

Supporting People Inspection Report

June 2006



Supporting People

London Borough of Lewisham

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

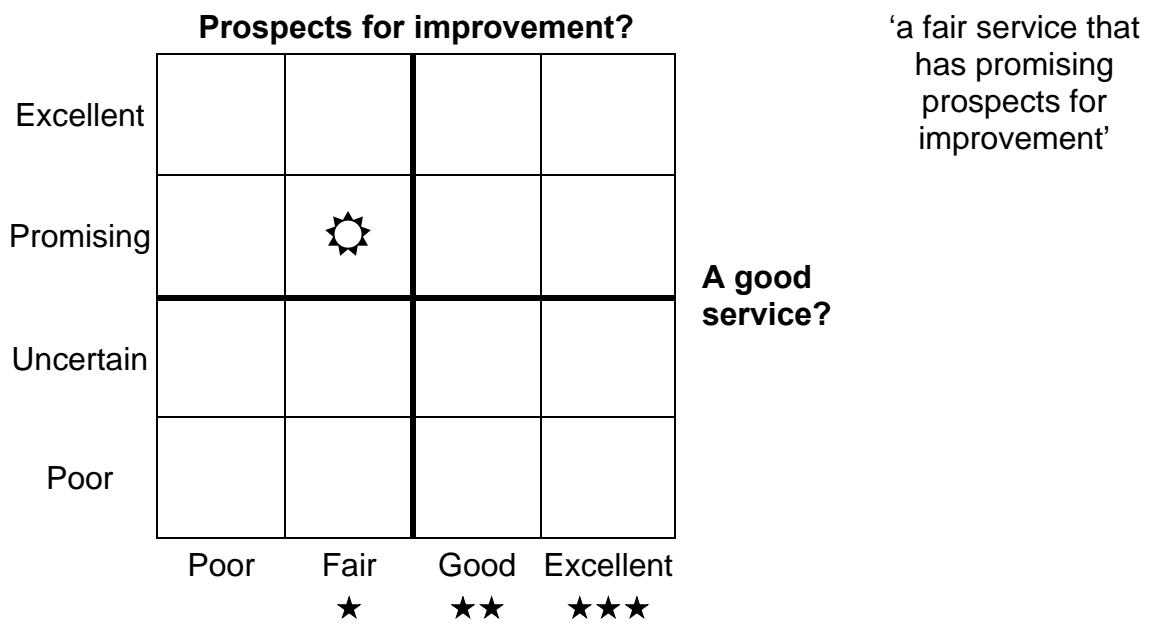
Summary

- 1 The London Borough of Lewisham is in the South East of London. The population is 249,000, of which 34 per cent are from non-white minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 2 The Council is Labour-controlled unitary authority following a cabinet model with an elected mayor. It has 4,300 employees excluding schools and a service budget of £808 million. It has a Social Services budget of £173 million for 2004/05.
- 3 Lewisham is the administrating authority for Supporting People working in partnership with the Lewisham Primary Care Trust and the London Probation Service. The Council receives a Supporting People grant of £17.5 million and an administration grant of £233,000 for 2005/06. The budget equates to £1.41 per head of the population, which is more than the 97 pence London average and the 70 pence English average but less than the inner London average of £1.88. The two groups that receive the most grant from Supporting People are:
 - single homeless with support needs, which made up 30.7 per cent of expenditure in 2004/05; and
 - people with leaning disabilities, which made up 21.5 per cent of expenditure.

Scoring the service

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

Figure 1 Scoring chart¹



Source: Audit Commission

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

- 5 During our inspection we identified the following strengths in the way in which the Supporting People programme has been administered.
- The location of Supporting People under crime prevention allows for useful co-ordination while separating it from the directorate where internal providers are based.
 - There are good partnership links with health which is fully involved with the programme.
 - Cross-authority work with a number of different partnerships between London boroughs have realised efficiencies and benefits including joint accreditation, information sharing protocols, joint commissioning, joint consultation and legal advice, joint training and projects to improve monitoring.
 - The eligibility criteria are well written, clear and detailed.
 - The three borough forum and the client sector workshops provide productive ways for providers to be involved.
 - The programme for service reviews was well prioritised and almost finished.
 - Administration costs are relatively low for the size of the programme.
 - The methodology for value for money is clear and effectively used to scrutinise costs resulting of annual savings of £1.9 million for reviews approved in 2005/06.
 - There have been a number of benefits to service users through the implementation of the programme.
- 6 However, we found some less positive aspects that need to be addressed.
- The role and authority of the Commissioning Body is not clearly established yet and the Probation service is not adequately involved across the programme particularly in the Core Strategy Group.
 - The Council has not raised the profile of and response to Supporting People sufficiently internally over the past three years.
 - The eligibility criteria were changed late in 2005 causing delays in cost savings and service reviews for very high cost schemes.
 - The needs mapping is not fully established in all areas and there is a lack of an overall strategy for learning disabilities.
 - The performance of services, the Supporting People team, the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body has not been adequately monitored against targets and benchmark figures.
 - There is a lack of regular feedback available to providers on the plans and outputs for the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group and Client Sector Workshops.
 - The risk register does not link with those of relevant partners; there is a lack of transparent monitoring of actions.

8 Supporting People | Scoring the service

- Service reviews lacked a formal quality assurance process outside the team and the follow up of service reviews has been limited and inconsistent.
 - There are no current strategies or structures for involving service users in the development of the programme. Feedback from service users is not kept confidential from their providers.
 - There is a lack of information available with no directory of services, no mention of Supporting People in '*Better Care: Higher Standards*', very limited signposting of services from council offices, and a paternalistic approach to enquiries.
 - Referral arrangements are not strong with complaints of inappropriate referrals geared too much to homelessness targets.
 - There is a lack of clear strategy and approach on diversity with no targets or monitoring of the service.
 - Lack of progress on move-on exacerbated by a lack of rent deposit scheme leading to frustrated service users staying in schemes longer than necessary.
- 7 We have judged that the service has promising prospects for improvement due to the following positive aspects.
- The annual work plan for 2005/06 will have been largely completed.
 - Services are improving with significant improvements in value for money, and successful restructuring.
 - Cross authority work is continuing to deliver improvements.
 - The IT system is delivering and there are plans to improve it.
 - Human resources and training are helping to deliver improvements.
 - The new directorate has plans in place to improve support to the team, particularly around data collection, target setting and performance monitoring.
- 8 However, the following aspects are weak and need to improve.
- The lack of strategy and lack of progress against plans for improving service user involvement.
 - Progress is slow in addressing the lack of move on and assessment and referral issues.
 - The format and monitoring of the annual work plan.
 - Failure to address key weaknesses such as information and diversity in the annual plan.
 - Target setting and performance monitoring of services, the support team and management structures.

Recommendations

- 9 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 costs² 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.

Recommendations

R1 Strengthen user involvement, in consultation with service users by:

- *developing a user involvement strategy;*
- *improving feedback to service users about reviews and monitoring of services; and*
- *setting up structures and events that involve service users.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- service user engagement with their service and the programme;
- greater input by service users into strategic development;
- greater accountability to service users; and
- improved services through greater responsiveness to service user views.

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

Recommendation

R2 Improve the involvement of Probation and improve the multi-agency approach in the Supporting People partnership by:

- *reviewing the participation of probation at the Commissioning Body to ensure that it is at the appropriate level and with local knowledge;*
- *ensuring full participation in the Core Strategy Group at the appropriate level and with local knowledge; and*
- *ensuring that relevant providers are briefed on the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.*

² Low cost is defined as less than 1 per cent of the annual service cost, medium cost is between 1 and 5 per cent and high cost is over 5 per cent.

10 Supporting People | Recommendations

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- greater understanding of service users needs and enhanced ability to address these;
- better value for money and better quality of services; and
- more comprehensive services.

