden in the morning. Mrs Jones remains in contact with her husband and the warden monitors the situation in respect of adult protection concerns.

The overall cost of the current placement is £281.90 per week, with funding covering home care, day care and Supporting People-funded money advice. This is significantly less than both the cost of placement in the assessment centre (around £600 per week) and less than a placement in the private sector (around £375 per week).

### **Case study 2: Support for vulnerable young people**

The Stopover IMPACT project provides eight units of supported accommodation for young people at risk. Sue first came to the project following a crisis precipitated by her mother's alcohol problems. As a result, she had spent three months in a local mental health hospital, missed her final year at college and failed to complete her A-level studies.

At Stopover, Sue achieved stability, supported through key worker sessions and implementation of an independent living plan. She re-engaged with her college and took on a part-time job to generate some additional funds. Moving to a lower level of support, Sue was still able to access a supported housing project which assisted her through a further relapse due to examination pressures. Because of the level of support provided by the team, Sue was able to avoid re-admission to the mental health hospital, which was considered a considerable achievement. Sue has now achieved her main independent living goal by applying to university and receiving three acceptances. Staff from the Stopover project liaised with the university to ensure she received appropriate learning support and helped her to apply for a grant to purchase a laptop. Sue still receives learning support and is now enjoying student life.

### **Case study 3: Detox support project**

The detox support project provides six units of accommodation-based support for people with drug problems. Following an initial twelve week programme, clients move through to a secondary project and move-on accommodation.

Tony came to the project after being drug and alcohol dependent for over 30 years. He had been married for 21 years, with four children. He entered the project after a crisis precipitated by the death of his wife and both grandparents.

The twelve week project enabled Tony to engage with other drug misusers facing similar problems and he received support to help him cook and eat nutritional meals. He built up a good relationship with his key worker and is now in move-on accommodation. He is actively involved in voluntary work and has been drug-free for over ten months.

Tony says that he owes his life to the project and the support he received in developing day-to-day living skills and tackling his drug problem. He is in regular contact with his four children and grandchild and is now looking towards the future with some confidence.

## Value for money

### How do costs compare?

- 174** Comparisons of unit costs with England and the south east are set out in the data appendix. These are largely based on the 'platinum cut' data submitted to the ODPM in July 2003, which is the most up-to-date comparison available. These figures will not reflect the full range of work undertaken by the Council to tackle high costs, but we have taken this into account in reaching our judgements.
- 175** Overall, the Council has higher unit costs in comparison with the others. Its unit costs totaled £46.32 compared to £29.94 for the south east as a whole. However, at the time of the platinum cut the Council had only twelve services with unit costs that exceeded £300 per week and only one that exceeded £500 per week. The current profile shows that there are now just seven services with unit costs in excess of £300 per week and only one in excess of £500 per week, with most of these providing services for people with learning difficulties.
- 176** Cost profiles for individual client groups at the 'platinum cut' also reveal some high cost areas:
- the average unit costs of supported accommodation for offenders, people with alcohol problems and frail older people were within the highest 25 per cent for all Council's in England; and
  - the average unit costs of floating support services with physical or sensory disabilities and older people with support needs were also within the top 25 per cent.
- 177** Although there are difficulties in making up-to-date comparisons, an analysis of the Council's current average weekly support costs across different client groups shows that a number now fall below the median weekly support costs for the South East identified at the platinum cut. However, 21 services providing 366 units of support still have weekly average costs per service user which exceed the upper quartile cost for the south east at the platinum cut.

### How is value for money managed?

- 178** The Supporting People team and the commissioning body maintain a strong focus on value for money. Value for money guidance has been agreed and high and ineligible costs are being challenged through the service review process. However, there remains a need to demonstrate to providers that the Council's approach to value for money is based on an in-depth analysis of costs, performance and a service's overall contribution to agreed strategic priorities.

- 179** The Council has developed a clear approach to assessing the value for money of Supporting People services. Separate value for money guidance was produced in July 2004 which sets out a range of tools for assessing value for money, including an analysis of hourly support rates; staff to service user ratios; and weekly support hours per service users. It also includes guidance on examining budgets, including analysis of the housing management and support split and overhead costs. A related value for money database, which includes a range of core financial and contractual information for each service, allows the review team to make inter-service comparisons and challenge high cost providers.
- 180** While the prioritisation of the service review programme has meant that some high cost services are yet to be fully examined, the reviews concluded to date have explored the reasons for service costs above the upper regional quartile or high in comparison to other provision locally, with meetings held with providers as appropriate to explore options for savings, based on detailed breakdowns of housing management and support costs. Wider evidence of cost effectiveness has also been examined; for example, through consideration of contribution to strategic priorities, service user and stakeholder feedback and meeting demand.
- 181** The review process has led to a number of positive value for money outcomes, including reduced contract prices for the same similar level of service or increases in the service level for the same contract price. Overall, prices have reduced on 22 contracts following reviews, 4 have increased and a number of services have been re-modelled to promote better outcomes, with overall savings of £296,147.
- 182** There has also been a willingness to withdraw Supporting People funding from services which are ineligible and redistribute costs to relevant service areas. For example, there has been some transfer of costs to the Council's Leaving Care Team to cover statutory housing and support costs that should not have been met by the Supporting People programme.
- 183** Reports to the commissioning body show that there has been a consistent focus on achieving value for money, with information regularly highlighting issues about the cost, quality and performance of services. Our discussions with members of the commissioning body and the minutes of meetings of both the core strategy group and the commissioning body confirm that there has been an appropriate level of discussion and interrogation of value for money.
- 184** The Supporting People team and governance fora have not just looked at reducing payments to providers, but have focussed on savings and efficiencies that can be achieved through the joint commissioning of services and re-tendering. Examples include the recent re-tendering of rough sleepers' services which aims to improve quality and cost effectiveness of existing services and the establishment of the direct access hostel for people with mental health problems, which ensured support from the PCT to cover relevant support costs and made use of the Council's wider ten-year private leasing initiative to procure the accommodation at a reasonable cost.

- 185** The Council has worked with other authorities in the south east region to establish hourly support costs by client group. The Council proposes to use this data to inform future inflationary payments to providers. Increases will generally be targeted at those within the benchmark indicator costs, though additional payments will be considered where a high cost service's performance against the quality assessment framework is strong, with scores of 'A' and 'B' achieved.
- 186** Despite the focus on achieving value for money on the programme grant, the recent expansion of the Supporting People team was not subject to a full value for money assessment. No comparisons with other ALAs were undertaken to compare performance and outcomes against staffing levels. In our view, this was a missed opportunity to demonstrate that additional Council investment made in the team was commensurate with the overall workload and outcomes achieved.
- 187** Concerns exist among some providers about the requirement for providers submitting tenders for the rough sleepers' services to pay staff in line with prescribed local government pay scales. For example, providers indicated that there was not always a clear relationship between staff costs and service outcomes and that many providers who work across more than one authority cannot simply raise staff salary costs unilaterally in one area of their operation. In response to this feedback, and given wider concerns about the impact of this approach on wider value for money targets, the Council has indicated that this will no longer be included as a requirement in future tendering exercises.
- 188** Our provider survey identified mixed views about the Council's approach to value for money. Fourteen respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Council's approach whereas 11 said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Written comments also varied: while some commented favourably on the Council's approach compared to other ALAs they worked with, a significant minority number expressed concerns about an overriding focus on cutting costs, with insufficient regard to the problems faced by small providers, risks and service outcomes. Some also raised issues about having to cross-subsidise Supporting People services following budget reductions.
- 189** In response to these issues we have been provided with examples of contract negotiation documents and reports on service reviews which have clearly sought to identify risks, address areas of ineligibility and take service performance into account in assessing value for money, with some costs agreed above the upper quartile threshold to reflect good quality services. However, recent proposals to achieve savings by applying a blanket reduction in all unit costs above the upper quartile does not support this wider approach, implying a focus on making cuts without a full examination of cost effectiveness.
- 190** Notwithstanding the examples of positive practice provided by the Supporting People team, the feedback we received from providers still suggests a need for the Supporting People team to work more closely with providers to ensure that the Council's overall approach to value for money is better understood and fully transparent to service providers. The development of clear benchmarks for hourly rates, overhead costs and surpluses, as well as a stronger focus on outcome indicators, would assist in this process.

## Summary

- 191** We have assessed the Supporting People service provided by Brighton and Hove as a 'good', two-star service. The delivery of the programme has been well-managed by the Supporting People team, with robust financial management and a comprehensive service review process which includes a focus on value for money, strategic relevance and eligibility. Some new services have been developed and a number with poor outcomes have been re-modelled, with input from key stakeholders.
- 192** The new five-year strategy provides a reasonable overview of needs across all key client groups and sets out clear commissioning priorities. However, more work is needed to assess the risks associated with the overall shift to floating support, both for service users and providers.
- 193** Some areas of the programme still require further development. For example, there remains a need to ensure that service users have better links to the programme. Relationships with service providers also need strengthening to ensure a stronger focus on consultation and involvement in strategy development. Equally, the Council needs to do more to demonstrate to providers that its approach to value for money and contract negotiation is robust and fair.

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

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

- 194** Strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area. A track record of improvement across the Council has been reflected in the successful implementation of the early stages of the Supporting People programme. The service review programme is on schedule for completion by March 2006 and governance arrangements are working well. There has been a clear focus on delivering savings and promoting improvements in the quality of services, through support planning, decommissioning and re-modelling. However, the Council has been slow to address the weaknesses in its working relationship with service providers.
- 195** Corporately, the Council has demonstrated some improvement over the past two years. The Council's adult social care and children's services were rated as a one-star service (out of a possible three) by the CSCI in 2004, but achieved a two-star rating in 2005. Equally, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out by the Audit Commission in December 2005, which rated the Council as a 'three-star' authority (out of a possible four), judged the authority to be 'improving well'. The 2005 audit and inspection letter also pointed to a strong culture of partnership working, robust budget management and successful implementation of new arrangements to reduce homelessness in the City.

- 196** In line with the positive wider direction of travel, 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, with strong input from key commissioning areas and external partners.
- 197** Key elements of the programme have also been delivered effectively. Financial and performance monitoring systems for the programme are now well-established and service providers are receiving timely payments. Policies and procedures have been developed to support the service review programme and its implementation has resulted in improvements, in terms of both value for money and outcomes for service users. A number of poorly performing schemes have been de-commissioned or remodelled following reviews, with some new schemes extending the benefits of the programme to new client groups.
- 198** The five-year strategy was completed on schedule and includes a strong commitment to embedding the programme within wider Council strategies and commissioning plans. However, more extensive consultation with service providers would have helped to identify concerns about the shift towards floating support and allowed fuller consideration of the risks associated with new models of service, such as the development of the integrated pathway for homeless people, at an earlier stage.
- 199** In addition to quantifiable improvements in the quality of support planning and levels of unplanned departures from Supporting People services, the programme is helping to meet some wider performance goals. For example:
- the development of the fast track procedure into sheltered housing and additional accommodation-based services for people with mental health problems is contributing to targets to reduce reliance on institutionalised care and delays in hospital discharges;
  - extending floating support to private sector tenants and people in temporary accommodation is supporting the Council's work to reduce overall levels of homelessness acceptances and promote tenancy sustainment; and
  - new, more flexible approaches to housing children leaving care increases the likelihood of successful outcomes for this potentially vulnerable client group.
- 200** Although there has been progress against the majority of targets included in the Supporting People Annual Plan for 2005/06, further work is still required to strengthen the approach to risk management, to develop locally agreed eligibility criteria for the programme and to promote service user involvement in governance arrangements. Additionally, while work is underway to address the problems around move-on in the City, there is not yet a clear action plan setting out how work in the draft strategy will be prioritised and taken forward.

- 201** Despite some recent improvements, the Council has been slow to address providers' concerns about their input into the programme. Minutes of the Supporting People Provider Forum, for example, show ongoing concerns about the approach to consultation over the past two years, but there were delays in agreeing to provider representation on the core strategy group. Equally, the shadow Supporting People strategy included a commitment to develop a communication and consultation strategy for the programme, but this was only finalised shortly before our inspection. Although this document now outlines proposals for improvement, the lack of an earlier emphasis on promoting engagement means that provider expertise has not always been fully maximised.
- 202** There has been a robust approach to value for money across Supporting People services. Clear guidance on value for money has been developed and there is evidence that this has contributed to savings and improvements in the quality of services. However, further work is required to ensure that all providers are confident about the approach to value for money and contract negotiation.

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

- 203** There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in this area. There is strong leadership of the programme, with a shared understanding of its aims among key partners. The five-year strategy has set out clear priorities for future investment, with key areas of work reflected in annual, team and service plans. The Council is also open to learning from other authorities and its own experiences. However, some of the current raft of plans would benefit from closer integration and there needs to be a stronger focus on monitoring progress on key plans against agreed milestones through the governance fora. There is also scope to improve learning from complaints, develop members' understanding of the strategic objectives of the programme and improve risk management.
- 204** There is strong leadership of the Supporting People programme through the governance fora. The commissioning body has been strongly led and demonstrated its ability to take difficult decisions. The core strategy group and Accountable Officer have also played an important role in linking the programme to wider commissioning priorities. Our discussions with officers and partners involved in these fora found a good shared understanding of the need to reshape services to reduce long-term dependency among service users, supported by a stronger focus on move-on between services.
- 205** Political commitment to the programme is also evident, with members prepared to invest resources to support the delivery of the programme and take difficult decisions about the de-commissioning of services, despite strong opposition from some of the wider community. However, as noted earlier, our discussions with members identified a sound understanding of some of the operational aspects of the programme, but scope to improve the awareness of some of its broader strategic objectives and links with other Council priorities, such as reducing homelessness.