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

Recommendation

R3 Make the service easier to access for service users by:

- *producing a directory of all the Supporting People services available;*
- *producing information systems detailing how to access services and what likely requirements and waits are;*
- *ensuring that where there is low demand for example in sheltered housing, service users are aware that it is relatively easy to access;*
- *ensuring that relevant council staff have access to information and can access and give advice to those enquiring; and*
- *improving assessment and referral systems to make the best suitable match of client and service.*

10 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- potential service users and their representatives will be able to find out what services are available to them more easily;
- relevant people will be more inclined to apply for services that have low demand;
- service users will be able to exercise more choice through greater information; and
- services will match the needs of people referred to them better.

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

Recommendation

R4 Improve systems to ensure fair access and improve service responsiveness to the needs of diverse users by:

- *developing a diversity strategy or plan for Supporting People;*
- *setting targets and monitoring progress on meeting equality and diversity aims; and*
- *ensuring that best practice is shared on meeting diverse cultural needs.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- unintended discrimination can be discovered and remedied
- marginalised and vulnerable groups are more likely to be able to access the service
- service users are more likely to receive a service sensitive to their diverse needs.

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

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

Dates of inspection: 27 February to 3 March 2006

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Report

Context

The locality

- 12 The London Borough of Lewisham (LBL) is one of 33 London boroughs. It is in the South East of London. The northern tip touches the Thames and it has borders with Southwark, Greenwich and Bromley councils. The population is 249,000, of whom half are white British. Of the rest, 26 per cent are black, split fairly evenly between African and Caribbean origin. Seven per cent are mixed and 5 per cent are Asian.
- 13 Lewisham has greater numbers of people in the 30 to 45 year age group than the London average but less people over 50. The 2001 census shows 11 per cent over 65, compared to 12.4 per cent in London and 16 per cent in England. Looking at households, 10.5 per cent are lone parent households, the third highest level in London and the 12th in the country.
- 14 Unemployment is relatively high at 4.5 per cent. This compares to the London average of 3.3 per cent and the national average of 2.4 per cent. The deprivation index shows that Lewisham is among the 20 per cent of most deprived local authorities in London. The index shows that it is 57 out of 354.
- 15 Lewisham is an inner London dormitory with most people going out of the borough to the centre of London to work. Many of the largest employers and business rate payers in the borough are public sector organisations. The public sector: hospitals, colleges, the fire service, police and the Council and partnerships are dominant in the labour market. The Mayor acts as a figurehead for all the public services in the borough not just the Council.

The Council

- 16 The London Borough of Lewisham is a unitary authority with Labour holding 41 out of 54 seats. The rest are held by The Liberal Democrats (8), The Conservative Party (2), The Green Party (1), Socialist Alternative (1), and Local Education Action by Parents (1). The Council is run with a cabinet model under a directly elected mayor.
- 17 The overall budget for 2004/05 was £808 million. Of this, the Social Services budget consisted of £173 million and the housing budget of £149 million gross. The Council employs 4,300 people excluding schools.
- 18 The Audit Commission rated the Council as a 'three-star' authority (out of a possible four) in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in December 2005, with a score of three out of four for adult social care. In terms of direction of travel, the Council is judged to be 'improving well'.

- 19 The Council undertook a major restructuring exercise in 2005. A Customer Services Directorate was created which encompasses housing, public services and revenues and benefits. A Community Services Directorate was created which covers adult social care, community services, cultural services and leisure, and crime reduction.
- 20 The Council's housing strategy has been rated as 'fit for purpose' by the Government. The Council is planning to create an arms length management organisation to manage some of the Council's stock in order to access grants from the government to make improvements to the stock. At present, 60 per cent of the stock does not reach the Decent Homes Standard. The stock has approximately 1,800 vacancies each year with around 11,000 households waiting for social housing, over 2,000 of whom are living in temporary accommodation. A further 4,500 tenants want to move to alternative accommodation.
- 21 The vision statement for the Council is:
- 'Together we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn.'*
- 22 The priorities laid out in the Community Strategy are as follows.
- Make Lewisham a safer place and reduce the fear of crime.
 - Sustain and improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
 - Raise educational attainment, skill levels and employability.
 - Foster enterprise and sustainable business growth including the creative industries.
 - Develop cultural vitality by building on Lewisham's distinctive cultures and diversity.
 - Secure sustainable regeneration of Lewisham as a place – its housing, transport and environment.
 - Reduce welfare dependency, promote independence and increase the life chances of vulnerable members of the community.
 - Help local communities to develop the capacity to support themselves, act independently and participate in providing services and wider support to the borough.
 - Design diversity into local institutions and design out discrimination, ensuring equity in service delivery.
 - Improve the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of local public services; optimise investment in infrastructure; and improve the management of assets.

The service

- 23 The Council acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the development and delivery of the Supporting People programme in its area. The Supporting People programme is based within the Community Services Directorate in the service area of crime reduction.
- 24 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.
- 25 The total amount of Supporting People grant available to the Council in 2005/06 is £17.5 million plus an under-spend of £94,000 carried forward from the previous year. This is a grant reduction of £900,000 or 5 per cent on the previous year. In addition, the Council received an administration grant of £233,000 to fulfil its role as the administering authority. This was £59,000 or 20 per cent less than in 2004/05 the previous year. The Council allocated an additional £187,500 to help with the administrative costs of the programme in 2005/06.
- 26 Lewisham has not produced a vision statement for Supporting People but the strategic vision for Supporting People in the five-year plan is to contribute to the Council, and the community strategy vision is to contribute to making communities safer, and to contribute to decent housing and better health.
- 27 There are 74 organisations providing 215 services. The service provision can be divided into three categories: 3,355 accommodation based, 505 floating and 1,637 community alarms. This adds up to a total of 5,497 households receiving support although the community alarms can overlap with the other two.
- 28 The client groups which used the most budget were as follows.

Table 1

Client group	Expenditure in 2004/05	Percentage of total expenditure	Number of units	Average cost per unit per week
Single homeless with support needs	£5,744,191	31%	1,003	£110.13
People with learning disabilities	£4,018,679	21%	287	£269.28
People with mental health problems	£3,606,629	19%	548	£126.57
Young people at risk	£769,650	4%	117	£126.50
Older people with support needs	£694,147	4%	660	£20.23
People with alcohol problems	£642,700	3%	114	£108.42
Total above	£15,475,996	71%	2,729	£109.06
Total all	£18,700,530	100%	3,316	£108.45

How good is the service?

Governance

- 29 The weaknesses outweigh the strengths in the governance of the Supporting People programme. There is insufficient input by Probation into the partnership. The Commissioning Body is not playing a full strategic role yet and the Core Strategy Group has been under performing since the five-year strategy was adopted. However, there are strong partnership links with health, and productive cross-authority working. The new directorate is starting to provide useful support to the team

Corporate commitment

- 30 There are positive signs of the London Borough of Lewisham's commitment to Supporting People. However, the delivery of some of the benefits of this are still to be realised and the level of commitment is not strong. The most important manifestations of this commitment are around money and structure.

- 31 Council commitment is demonstrated through the provision of extra resources for Supporting People although this has not been generous on the administration side. The government supplied a £233,000 administration grant which was topped up by the Council in order to ensure it fulfil its role as the administering authority. The total amount for administration is £42,000 which is 2.4 per cent of the programme grant. This is the second lowest of the six South East London boroughs and £80,000 less than the amount that would make Lewisham average for this group. In addition, the Council made a one off injection of £225,000 to cover the overspend of the Supporting People budget projected for 2005/06.
- 32 The location of Supporting People in the Council structure is seen as positive by everyone. When the Council was restructured in 2005, Supporting People was moved from housing within the Regeneration Directorate to crime reduction within the Community Services Directorate. The Community Services Directorate is more engaged and supportive than regeneration was.
- 33 A benefit of the placement of Supporting People in the crime reduction section is the minimisation of conflict of interest issues, which occur in traditional SP directorates (housing and Social Services) who are also often internal providers. The structure has the additional advantage that it strengthens links with other initiatives to dealing with offenders and helps to balance the weakness of the partnership with Probation.
- 34 Councillors have some involvement with Supporting People depending on their involvement within the committee structure. Those that are involved in the committee structure receive information when relevant to their committee. However, there is conflicting evidence as to whether updates and information such as the Supporting People newsletter are provided to all councillors. This prevents the Councillors from raising the profile of Supporting People and giving the best advice to their constituents.
- 35 The Governance at the interface between the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Supporting People Programme is clear through the joint attendance at the management group within the Community Safety and Drug Action partnership. The strategic links with the SP programme are clear and expressed in the YOT Action Plan.