- 206** Clear aims and objectives for the programme are set out in the five-year strategy. This recognises that resource constraints will limit the development of new services and places a strong emphasis on re-modelling existing provision, developing floating support and pathway models to promote move-on between services, and improving overall quality of, and access to, existing provision. This is balanced by plans to shift resources to some client groups, such as teenage parents, vulnerable families and older people with mental health problems, who receive a disproportionately low amount of the Supporting People budget.
- 207** The development of the five-year strategy reflected some of the principles of best value (challenge, compare, compete and consult), with a clear focus on challenging existing patterns of provision, needs assessment and consultation with key commissioners, and, to a lesser extent, service users. However, lack of ongoing consultation with service providers means that some concerns associated with new approaches have not been fully explored. As a result, ownership of the strategy among providers has not been maximised.
- 208** A raft of plans, including a five-year plan, an annual Supporting People plan 2005/06 and Supporting People team plans, aim to keep implementation of the strategy on track. However, examination of these plans and associated monitoring arrangements suggested some scope for improvement. For example:
- the five-year strategy annual plan includes a number of high-level strategic targets, but does not give a clear indication of timescales, making it impossible to know when tasks are scheduled for completion and how they will be prioritised;
  - both the annual plan 2005/06 and five-year plan contain broad targets to forward key areas of work, such as the equalities audit of all services, re-focussing of services for learning difficulties to promote more flexibility, and the development of an integrated move-on strategy. However, the absence of key milestones would make it difficult to monitor and measure progress effectively. There is also a lack of focus on anticipated outcomes in the annual plan 2005/06, with most targets focussing on process issues;
  - there is a weak relationship between the annual plan 2005/06 and the Supporting People team plan for 2005/06. For example, a number of more strategic tasks within the annual plan which have been taken forward by the team, including the development of the move-on strategy and a review of referral arrangements for older people's services, are not reflected in the team plan; and
  - although the annual plan 2005/06 has been presented to both the commissioning body and the core strategy group, there has not been systematic monitoring of the plan to identify progress and slippage.
- 209** Reductions in the overall budget for the programme have been taken into account in future financial projections, with anticipated areas for savings linked to the overall implementation of the strategy's priorities. However, future forecasts are heavily reliant on savings generated through the re-modelling of single homelessness services, with the tendering exercise expected to generate a saving of £326,300 over the next two years.

- 210** There are robust arrangements in place for monitoring the performance of Supporting People services, with regular reports to the governance fora. Presentation of the performance data has recently been strengthened through the production of a traffic light report showing each service's direction of travel against a range of performance indicators. The development of outcome indicators for each client group will further help demonstrate the benefits of the programme to services users, and the cost effectiveness of individual services.
- 211** Risk management of the overall programme is underdeveloped with current monitoring tools placing insufficient emphasis on the risks posed by key strategy initiatives and those relating to service users, for example through service failure (see also, 'Delivery arrangements earlier in this report').
- 212** Opportunities for users to determine how performance is measured and monitored are limited by a lack of input into governance arrangements. The new communication and consultation includes plans to address this through improved links with existing service users' fora and the development of a service user steering group. However, while this will help to increase understanding of service users' needs and priorities, targets dates for the introduction of these new arrangements are not currently reflected in Supporting People plans.
- 213** The Council has been open to learning from both its own experiences and that of others. Examples include:
- good practice identified during service reviews is collated by the service review team, with information often shared with small providers;
  - there has been learning on Supporting People issues through partnership working with other authorities in the south east region, including information sharing on benchmarking and value for money;
  - sharing of good practice across commissioning areas is evident, for example, a peer mentoring scheme used in children's services is currently being evaluated as a potential model for single homeless people; and
  - the development of the communication and consultation strategy and work to strengthen relationships with providers has taken account of best practice in other authorities and drawn on expertise from both external consultants and the National Housing Federation.
- 214** The new complaints policy for the Supporting People team includes a focus on learning from complaints, with a commitment to analysis of outcomes on a six-monthly basis. However, there has not yet been regular reporting of outcomes and learning through the governance arrangements.

## Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- 215** Strengths outweigh weaknesses in this area. There is strong ownership of the programme within the Council and across partner agencies, providing a basis for further improvement. The Supporting People team is well-resourced and there are clear plans in place to strengthen the working relationship with service providers. Financial management of the programme is robust, with a commitment to further remodelling and re-tendering to achieve required savings. However, while savings projections have been developed, timescales for the future re-tendering of single homelessness services to achieve required savings are tight, indicating a need for close scrutiny of progress.
- 216** Strong management of the programme from an early stage has provided a basis for further improvement. Senior officers and managers involved in the governance fora are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the agreement of the five-year strategy has provided a clear direction for future work. Although there needs to be a stronger focus on systematically monitoring progress against key plans, the delivery of the service review programme and substantial work undertaken to remodel existing service provision has demonstrated a capacity to manage change well.
- 217** Partnership working across the City is strong and should contribute to the effective implementation of the programme in the future. For example, CSCI has recognised that partnership working between health and the Council is well-developed, reflected in the joint commissioning of health and social care services across most adult social care groups. This provides a firm basis for the successful integration of the Supporting People programme into wider commissioning plans. Clear links between the programme and the Council's wider work to tackle homelessness are also evident, with the programme viewed as an integral part of this agenda.
- 218** Although there are future plans to review all Supporting People services on a five-yearly cycle, there has to date been little focus on conducting joint reviews and inspections of jointly funded schemes, with some areas such as children's services highlighting difficulties resourcing the range of review and inspection work currently underway. However, the Supporting People team has indicated that it has agreed in principle to undertake joint reviews where practical, helping to minimise duplication for service providers.
- 219** The Council has acknowledged that it needs to do more to engage providers in the programme effectively and ensure earlier consultation on new strategy and service proposals. Although some work has already been undertaken to promote more involvement, further work is outlined in the new communication and consultation strategy. This includes proposals to commission an external agency to facilitate the provider forum, and a related provider steering group, and represent providers' interests at the core strategy group.
- 220** While this model has proved successful in other areas in the south east, it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness in Brighton and Hove. However, initial feedback from providers has been positive, suggesting that the proposed model could contribute to better working relationships in the longer-term.

- 221** Extra investment in the administration of the programme has ensured that the Supporting People team has the skills and capacity to manage the programme. While we raised concerns about the ability to sustain current staffing levels due to wider financial pressures facing the authority, the Accountable Officer advised that there are long-term plans for the team to take on wider performance management and contracting work in the Housing and City Support Directorate. Although the detail of this has not yet been agreed, this wider role would also help to integrate the programme with wider housing and social care initiatives.
- 222** There are effective performance management arrangements in place to ensure that the Supporting People team meets its objectives. Under the Council-wide performance and planning development scheme, all staff have individual targets which are monitored through six-weekly supervision sessions and appraisals. Feedback from the team during our inspection found a clear commitment to continuous improvement among staff and all reported that there was good access to training and development opportunities.
- 223** IT systems are in place to support financial management and monitor the performance of service providers, with some wider improvements planned. For example, the Housing Needs Service has recently developed a business case for a new IT system which will record casework and processes, capture performance data and monitor vacancies in supported housing. If implemented, this will increase the ability to produce detailed reports on the movement and profile of supported housing applicants, helping to inform both the delivery of the five-year strategy and work to promote more effective move-on through services.
- 224** The level of financial resources means that not all of the needs identified in the five-year strategy can be met in the short or medium-term and that further savings will need to be found. As indicated earlier, future financial projections have been developed to show how spending will be kept on track, with a significant proportion of savings dependent on the implementation of the new single homelessness pathway model and related re-tendering of services, with implementation of the new service model scheduled for October 2006.
- 225** However, risks associated with the re-tendering of single homelessness services require further evaluation. While the re-tender of the rough sleepers' services has provided some evidence of the Council's ability to manage such exercises satisfactorily, some providers have raised concerns about the provider market's ability to respond at the speed envisaged and a need for clearer identification of related de-commissioning costs prior to the commencement of tendering. Although the Council has recently agreed to establish a Project Board, including health and probation partners, to oversee implementation of the re-tendering exercise, financial contingency plans and risk assessments need to be developed to cover the possibility of delays and minimise future service delivery problems.

- 226** As the Council moves to a formal Children's Trust Partnership in April 2006, governance arrangements will also need to be re-assessed to ensure all services for young people, including services for homeless families, remain integral to the Supporting People programme. At present, there is no direct representation of Children's Services on the governance fora. Indirect links, through the YOT representative and the Chief Executive, have proved adequate so far but more direct representation may prove beneficial in the longer-term to ensure a sustained focus on the needs of this client group.
- 227** More consideration needs to be given to blanket proposals to achieve further savings by reducing all unit costs to below the upper regional quartile for the south east. Although high quartile costs will sometimes be an indication of scope for savings, more detailed work is required on a case by case basis to establish overall cost effectiveness. This will also help to increase providers' confidence in the Council's approach to value for money.

### **Summary**

- 228** In summary, we judge Brighton and Hove to have 'promising' prospects for delivering further improvements in the management of its Supporting People programme.
- 229** The Council has successfully developed and implemented the early stages of the programme and there is wider corporate track record of delivering improvements in social care and homelessness services. There is strong corporate ownership of the programme and governance arrangements are working well, supported by a well-resourced team of staff. Effective partnership working should contribute to effective implementation of the programme in the future.
- 230** The five-year strategy includes clear aims and objectives for the further development of the programme and reflects a strong commitment to embedding the programme within wider Council strategies and commissioning plans. Reductions in the overall budget for the programme have been taken into account in future financial projections, with anticipated areas for savings linked to the implementation of the strategy's priorities. The Council is also willing to learn from its own experiences and those of other organisations.
- 231** However, there is a need to improve the quality and monitoring of Supporting People plans to support effective implementation and further work is needed to evaluate the full range of financial and service delivery risks which may arise through the proposed re-tendering of single homelessness services. There is also scope to strengthen the overall approach to risk management and develop a more systematic approach to learning from complaints.

# Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

## Demographic information

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

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**Table 1**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Brighton and Hove</b>	<b>England</b>
Population (mid-2003) <sup>14</sup>	251,900	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2003)	17.6%	18.5%
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than white - British 2003)	5.7%	10.44%
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) <sup>15</sup>	3.0%	2.4%
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) <sup>16</sup>	89	-

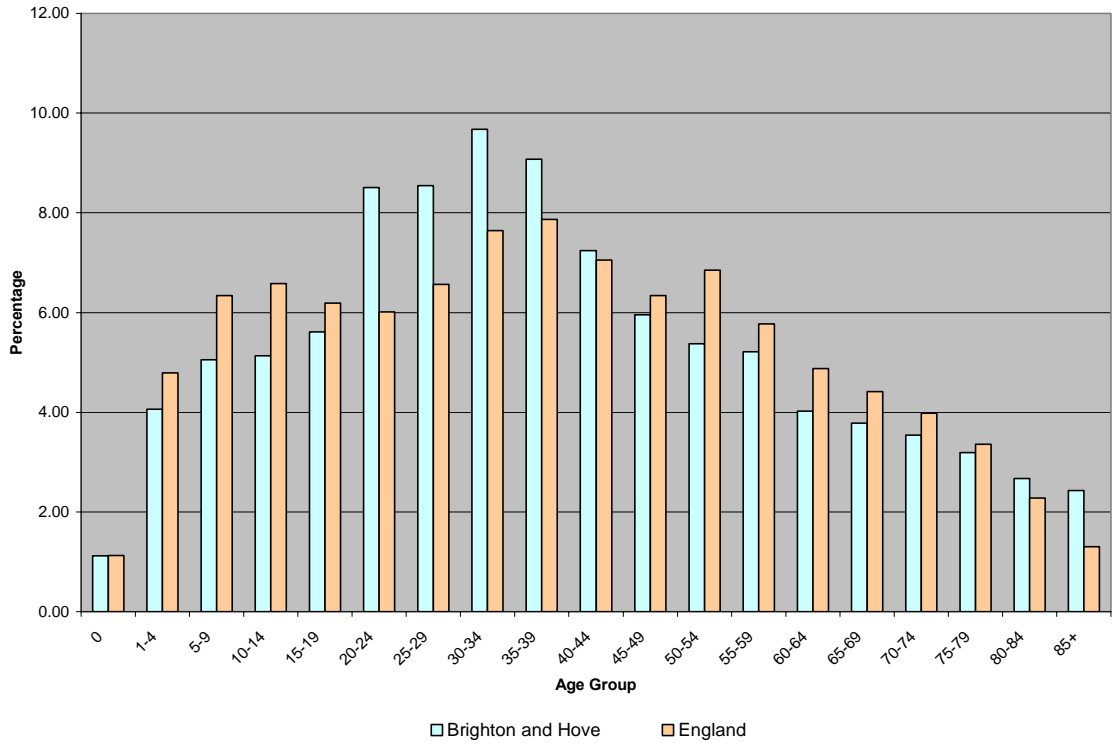
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<sup>14</sup> Source: mid-year population estimates (2004).

<sup>15</sup> Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (September 2005).