Commissioning Body

- 36 The Commissioning Body is functioning adequately but is not strong. It has a confusing memorandum of understanding, it has not been consistently supported by partners and its role has been limited.
- 37 The documentation relating to the status and working of the Commissioning Body is not as clear as it should be. Important changes in September 2005 were not recorded until February 2006 and previous copies have been undated. The membership of the Commissioning Body is not clear. The memorandum contradicts ODPM³ guidelines by stating that the Commissioning Body cannot decide grants for providers. In practice the Commissioning Body does make these decisions.

³ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

- 38 The Council has an effective veto over decisions that the Commissioning Body makes in a way that is not in line with ODPM guidelines. All decommissioning decisions and decisions involving budgets of over £0.5 million are decided by the Mayor and cabinet. This is the case even where these decisions have no particular impact on the finances of the Council. The Commissioning Body does not have broad representation which will limit the input to inform the Mayor when making decisions.
- 39 The Commissioning Body has not set itself a clear goal and work plan nor are there any plans to assess its own role or that of the Core Strategy Group (CSG) and the governance of SP. The role of the Commissioning Body has been focused on immediate delivery of the programme, in particular three main issues; service reviews, eligibility criteria and finance, (eg discretionary inflation awards). The Commissioning Body has not been looking at the role of the CSG and performance has not been adequately addressed.
- 40 Commissioning Body minutes are not put on the website. Providers wanted this and it is encouraged by the ODPM. The failure to do this has made the Commissioning Body more distant.
- 41 The Commissioning Body has maintained positive control over the review timetable to ensure that the 215 reviews would be completed by the March 2006 deadline. It has approved the outcome of each review and made a number of decommissioning decisions. It challenged the approach to eligibility put forward by the Strategy Group and instigated the research necessary to produce a more sophisticated approach.

The Core Strategy Group

- 42 The Core Strategy Group (CSG) has lacked a clear role and direction since the five-year strategy was agreed. It played a role in the lead up to the five-year strategy, co-ordinating and bringing together different views on needs, provision and strategy. Since then the meetings have lacked focus and attendance has fallen off with as few as a third of the named members turning up at meetings.
- 43 The role of the Core Strategy Group in 2005 has been restricted to an information exchange. The minutes show the meeting updating attendees on events and reporting back on the Supporting People team's annual work plan. They have not looked at performance issues beyond receiving feedback on progress against the annual plan. The frequency of the meetings is not clear but there are only five meetings minuted in the whole of 2004 and 2005. The CSG does not review the minutes from the previous meeting, reflecting the fact that it does not usually make decisions or recommendations.
- 44 The membership has not been balanced between all relevant partners and the new structure has failed to assess this issue. There has been no effective representation by probation at CSG level which is a weakness. Up until January 2006 out of 27 members, 20 were Lewisham employees. There were five external providers and seven internal providers. This is despite internal providers managing fewer than ten per cent of schemes.

- 45 There is a limited relationship between the CSG and the Commissioning Body. The Lead Officer is the only person who attends both; the CSG does not receive Commissioning Body minutes and is not completely aware of the membership of the Commissioning Body.
- 46 A recent change in approach is leading to improvements. The new approach involves client sector workshops (CSWs) acting as sub-committees of the CSG. They are partnership groups that have been in existence for up to two years; they are mostly chaired by providers with agendas set jointly with the SP team. The CSG now meets three times a year with CSW chairs automatically becoming members of it. The plan is that the CSWs look at operational issues and the CSG at strategy issues. The new membership has not been decided or discussed beyond the addition of the CSW chairs.
- 47 The Council does not keep providers adequately informed of the work of the CSG or CSWs. Providers would have liked minutes to be placed on the website. Providers are not sure what issues the CSG or CSWs are addressing over the coming period so do not know if there are any issues requiring their input. This desired information is not covered adequately in the newsletters and updates that are sent out.

The Accountable Officer

- 48 The Accountable Officer (AO) provides useful support to the team but she has not developed an adequate strategic lead or overview yet. The AO has only been responsible for SP for five months. The previous Accountable Officer was the Head of Housing and he was not very involved in the work of the Supporting People team, so the level of support has improved. The new Accountable Officer is the Head of Crime Reduction. She has not yet dealt with issues such as reviewing performance, reviewing the annual work programme, the role of the Commissioning Body, and the Core Strategy Group. She has not considered the authority of the Commissioning Body and how the memorandum of understanding that governs it conflicts with the ODPM guidelines.
- 49 However, the present Accountable Officer has direct involvement and provides more support to the SP team than has been the case in the past. She has focused attention on service reviews and has attended difficult meetings with providers of services due to be decommissioned.
- 50 The Accountable Officer plays a useful role as a link to nine relevant strategic forums such as: the Social Inclusion Committee, the Adult Joint Strategic Commissioning Board, Safer, Stronger Community Fund (part of the LAA⁴), Substance Misuse Commissioning Group and the Risk Management Panel.

⁴ Local Area Agreement

Partnerships

- 51 Partnership work is very mixed with strong involvement from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) but weak involvement from Probation. The Probation area links Lewisham and Greenwich boroughs together with just one Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) to lead at a strategic level. The effect is a double requirement to attend borough multi-agency meetings on the one manager. This pressure on senior management resources has meant the role of attending the Commissioning Body has been delegated to somebody at a middle management level without local experience. This officer acts on his behalf, briefing beforehand and debriefing afterwards. Whilst this has kept Probation engaged it is at a lower level than direct involvement can produce.
- 52 There has been ineffective participation by Probation at the CSG in the past two years. The plan for future focus groups feeding into a newly-constituted Core Strategy Group is not understood by Probation who also struggle to identify how cross-cutting issues will be addressed in future. The offender accommodation strategy is London-wide and there is no specific and agreed strategic plan for the work at the interface with Lewisham Supporting People Programme.
- 53 The Council is trying to work with offenders' issues but the lack of strong local management engagement from Probation makes it difficult for them to achieve a robust strategy and supporting arrangements.
- 54 Engagement with the PCT has been effective. The Supporting People team developed strategic links with the PCT and University Hospital Lewisham as soon as the SP programme began. Partnership members sit on each other's relevant governing bodies. The PCT fully participates in the Commissioning Body, the CSG group and the CSWs at the appropriate level.
- 55 Supporting People providers are not effectively briefed on the MAPPA arrangements. This affects their understanding of these arrangements in particular on information sharing protocols, staff development and training. It means that service providers' anxieties are not being allayed.

Cross Authority and Voluntary Sector Work

- 56 Cross authority working is a strength. Lewisham works well with other authorities at a number of levels, across 3 boroughs, 6 boroughs, 10 boroughs and 12 boroughs.
- 57 The strongest cross-borough relationship involves close working with Lambeth and Southwark which has resulted in joint commissioning and the three borough provider forum that has been running productively for some time. The three borough partnership has introduced joint initiatives such as joint accreditation (which has now spread to twelve London boroughs) and the joint working protocol. The forum has enabled an exchange of information and expertise between SP teams and the providers, particularly around service reviews and joint training has taken place. It has also secured funding from the NHF⁵ to research the measurement of outcomes for service users.

⁵ National Housing Federation

- 58 The Lead Officer attends the ALG Housing Strategic meetings that provide a London-wide focus on housing, and the South East London Strategic Housing Partnership. Recent developments through sub-regional work have attracted joint funding to research the geographical mobility of older people across the sub-regions that will be used to inform the housing options available. The South East London Regional Implementation Group (RIG) for Supporting People is a subgroup of the partnership, with a work plan that contributes to the SE London Housing Strategy.
- 59 The mental health budget for the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (SLAM) is pooled across three authorities. There are ten boroughs involved in the sustainable communities for the Thames Gateway. Lewisham works directly with Greenwich on the 'Creative Hub' for Economic Development (developing support for adults with learning disabilities).
- 60 The Supporting People team has been fundamental in creating a London IT forum. This followed concern that the national group that was led by a software provider was not effective for Supporting People. A forum has been meeting since November 2004 of ten local authority SP teams. Lewisham has been able to share good practice, and overcome some IT/SP issues. For example by applying a consistent industry standard for the calculation of staff time. How information is inputted on to computer systems is fundamental and so dealing with the software provider as a group helps to ensure necessary alterations to the system.
- 61 Lewisham SP has links with the voluntary sector but there is no evidence of any benefits for service users arising from these links yet. The recent stakeholder event attracted 70 people but none of them were from the voluntary sector. Contact and shared work is being developed. SP have recently started funding an assessment and referral team for young people and Youth Aid have been contacted to help develop this service. There is an umbrella organisation 'Lewisham Grapevine' representing the voluntary sector. The SP team has contributed to the newsletter and attended their meetings to promote an understanding of SP.

Delivery arrangements

- 62 There is a balance of weaknesses and strengths in delivery arrangements. There are effective and productive provider forums, a clear and thorough eligibility criteria and a work plan that has been almost all delivered. There has been robust monitoring of finances and the service review timetable. However, there has not been a clear enough leadership in promoting Supporting People in the rest of the Council, the Supporting People team has not been consistent in performance. The needs mapping has not been thorough enough and there has been a lack of feedback to providers.

Corporate commitment

- 63 There has been a lack of corporate commitment to Supporting People. There has been a lack of leadership on issues relating to Supporting People across the Council. There have been some issues where there have been relevant initiatives.
- 64 Lewisham was not sufficiently prepared as for the start of Supporting People. The cost of services increased by 41 per cent between the golden and platinum cut. However, there were areas of internal provision where applications for Transitional Housing benefit were not made or not made appropriately. As a result, there are homeless hostels where the support is not funded by SP and others where the proportion of support work had been under estimated.
- 65 Internal providers have not responded with sufficient speed and efficiency to the challenges of the Supporting People process particularly when compared to external providers. Some internal providers only started addressing key issues relatively recently. For example introducing support plans only 18 months ago and working out the differences between housing management and support over the past year. Similarly, internal providers were until recently slower than external ones at getting their performance indicators in on time.
- 66 The Supporting People process has helped stimulate partnership work between the children's procurement team and the Supporting People Team. Similarly, there is a wide ranging training programme on substance misuse in the borough which is available for Supporting People providers.

Supporting People team

- 67 The Supporting People team has had a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The staff membership of the team has not been stable. Staff turnover and temporary staff have led to gaps and lack of consistency in the standard of output. However, there is a core of stability within the team, a Contract and Reviews officer has been in the team since 2001 as has the Lead Officer.
- 68 Stakeholders find the SP team helpful, knowledgeable and responsive noting improvements in the performance of the team in the last six months, since it has become more stable. Providers have noted inconsistencies and lower standards of responsiveness and knowledge over the past two years where temporary and short-term staff have been involved.
- 69 The work of the Supporting People Team has been almost exclusively focused on service reviews. It has been a priority of the ODPM to have reviews finished by March 2006. However, this focus has been at the expense of regular performance management of those services not undergoing reviews and updating of needs analysis and strategy.
- 70 The support structures for the Supporting People team are more robust now than in the past. There are various signs that the Community Services Directorate will provide more support than the former structure. There are plans in place to help improve the annual planning process and the management of performance data.

Grant conditions and eligibility criteria

- 71 There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the Council's management of grant conditions and eligibility criteria. There are thorough eligibility criteria in place. However, the current eligibility criteria were only adopted late in 2005 and providers are not unsure about or unaware of the criteria.
- 72 The Council has taken a considered and focused approach to eligibility for the high cost learning disabilities schemes. Neighbouring boroughs capped costs at £450 per service user per week. This would have saved £700,000 and was requested by the Supporting People team. The Commissioning Body rejected this approach and called for more research and a clearer and more consistent approach to eligibility based on activities that would apply to all client groups.
- 73 The final impact of these new eligibility criteria has still not been calculated although it is estimated that it will produce a grant reduction of £400,000 affecting only a handful of providers. Due to the long period of time it has taken to agree the eligibility criteria, providers have been left with uncertainty over what proportion of their services will be funded over 18 months after the conclusion of a review. This has caused planning problems for those few providers affected. At least one provider was promised in principle that it would receive an inflationary increase in grant for 2005/06. However, this has not been finalised due to the uncertainty created by the eligibility criteria.
- 74 The eligibility criteria are not clearly communicated to all providers. Over a quarter of providers in the provider survey were dissatisfied. Some were not aware of the criteria; others found the criteria lacked clarity. The providers we spoke to did not know that new criteria had been produced.

Contracts

- 75 The approach to contracts shows a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The new contracts have been well consulted on and publicised but some providers find the approach by the Council quite rigid.
- 76 The Council are reissuing interim contracts for six months and promised steady state contracts by October. The three borough provider forum obtained legal advice on the contract and then consulted with providers. The contract has been widely consulted on, agreed, is available on the web.
- 77 The Council has not amended the contracts to reflect changes in contract specifications. Generally, changes to the services are happening three to six months after the Commissioning Body approve the reviews. Changes are on a voluntary basis and are not reflected in the interim contracts. The lack of contractual requirements results in a lack of clarity on the requirements of the service.

78 The Council has been flexible in changing contract conditions in some cases but not in others which has made some providers unhappy. Where some providers wanted to make minor amendments to the service they found the Supporting People team unsympathetic and unwilling to change outside of the review process. This is the case even where the providers are suggesting an improvement. Some providers feel that the result is a chaotic service with clients in the same service getting different payments when this is avoidable. There has been some flexibility where services have been changed in advance of the service review process.

Needs mapping and the five-year strategy

79 The five-year strategy is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. There are weaknesses in the approach to needs mapping and analysis and review. There was good consultation in the production of the five-year strategy. However, the process of needs mapping was mixed. There is no learning disability strategy that would link with and inform the Supporting People strategy.

80 The five-year strategy is not as easy to follow or comprehensive as it could be. It is not clear which client groups have greater priority for more resources. It is not available in any other formats. The executive summary is not as effective as it could be, limited mainly to a description of processes and values. The strategy lacks overall conclusions and priorities. A number of other strategies are referred to in the five-year strategy but it is not always clear how they link together.

81 There was widespread consultation around the five-year strategy among providers who were generally satisfied with the result. In the Audit Commission survey of providers 71 per cent declared themselves satisfied with the strategy. A few providers found the Council's approach unclear or inconsistently interpreted by different officers. Some providers although consulted, did not feel adequately informed of the results of their own input and the Council's performance on delivering the strategy.

82 The Council commissioned an in-depth needs analysis for three client groups as part of the five-year strategy. For these areas the needs analysis was thorough although this did not translate into a clear strategy. The areas were:

- people with mental health issues;
- people with learning disabilities; and
- young people, including young people at risk, young people leaving care and teenage parents.