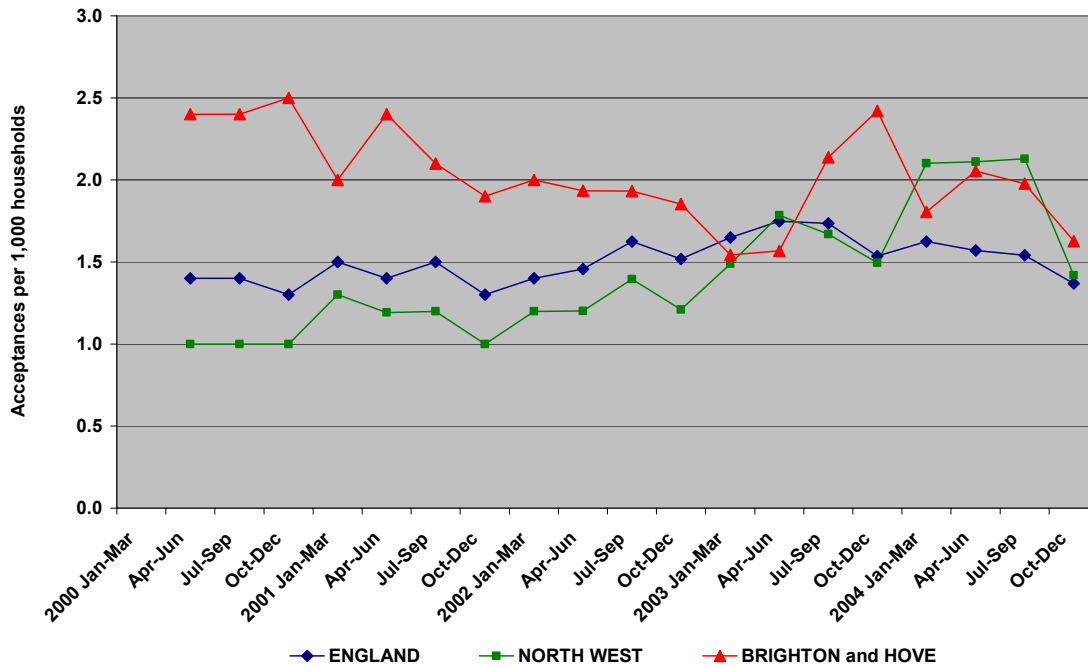
<sup>16</sup> Source: Deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the Authority.

**Figure 2 Percentage of the population<sup>17</sup> in each age group compared with England**



<sup>17</sup> Source: midyear population estimates (2003)

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

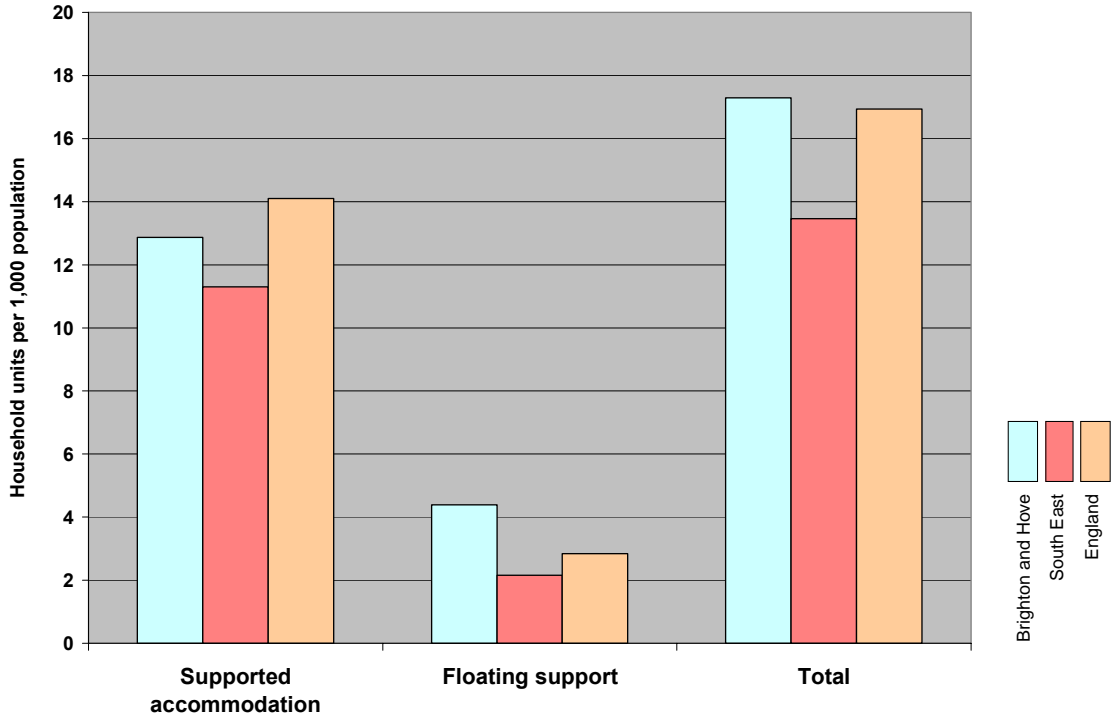


## Performance information

- 2 This section highlights strong and weak areas of the Council’s performance in services that are relevant to Supporting People. We have used the following information to help us reach our judgements:
  - data for services funded through the Supporting People programme;
  - Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores;
  - star ratings for social services;
  - performance assessment framework indicators for social services; and
  - relevant best value performance indicators.