- 83 The Council lacks a clearly documented strategic approach for people with learning disabilities. The White paper '*Valuing People*' has as a key action that Learning Disability Partnership Boards should have developed local housing strategies for people with learning disabilities by 2003. The learning disabilities joint strategy 1997/2002 is now out-of-date and there is no local housing strategy. The Council has not yet clarified the Supporting People input as the new eligibility criteria have not been fully quantified or applied or alternative funding found. There is a service plan for services for people with a learning disability which contains a list of recommendations which are challenging for a service at this stage. There is currently a review of the housing options for people with learning disabilities with the aim of producing a strategy.
- 84 The needs analysis for the other areas varied. There has been a review of sheltered housing and a best value review of the homelessness service. However, it is not clear how these have fed back into a needs mapping analysis. The information on homelessness shows that there is an issue around the lack of meaningful provision to assist non-priority households to whom no statutory duty is owed. This is not addressed in the five-year strategy nor is it clear how any ongoing work has fed back into the analysis of needs.
- 85 There is a lack of focus on needs mapping in the best value review of the homelessness service. We were told this review would address shortcomings in the needs mapping process. However, the review is mainly focused on government targets around statutory responsibilities.
- 86 The Council has not communicated its approach to dealing with homelessness effectively to staff. While the inspection found no evidence that it was becoming harder for applicants to become accepted as statutorily homeless thus increasing the numbers of single homeless people with support needs, this was an impression held by some staff. Assessing the support needs of this client group is very important but this is not happening adequately with the exception of a very recent initiative for young people.
- 87 There is a lack of data on needs and access. For supported housing for ex-offenders the evidence of needs data is lacking; since there is no research project either this is a real hole in the strategy. There are no data sets available to the YOT that express the extent of access by young offenders to the SP programme
- 88 The approach to needs mapping and reprioritisation of resources since the five-year strategy has not been clear. Various CSG members are not aware of how further needs mapping has been considered or developed in the period since the detailed report in November 2004. Lewisham borough offender needs are not clearly understood by Probation and therefore are not fed into the strategic planning process. In addition, Probation appears to have no knowledge of how the Supporting People programme is performing with respect to offenders and the extent of their access to the programme.

- 89 Teenage pregnancy data and information is not robust. A central system across the partners is not in place to collate and analyse data, and there is some concern from partners that the data collected at frontline level and used to inform planning is not sufficient. This prevents partners from having accurate data, and planning resources and performance improvements adequately.
- 90 The process of needs mapping for victims of domestic violence (DV) lacks clarity. The five-year strategy identified the need for more local information for the needs mapping of DV victims. However, the Council's DV strategic co-ordinator had not been involved in the development of this area and was not aware of how it had progressed, other than plans to discuss specific service user group needs at the future Client Sector workshops. Gaps in the service have been identified and acted upon.
- 91 There is no corporate monitoring system in place to capture the level of DV reports/contact made by potential victims. Currently, reports are captured by various divisions, eg housing, adult social care. However, these reports are not centrally captured or co-ordinated. This prevents the Council from informing the level of need for victims of DV and the objective of the SP strategy to develop services to reflect need.
- 92 The substance misuse dimension to the Supporting People work in Lewisham has been slow to start. However, needs research is now taking place and will report in May 2006.

Work planning

- 93 Work planning has a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Plans have been consistent with the five-year strategy and mainly carried out. However, the formatting of plans is weak making them difficult to monitor.
- 94 The plans are not SMART⁶ and they lack clear outcomes. They lack integration into wider corporate planning as they do not cross-check with other relevant plans in the Council and among wider partners. For example the need to improve the move on process is not clearly stated in the homelessness strategy.
- 95 The formats used are confusing. It is difficult to tell by reading the plans whether a task has been done or is late. The 'end date' column can show anticipated end date, actual end date or 'completed'. The plans are not monitored by the Commissioning Body as recorded in the minutes of that body, although, there is evidence of the plans going to the Core Strategy Group for review though.
- 96 The Community Services Directorate has a well developed framework to improve the annual planning process by consulting on the plans, improving the layout and monitoring them better.

⁶ Specific, measurable, actionable, realisable and time-bound.

Performance monitoring and data to ODPM

- 97** Performance monitoring is weak. High level data has been provided to the Commissioning Body in recent months. There is strong monitoring of service review progress. Financial monitoring is robust. However, targets have only recently been set, so not monitored against and there is a lack of local performance indicators and monitoring by sector or provider level between service reviews.
- 98** Monitoring by the Commissioning Body is not rigorous. The Commissioning Body recently introduced a quarterly report that shows seven of ODPM⁷ key performance indicators (KPIs) for the service as a whole with graphs showing a trend for 15 to 24 months and a commentary. The weakness is that there are no targets, the figures do not show comparisons with other authorities and the commentary does not explain the performance. For example, for KPI 1 (service users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living), the figure averages 99.5 per cent and does not go below 98 per cent for 15 months. The figure then falls to 92 per cent but there is no commentary on this.
- 99** The minutes of the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group do not show performance monitoring as a regular item before 2006. Targets have only been set in February 2006 and so performance has not yet been monitored against those targets. As indicated earlier, the Council is part of a cross-authority project to measure the outcomes of support provided to individuals and this will contribute to performance monitoring in the future. There is no system to monitor the quality of work done by the Core Strategy Group or Commissioning Body beyond service reviews.
- 100** The Council lacks systems and targets to monitor services outside of the review process. There are no reports that compare KPIs by type of sector. Some services face similar challenges and so their performance could be assessed better by comparing them together. There is also no real monitoring of performance outside of service reviews. So where services were reviewed early on, if performance has been poor since, then the Supporting People team will not necessarily have recognised the weakness. It requires a complaint from a service user or extremely poor PIs before performance is acted on by Lewisham outside of service reviews.
- 101** There is a lack of clear standards set for providers. Providers have said that there is no clear level of performance expected of them by the SP team other than the provision of the worksheets. There are no specific targets for services and no local KPIs beyond those set by the ODPM. The lack of local KPIs is in line with a decision made by the cross-authority Regional Implementation Group to maintain consistency between boroughs.

⁷ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

- 102** Performance data is not robust, although the Council has taken initiatives to improve it. All providers submit their PI data electronically and the Council has submitted completed extracts to the ODPM on time with minor set-backs. However, during our provider visits we found that some providers were not routinely recording client data, and had limited understanding of the basis for some performance data. The Supporting People team have set up training sessions for providers and check for missing and unusual figures. However, the review process does not involve assessing whether the providers understand and are correctly applying the definitions of the data.
- 103** There have been recent improvements in the performance data available to the Supporting People team. The implementation of SWIFT in May 2005 and accompanying changes in procedure for receiving and clarifying block subsidy payments has produced these improvements. Payments to providers are now regular and based on accurate client data of the scheme which can also be used by the review team when carrying out a service review.
- 104** There is a high corporate profile afforded to SP expenditure. Monthly finance meetings take place that are chaired by the Council's deputy 151 officer, and attended by various SP officers. The meeting demonstrates corporate commitment to monitoring and reviewing SP expenditure, and has contributed to the process of the Council topping up the grant to providers in 2005/06 to prevent unnecessary cuts where cost reductions taken late in the year will only sufficient impact in 2006/07. The current projection shows that the Supporting People budget will balance at the end of 2006/07.

Fairer charging

- 105** Fairer charging is being dealt with adequately by Lewisham. There is a protocol in place but information to service users is not comprehensive.
- 106** There is an effective system for checking whether service users are entitled to fairer charging. Providers inform the Supporting People team of all new service users. These are checked against housing benefit records. If they are not on Housing Benefit they are sent a fairer charging assessment form and their circumstances assessed. In 2005/06 there have been 15 applications for fairer charging assessments; in total eight service users are required to pay a charge of some kind which between them adds up to £33,000 per year.
- 107** Information to service users is reasonable but not comprehensive. Leaflets on fairer charging are available but they do not give timescales for assessing applications. The Supporting People team are not aware of these timescales set down in the protocol but are aware that assessments in practice take around one month.

- 108** The Council is not taking sufficient action to promote and liaise on fairer charging. Providers felt that although there were leaflets on fairer charging, the Council should take more action to promote this. Service users have not been sent a leaflet since 2003. Providers to services in council stock felt that they lacked information as they are not told who gets housing benefit so they are unable to check whether appropriate fairer charging assessments have been made. In addition, information on fairer charging is not promoted widely for example in newsletter for service users. This may prevent the assessment of fairer charges being provided to all service users that require it.
- 109** There has been too great a delay in producing new literature on fairer charging. A review was carried out in 2004 and as a consequence a new leaflet will be made available. However, 15 months later the leaflet has still not been sent out. A review at the end of 2006/07 will look into whether the Council wants to charge for these services at all. The Council is waiting for this second review before deciding whether to provide a new leaflet. The cost savings of not advertising, assessing and paying fairer charging would cover part of the £30,000 that would be lost by not charging.

Relationships with providers

- 110** Lewisham has a reasonable relationship with providers but there were many low level criticisms by providers. There are very useful forums but despite emails being sent out not all providers receive information and there is a lack of feedback on outcomes from the forums.
- 111** Providers are generally satisfied with their relationship with the Supporting People structures in Lewisham. The survey of providers carried out by the Audit Commission showed an 85 to 90 per cent satisfaction with issues like involving providers and providing advice and support to providers.
- 112** The three borough forum is productive and useful. Many providers attend the three borough provider forum along with providers from Lambeth and Southwark. This was particularly useful for the larger providers as it saved them from going to three separate events and some considered it to be the best in London. It meets for half a day once a month and is chaired by a provider and has a closed session for providers. It sometimes divides up into sector areas and borough areas and is useful for networking and sharing information. Some of the smaller providers were less positive and wanted a Lewisham only forum.
- 113** Lewisham held a successful stakeholder event in February 2006 at which 90 people attended. It is intended that this will be the first of regular events that will meet the needs of providers who do not attend the three borough forum.
- 114** Client Sector Workshops (CSWs) have provided useful involvement for some providers for two years. There are six CSWs and four other client specific forums. The Council has been running CSWs for two years. They have been facilitated by the SP team, with four now chaired. They were useful for consulting on the strategy and developing procedures like the referral routes and forms. They have guest speakers to update providers and provide training and exchange of best practice. They are now being formally integrated in the Supporting People structures to form sub-groups of the Core Strategy Group.

- 115** The Council's approach to keeping providers informed and up to date has weaknesses. The Council's website has limited information on Supporting People. It provides the information in the standard Lewisham leaflet and links to other sites. The ODPM's spkweb⁸ provides more information for providers but not enough. Useful information includes the agenda for the stakeholder event, a draft of the steady state contract, the new eligibility criteria, the five-year strategy and the value for money methodology. However, it has nothing on any papers or information plans or agendas from any of the structures or forums other than the stakeholder event.
- 116** The Council produces two newsletters a year which are available on the web. Many of the providers were not aware of the newsletter. Of those that had read it they found it relatively useful but it did not meet all of their needs for information about developments and structures within Lewisham SP. They felt it lacks depth. It was not clear if anyone could drop into the Client Sector Workshops and with no advanced agenda, there was less incentive. There is also a written Lead Officer's update a few times a year but providers did not refer to it when asked about information from the Council.
- 117** Feedback to providers on various issues is not always adequate. The Supporting People team relies on provider representatives feeding back information to other providers. There is no proper assessment by the Council of whether this works.

Risk management

- 118** Lewisham Supporting People has a limited approach to risk management. There is a risk register and corporate strategy on risk management but plans and registers do not link together.
- 119** There is a Supporting People risk register but it is not comprehensive; it only lists five risks and actions to be taken to minimise those risks. It does not mention issues like serious incidents at Supporting People funded schemes. It does not address the issue of ensuring that providers have adequate risk management processes. This is linked to the fact that providers are not linked into the MAPPA arrangements which exposes the Supporting People programme to a risk that better links with MAPPA would help address.
- 120** The risk register is not formally monitored. When it is discussed at the Commissioning Body it is not minuted, although there is evidence that it was sent out to Commissioning Body members. Similarly, there is no record to show that the actions in the register to minimise risk have been carried out. These actions do not link with the annual work plan.
- 121** The risk register is not reflected in the corporate risk register or the register of partner organisations represented on the Commissioning Body. It was agreed at the Commissioning Body in December 2005 that the Supporting People risk register would be merged with the main risk register for the Community Services Directorate.

⁸ The Kweb is an ODPM website that provides information on Supporting People including detailed information provided by local authorities for providers and service users. The web address is: www.spkweb.org.uk

- 122** There are positive aspects in the approach to risk. There is a separate project plan, risk register and contingency plan maintained for the development of the Supporting People IT system which is positive. Lewisham council has a corporate strategy on risk management. Although the existing register does not flow from that strategy, future ones will do.

Service reviews

- 123** There is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the conduct of service reviews. The programme was well prioritised, almost finished on time and there are clear benefits and cost savings arising from the reviews. However, delays in the revision of the eligibility criteria have led to four reviews not being completed and delays in obtaining significant cost savings. A large minority of providers have some dissatisfaction with the process and the follow up to the reviews has been limited.
- 124** The programme of the review process has been well organised and prioritised with high cost schemes earlier on in the process. However, there have been problems with the timing of service reviews and some of the reviews of the highest cost schemes have not been finished. The reviews of high cost learning disability schemes remained incomplete for periods of over a year. The decision on contract value is pending an eligibility self-assessment against the new eligibility criteria and decisions on how much of the subsequent funding shortfall will be made up by other bodies. The failure of the Council to establish the eligibility criteria earlier has caused this delay which has postponed significant savings in the grant, estimated at over £400,000. This delay has also left these providers in limbo unable to plan.
- 125** Service reviews have not been carried out consistently. The reviews have in general been completed well but standards have not been consistent. The ten service review files that we looked at demonstrated a detailed and methodical approach. The reviews were clear and the key relevant issues covered.
- 126** Further inconsistencies were highlighted by providers. The provider survey showed that 42 per cent were dissatisfied. Many problems were cited including, duplicating information between the Council and the accreditation agency, stopping, starting and rescheduling of reviews, the length of time reviews take, delays of six months which made it difficult to comment on details, late and unconstructive feedback that was subsequently retracted and a heavy handed approach.
- 127** The provider focus groups had mixed views as well. While some providers were satisfied, others reported that the level of report detail for Lewisham was below the standard experienced from other SP teams and the officer having a low level of knowledge about the provider and client group. This inconsistency in quality of review has been attributed to the temporary staff arrangements that were in place for a limited period.

- 128** These negative views need to be balanced by the evidence of well managed reviews. The provider of one service considered that the team had an insight to the high level of support provided by the service. Although the grant was reduced by £60,000 as a result of the review, the provider valued the team's understanding and approach to the review process.
- 129** The involvement of stakeholders has added to the quality of some reviews but there is scope for better joint working. The SP team has been proactive in working jointly with the Learning Disabilities Partnership to carry out service reviews that has resulted in the reviews being sensitive to both cost and quality issues - as well as enhancing the understanding of the Supporting People team about the client group. In addition, a joint bid has gone to the board to access funds to involve people with a learning disability in Supporting People team reviews where applicable. However, some of high cost services have large care contracts where the same key workers carry out both care and support but there is no liaison in the management of the contracts and service reviews.
- 130** The reviews of children's services have had a substantial degree of involvement from the children's procurement team. Probation has only been involved in provider service reviews at a desk top level. Some providers felt that specialist assessors were not used sufficiently by the SP team.
- 131** Stakeholders of the provider are involved through questionnaires. This can be another funding organisation, a social worker, a CPN, or a local police officer. The review officers make an effort to ensure a minimum of two returns from stakeholders per scheme. Some providers considered that partner agencies were not adequately involved in the review process.
- 132** The service reviews lack a clear and formal quality assurance process but benefits from a procedure. For a year until the summer of 2005, the Lead Officer signed off all reviews. Now the quality of the reviews is the responsibility of the Team Contracts and Review Manager who checks and helps finalise them with the Lead Officer reading them all and providing input as she sees fit. There is no external input from outside of the team. The lack of proper quality assurance processes and variable quality of reviews following from staff sickness and turnover has lead to inconsistencies and variable quality in the service review reports and follow up.
- 133** The overview of the service review process by the Commissioning Body has been appropriate. The Commissioning Body kept very close tabs on the progress of the reviews. Decisions were made on each review based on discussion and summary reports.
- 134** Providers have a right of written representation which serves adequately but not well as an appeal process against their service review. They are given ten working days to make any comments whether of factual error or to appeal against a major cut in funding. Some providers have expressed dissatisfaction with the timescale that they have to respond in. There is no monitoring of the success of this system. Providers have successfully overturned recommendations through this process.