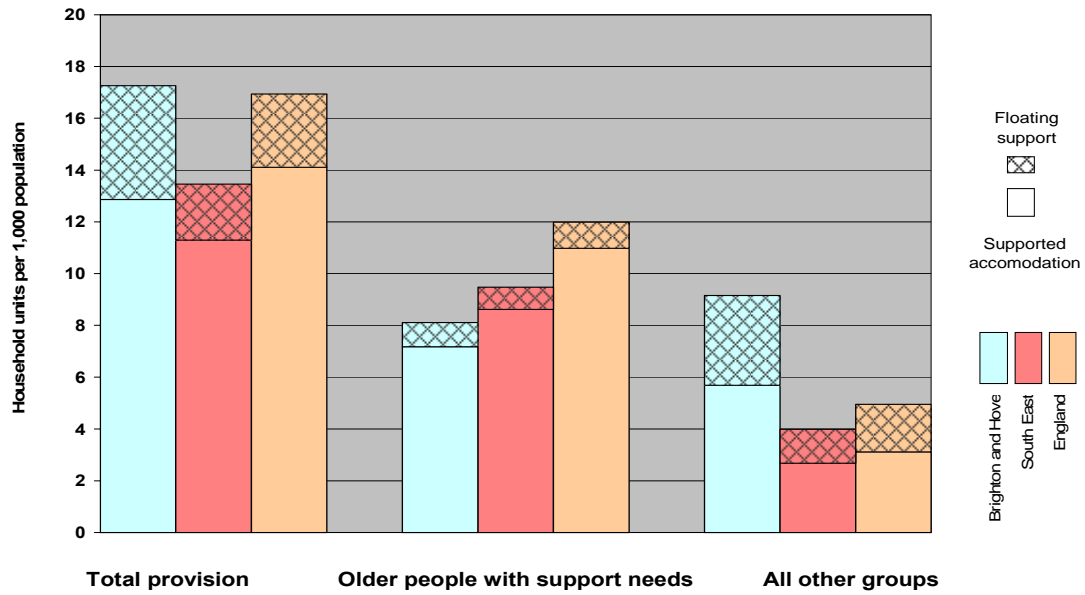
## Supporting People data

**Figure 4 Total service provision funded through Supporting People<sup>18</sup>**

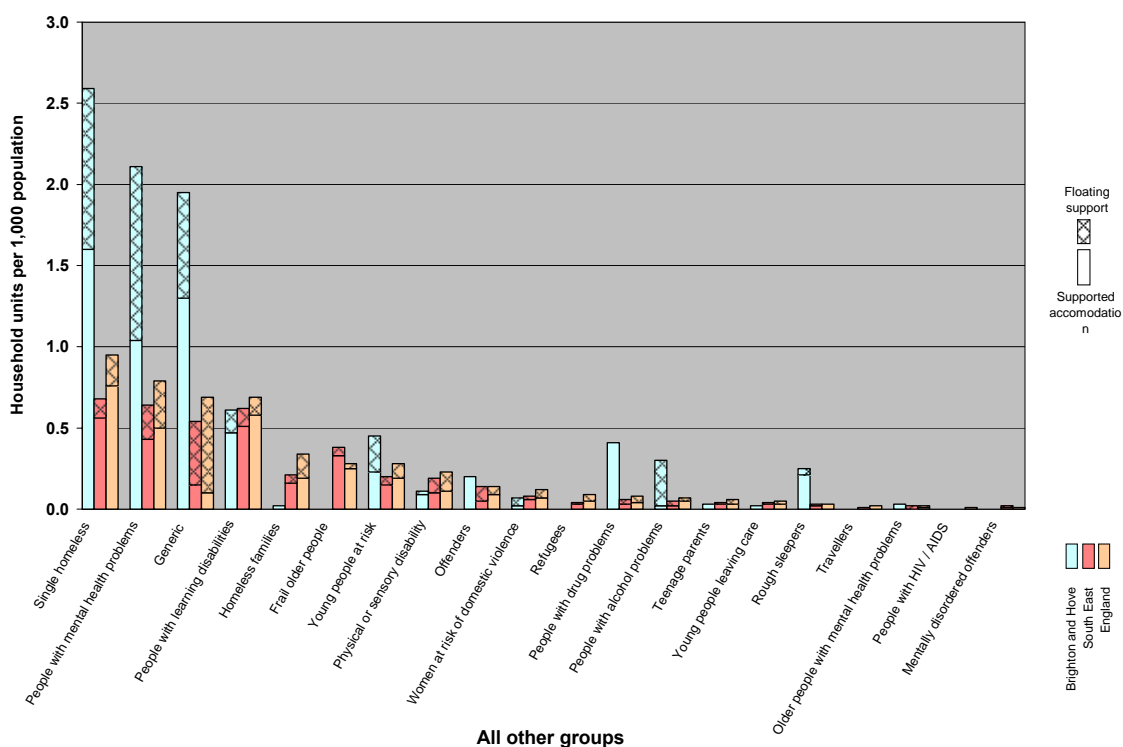


<sup>18</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

**Figure 5 Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England<sup>19</sup>**



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

**Figure 6 Services for other groups compared with the region and England<sup>20</sup>**

**Table 2 Funding for Supporting People<sup>21</sup>**

Brighton and Hove	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£13,847,484	£13,598,845	£12,913,931
Pipeline allocation	£187,494	£242,803	£-
Administration grant	£286,595	£272,564	£218,051

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

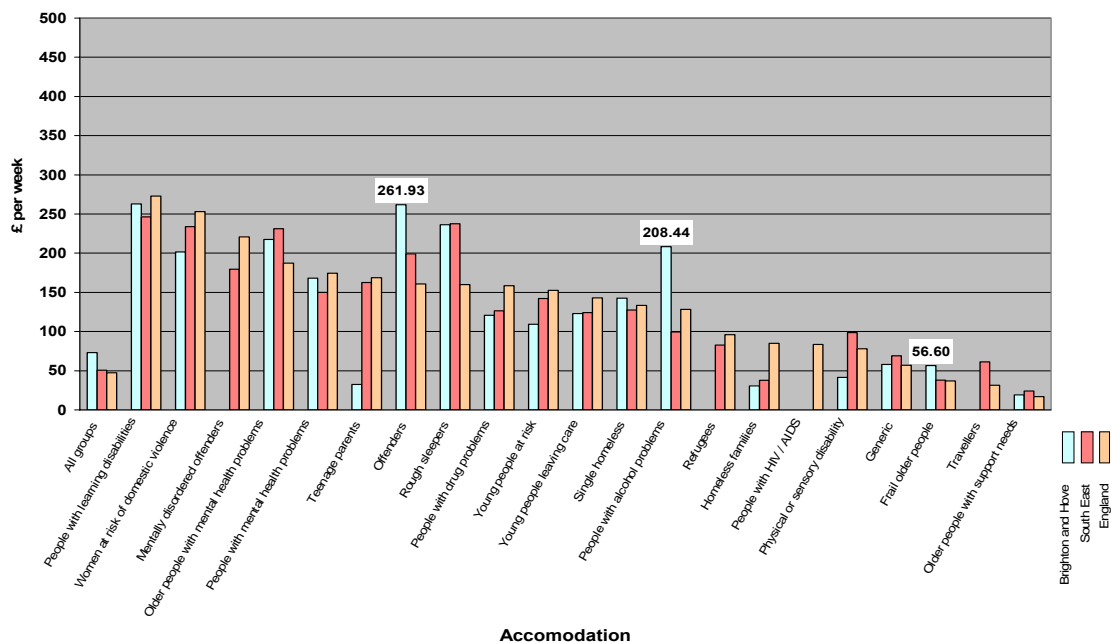
<sup>21</sup> Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

**Table 3 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)<sup>22</sup>**

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Brighton and Hove	£1.07	£46.32	£49.77	£91.14
South east	£0.52	£24.94	£32.26	£71.78
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.

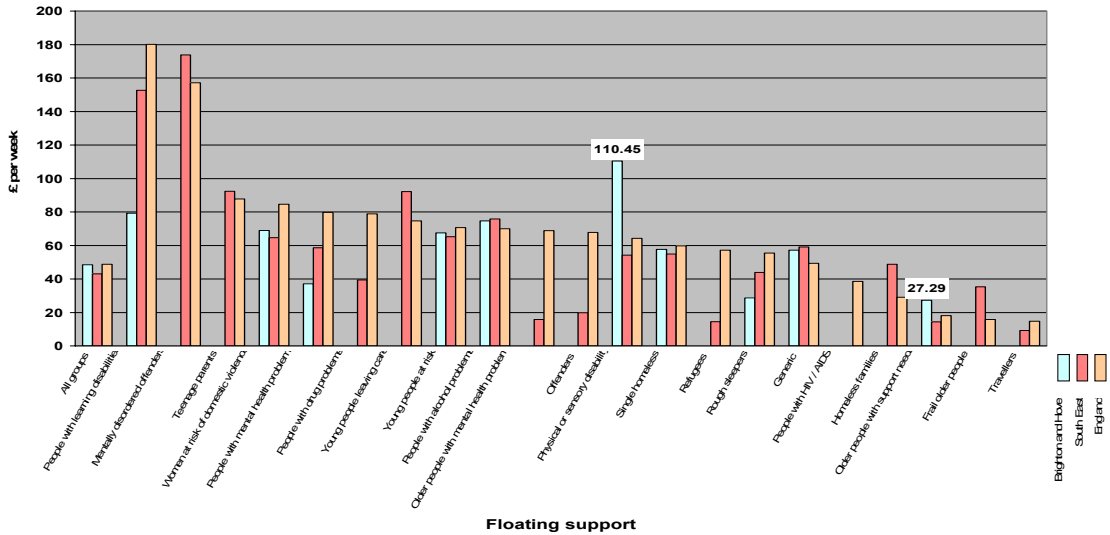
**Figure 7 Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>23</sup>**



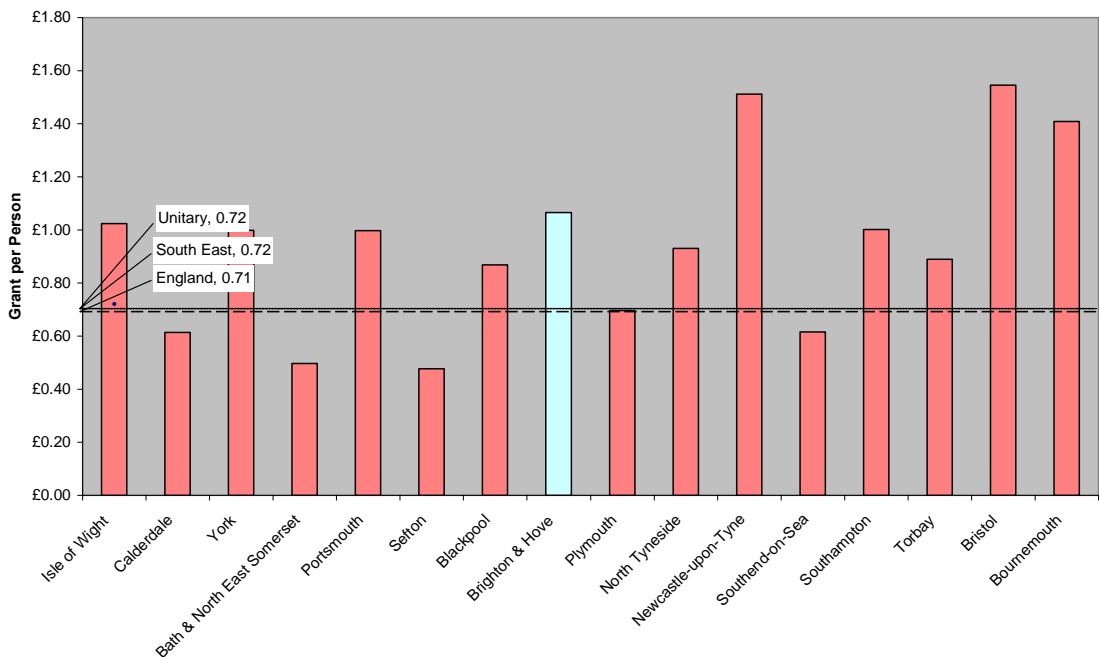
<sup>22</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003

<sup>23</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

**Figure 8 Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)<sup>24</sup>**



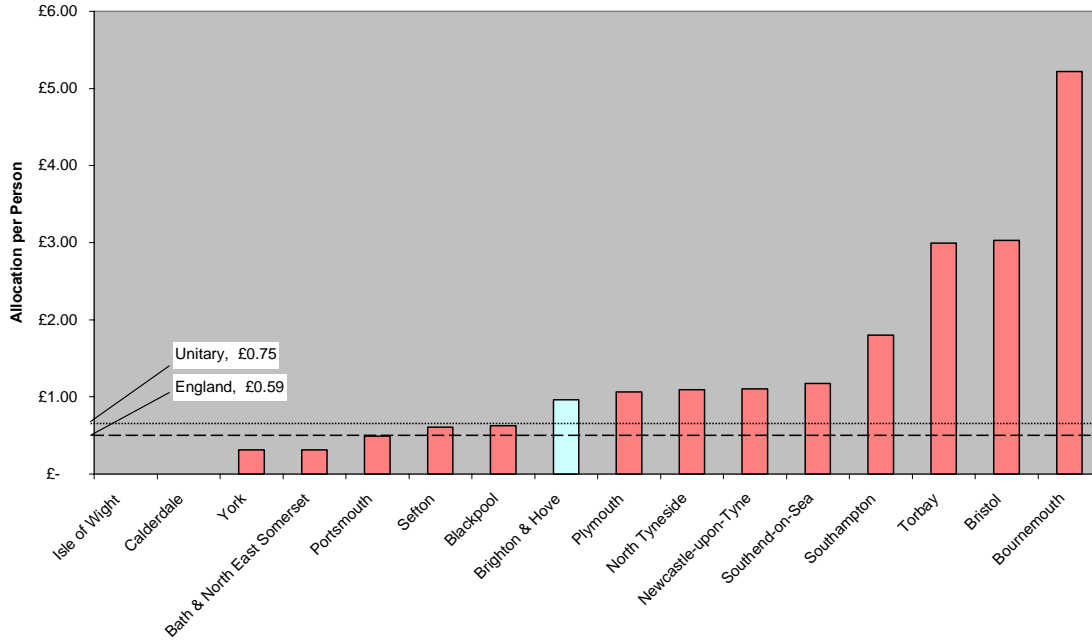
**Figure 9 Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours<sup>25</sup>, all unitary councils and all English councils (2004/05)**