- 135 Detail regarding the appeal process is not clearly indicated upon conclusion of a review. Letters to providers reveal inadequate information. While Lewisham say that this information is provided verbally, this is not adequate and the information should be in writing.
- 136 The Council has made productive but not full use of cross-authority working to improve service reviews. There have been joint training sessions for staff and review officers meet to discuss difficult cases to move towards greater consistency between the three boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark. However, there has been no use of officers from other boroughs to carry out reviews of internal services.
- 137 The process of keeping providers informed of the review process and reporting back to them has more weaknesses than strengths. Providers were unaware of the standards that the SP team work to for producing reports. There is a document setting this out but it is not easily available.
- 138 Providers are adequately informed about when reviews were due to take place but inadequately informed about the process once the review has started. The process for informing providers of the conclusions of the review takes a long time, and there is no specific time indicated as to when providers should receive the conclusion. Some providers felt that they were not given enough feedback prior to the report being finished. The Council recognises that the approach to feedback is inconsistent with some providers given the chance to respond to written drafts while others do not.
- 139 The SP team do not take appropriate action to help service users get feedback from reviews except where a service is decommissioned. Providers have said that they would find it very helpful if there were to be a service user friendly summary for the service users. They do not think it right that the provider should do it as they are not impartial. Such a summary is made available for the Commissioning Body but not to providers.
- 140 The approach to following up service reviews is not adequate. The approach is not clear and is inconsistently applied. The reports do not indicate how compliance would be achieved outside the review process or future monitoring arrangements. Some reviews have action plans with timescales that have long past but the review files give no detail of any monitoring or re-visit. Some reviews have action plans attached while others with lower standards achieved (a C or a D) do not. This does not set providers clear targets and timescales for improving services and reduces the chances that services will be improved.
- 141 The service review process has produced positive outcomes. These include improvements in support plans, improved health and safety, risk management and complaints processes. In three services there had been the use of appointeeship as a condition of access to the service which was inappropriate and changed. Better value for money has been achieved by cutting grant costs while maintaining the level of service.
- 142 Weak services have been decommissioned. In one example the service review of

- 143** scheme for teenage mothers identified weaknesses that were not previously identified by the children's service staff. The decommissioning was handled very sensitively by the SP team. Residents were housed with another provider that provided a higher quality of service in a number of ways.

Service user involvement

- 144** There are significant weaknesses in service user involvement with no current structures for involvement. Input by service users into the five-year strategy was limited. Responses from service users have not always been collected in a confidential way.
- 145** At present Lewisham Supporting People lacks any formal structures for involving users. Users have not been involved in any stakeholder structures. The 2006/07 annual plan includes involving service users in the Client Sector Workshops. There is some structured involvement of ex-service users of domestic violence and of substance misuse services that advise on process and strategy for SP. Broader user groups exist that the Council does have contact with such as the pension action group but these have had no impact on SP services.
- 146** The Council has a reasonable theoretical approach to service user consultation but it is not matched by actions as there are no present day activities that involve Supporting People. The Council has a Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2004/07. The strategy aims to ensure that consultation is effective, that outcomes are used to inform policy and decision-making and improve the co-ordination of consultation between directorates. In a similar way, a Supporting People User Involvement Strategy dated May 2004 sets out a series of aims on user involvement. However, the latter is no longer current and none of the aims are realised at the present time.
- 147** There is no existing strategy or plan for service user involvement with Supporting People. No methods of innovation have been introduced or discussed with providers to engage service users. The Council has not held events of the kind that neighbouring boroughs have to involve service users. The production of a new communication strategy has been put in the 2006/07 Supporting People work plan.
- 148** There was some user involvement in the development of the five-year strategy but the evidence for it is limited. There was a planned timetable on consultation that involved 28 different consultation meetings. Only five of these involved service users and there only remains evidence of one of them.
- 149** Consultants asked to carry out needs mapping work did not involve service users adequately. Despite doing an in depth needs analysis of three client groups; they only met with service users once in a young person's focus group. The strategy did address some of these users' concerns
- 150** The Council has had some limited success involving service users in reviews but there were weaknesses in the approach taken. In one sheltered housing service review, service user views were presented by a tenants' forum that included relatives of the residents. This led to tenants being involved in the recruitment of the scheme manager as well as minor improvements in the service.

- 151** Inadequacies in the approach taken were highlighted by providers. A quarter of the providers in the provider survey were dissatisfied and had specific issues to raise. A weakness of the approach taken is the lack of confidentiality afforded to service user views. In some reviews the SP team arrange for the provider to collect and forward service user questionnaires. This is not good practice as the questionnaires should be entirely independent and confidential from the providers.
- 152** Service users have not been adequately informed on the outcome of service reviews. Service users in some schemes had been actively informed and involved in the process but they had not received any feedback on the outcome of the review. This prevents service users from identifying the level of service that they are receiving, how services will be improved and how their input has informed these decisions.
- 153** There are limited examples of service improvements through user involvement in the service reviews. One example is the use of appointeeships. Service users were very vocal and successful in requesting that this practice is not routinely used.
- 154** There have been weaknesses in the approach to involvement in service reviews. For sheltered schemes and floating support and the 18 (8 per cent) desktop reviews questionnaires are posted out to service users. All reviews that have validation visits involve group or one-to-one interviews with service users and questionnaires are left with other service users.
- 155** There are a range of methods and many positive examples of service users participating in the improvement and development of the service and being involved in the running of their schemes. These include:
- resident meetings;
 - questionnaires including on the remodelling of the service;
 - involvement in the selection of new staff;
 - encouragement to take part in management meetings; and
 - attendance at ex-service user forums.
- 156** Improvements resulting from the above include an improved level of scheme security checks, the introduction of a communal lounge area a change in the ground rules and changes to social activities.
- 157** In one scheme that has a service user participation officer, service users have: been included in the interview for a new support officer; have accompanied security staff on their routine night checks of the scheme and taken part in drawing up scheme information, eg leaflets and newsletters. This has enabled service users to participate in service delivery and develop their skills. Improvements in response to feedback include a publicised rota of maintenance staff enabling. This has increased the efficiency in which maintenance issues are dealt with, as well as developing the independence of service users.

- 158** In another scheme service users were involved through questionnaires and meetings in expressing their views on the transfer of support services from one provider to another. However, service users were not told what impact their views on the decision.

Access to services and information

- 159** Access to services and information is a weak area of the Supporting People programme. There is no directory of services available and information from Council offices is limited with staff unable to give advice or signpost in some offices. Assessment and referral arrangements are not strong.
- 160** Information that is available about Supporting People is very limited. It has not been publicised well within Lewisham and is only readily accessible for professionals and experienced advocates. There is limited information advertising the service to the public, for example Supporting People does not feature in the Council's newsletters that are delivered to all homes within the borough.
- 161** Lewisham SP does not provide information in appropriate formats targeted at particular client groups, for example adults with learning disabilities. Other councils have managed this, for example giving guidance on what to expect and look for when offered accommodation.
- 162** There is a lack of easily available information on services and no directory of services beyond the on line service provided by the ODPM. If citizens are well connected to the Council or similar agencies they would be able to tap into this. However, there are no readily available lists of sheltered schemes or explanations of who they are available for. More information is made available after an application has been made for sheltered housing. The SP team rely on sending out a list of sheltered schemes if they receive a request but other advisors in the Council do not have ready access to the list. Good quality schemes are being decommissioned through lack of demand but the Council is not enabling people to see how easy it can be to be housed in sheltered accommodation. Providers told us that they found out alternative service provider information through established contacts rather than relying on information provided by the Council.
- 163** Information from the main council offices is very limited. There are two offices described as access points. Neither could provide any information relating to queries on housing and support. Two of the housing offices were equally unhelpful and would only give out forms to be filled in. They did not themselves appear to have any information about the services funded by Supporting People nor were they able to indicate where the information could be found. In one office the staff behaved in a dismissive and unpleasant manner on being pressed to provide information.