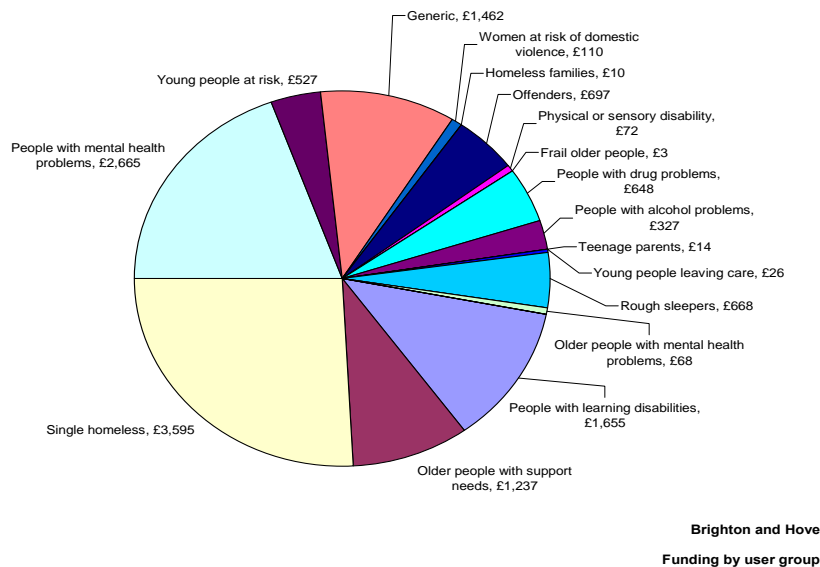
<sup>24</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

<sup>25</sup> A comparator group of similar councils.

**Figure 10 Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours<sup>26</sup>, all unitary councils and all English councils**



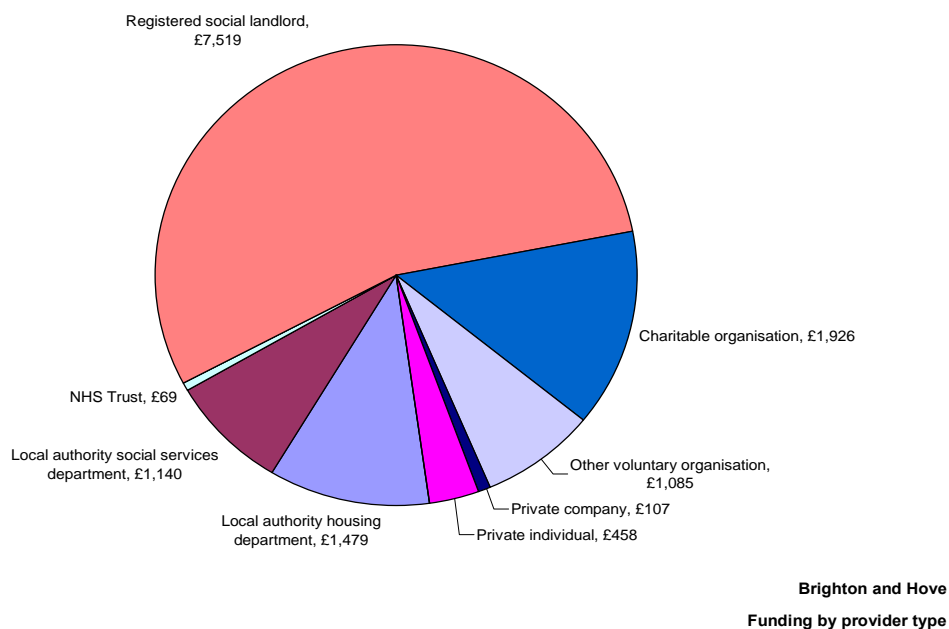
**Figure 11 Share of spending between user groups (£000s)<sup>27</sup>**



<sup>26</sup> A comparator group of similar councils.

<sup>27</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

**Figure 12 Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)<sup>28</sup>**



**Table 4 Social services star ratings November 2004**

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

	<b>Serving people well?</b>	<b>Prospects for improvement?</b>	<b>Performance rating (CPA equivalent)</b>
Adults' services	Some	Promising	★ (1)
Children's services	Some	Promising	

<sup>28</sup> Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

## Social services performance indicators

**Table 5 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04**

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

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

## Best value performance indicators

**Table 6 Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 compared with unitary councils**

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

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

## Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed

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

### Corporate documents

- Area and council profile
- Corporate procurement strategy
- Better Care Higher Standards Charter 2005/06
- Annual Audit and Inspection Letters, 2003 to 2005
- The corporate plan, 2004 to 2007
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, May 2005
- Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy, 2005 to 2008
- Valuing People Strategy, 2005/06 to 2009/10
- Older People's Strategy, 2003 to 2006
- Teenage Parents' Action Plan
- Joint Protocol for Care Leavers

### Service documents

- Self-assessment by the authority
- Supporting People shadow strategy and ODPM evaluation
- Supporting people five-year strategy, 2005 to 2010
- Minutes of the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group, Supporting People Provider Forum and SP Team meetings
- Terms of reference for the commissioning body, core strategy group and the memorandum of understanding with the Council
- Risk planning documents
- User leaflets and newsletters relating to Supporting People
- Service review timetable and guidance
- Value for money guidance and VFM database
- Supporting People annual plan 2005/06 and team plans
- Financial reports and ODPM data

## Appendix 3 – Reality checks undertaken

- 1 When we went on-site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on-site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. Our reality checks included:
  - interviews with key personnel, including commissioning body and core strategy group representatives, members of the Supporting people team and key councillors;
  - visits to services funded by the Supporting People grant;
  - questionnaire to all service providers funded by the Supporting People programme;
  - focus group with providers from a range of Supporting People services;
  - focus group with staff from the Supporting People team;
  - review of a number of service review workbooks; and
  - Review of Supporting People complaints file.

## Appendix 4 – Positive practice

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

### Shared protocol for children leaving care

- 1 A joint protocol between children's and young people's services, housing and the Supporting People team in Brighton and Hove City Council is providing a more flexible, user focussed approach to meeting the needs of children leaving care. Previously, an 18 year-old leaving care had to present as homeless within one month of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to access accommodation, leading to some inappropriate placements. Under the new protocol, a wider range of options are now possible: for example, care leavers can now access supported accommodation anytime between 18 and 21 years of age. Benefits cited by children's services staff included better tailored and care and greater clarity about funding arrangements.

### Fast track scheme into sheltered housing

- 2 Brighton and Hove City Council and Brighton and Hove PCT have developed a fast track scheme into sheltered housing to minimise delays in hospital discharge times for older people. The scheme offers sheltered housing for up to 15 older people who either require assessment or rehabilitation in a non-hospital setting or who are waiting to access longer-term care provision. Supporting People funds are used to provide housing related support as necessary, as part of an overall care package, leading to some positive outcomes for clients and improved value for money.

### Identifying supported housing needs

- 3 Brighton and Hove City Council carried out a snapshot survey of housing support needs in October 2003. Survey forms were distributed at over 150 locations in the City and identified the often complex and multiple support needs across all client groups, including 279 people with a learning difficulty; 631 homeless people with additional needs; 672 people with mental health problems; 437 substance misusers and 192 offenders. Information was used to inform the development of the Council's five-year Supporting People strategy.