- 164** The leaflets on housing support in the housing offices were very limited. There were some leaflets on mental health and domestic violence but we found none on alcohol/substance misuse, ex-offenders and learning disability groups. The main Supporting People leaflet was not consistently displayed in all of the offices. As a result, service users would not be able to access adequate information in order to make informed decisions about accessing the service; this might also prevent further enquiries being made by the public. Services like sheltered schemes have low demand and the failure to communicate this effectively makes that situation worse.
- 165** The Council's own website is weak on Supporting People, just making available the standard leaflet. It does provide links to other sites that have useful information. On the Government's Supporting People website *k-web*, the Council has made limited information available but solely aimed at providers. There is no information for service users on what services are available or how to get involved.
- 166** The approach to complaints is inadequate. There is no leaflet for service users informing them that they can complain to the Supporting People team if there are problems with the service that they are unable to resolve with the service provider. There is a Council complaints leaflet but this only applies to Council services and does not mention Supporting People. The Supporting People leaflet is not clear on the subject. It says that early complaints are dealt with by whoever provides the service. It goes on to say in poorly worded English that 'If any help is needed regarding complaints or compliments, they can be sent to:' and then the Supporting People address is given.
- 167** The Council's document '*Better Care: Higher Standards*' does not serve its intended purpose adequately. It makes no mention of Supporting People and is out-of-date. It does signpost people to services that would provide information about Supporting People services.
- 168** On a more positive note service users at the focus group were well informed about Supporting People. There was a level of understanding about the programme and grant facilities from central government, and the provision of the service from providers.
- 169** The weaknesses outweigh the strengths in the assessment and referral of people to appropriate housing support services. The homeless persons unit (called the Housing Options Centre) has referred people inappropriately, to the wrong service altogether or for the wrong level of need. The process has been unco-ordinated. Inappropriate priority has been given to priority homeless. The Council recognises that the service is in need of significant improvement and a best value review has been carried out.

- 170** There is a lack of proactive work for assessing ex-offenders. A probation post in the Housing Options team currently carries out assessments upon presentation, and there are plans for this post to be funded by SP post-April 2006 (currently funded by probation). However, the service does not access ex-offenders before they leave prison and are reactive to need rather than proactive to their needs. The system lacks arrangements to ensure that the access that ex-offenders have into the Supporting People programme is not limited by homelessness legislation. There are no outcome targets agreed although negotiations are currently ongoing.
- 171** The Youth Offending Team (YOT) now has a housing advice post in place and there is a clear line of communication for data gathered through the work on assessment of housing needs. This post forms part of a virtual referral and assessment team.
- 172** The Council has very recently been responsive to the gap in appropriately assessing and referring young people upon the first point of contact. A pilot referral and assessment team was introduced at the end of January 2006. It has assessed 29 young people and placed 13 of them. The plan is to review its effectiveness with a view to expanding it to cover other client groups.
- 173** Information about this new referral service has not been successfully communicated to all relevant providers. Information has been provided to those who have attended recent meetings but various providers we spoke to did not know about it.

Diversity

- 174** Corporately, Lewisham is strong on diversity. The Council has achieved level five of the Equality Standard for local government. In 2005 it was shortlisted for Beacon status on diversity.
- 175** The Council has been proactive in carrying out equalities impact assessments. An equalities impact assessment was carried out on the five-year strategy. Although the statutory requirement is specific to race, Lewisham widened the scope to also address gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion.
- 176** However, within Supporting People, diversity is an area where there are more weaknesses than strengths. There is a lack of strategic approach without any targets monitoring or overview on the subject by the Commissioning Body or CSG. There has been some planning in the area of hard to reach groups.

- 177 The Council has collected a reasonable amount of data as background to assess needs against the service, and to plan to meet diverse needs and ensure equality of access. Useful and relevant data includes the following.
- The borough's over-65 year old population is declining but within that there will be an increase in the proportion of BME older people.
 - Lewisham has the eighth highest proportion of conceptions by girls under 18 in the country.
 - Only 8 per cent of traveller children live on travellers' sites.
 - There is a continued over-representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups amongst homeless families with over two-thirds of applications being from non-white groups compared to only one-third of the general population.
- 178 Supporting People data has been successfully used to help produce the Council's resident profile data and was incorporated into the Housing Strategy 2004. This highlighted the level and variance of supported housing provided within Lewisham. This has raised awareness of the level of vulnerability within Lewisham and will specifically be taken into consideration in the development of the future management of the Council's housing stock through the stock options process.
- 179 Monitoring of diversity issues within Supporting People is entirely lacking. Neither the Commissioning Body nor the Core Strategy Group receive regular reports on diversity, analysing statistics to assess whether there are diversity issues in the service that needs addressing. Relevant issues are not being reported or commented on. For example we were provided with figures regarding housing and re-integrating offenders. From this we were able to extract figures that show that in the nine months to December 2005, 57 per cent of white offenders that were assessed for accommodation were referred on while only 34 per cent BME offenders were referred on. By failing to analyse and report on such information the discrimination could be left undetected.
- 180 There are gaps in the provision for excluded groups as identified in the five-year strategy. This includes:
- mental health services which are not diverse enough to meet complex needs;
 - a lack of wheelchair accommodation for learning disabilities and others; and
 - a lack of services for young black men, particularly in mental health and learning disabilities.
- 181 The YOT has identified gaps in Supporting People provision for young women offenders and these are fed in to the strategy development discussions of the offender focus groups.

- 182** The domestic violence service has a low level of reporting from BME women, and in particular some transient new communities from Eastern Europe. The Council plans to use contract monitoring and service specification to promote take up of the services by these target groups. However, this is not being monitored yet. Information contained in the domestic violence diagnostic review will enable the Council to target services more effectively at transient communities.
- 183** The Council has not yet addressed how to better reach groups from certain backgrounds. Service providers confirmed that there are groups that continue to manage at home, as they were unaware of the service opportunities. This is recognised in the five-year strategy.
- 184** The Council has carried out the following service improvements for the benefit of hard to reach groups:
- ensuring better access arrangements in one learning disability service;
 - developing an emergency contact system for women experiencing domestic violence; and
 - creating a scheme for young offenders to help them to regain and maintain independence in the community and reduce risk of re-offending.
- 185** The Supporting People team have been described as culturally sensitive. The provider for the service to travellers said that the team were supportive and understanding of the needs and context of the travellers' community.

Outcomes for service users

- 186** There are more strengths than weaknesses in outcomes for service users. The Quality Assessment Framework (QAF), service reviews and decommissioning has made a difference to the quality of the service. Support plans are in place and service users' lives are being improved. A lack of move on opportunities is limiting the outcomes for some users.
- 187** Improvements have resulted from the decommissioning of 12 services due to either the quality of the service or the fact that the services were not eligible for Supporting People funding. Services have been transferred to other providers and service users are receiving a better quality of service as a result.
- 188** There have been a number of improvements as a result of service reviews. This includes improved health and safety better risk management, improvements in support planning, better complaints processes and an end of the mandatory use of appointeeship.
- 189** A weakness in the process is the lack of follow up on action planning. Service reviews result in action plans that will improve outcomes for service users. However, not all the action plans are followed up to see if actions are having the desired effect. As a result, the Council cannot demonstrate improvements in some cases.
- 190** Service users will benefit from an agreement with a housing association to transfer accommodation-based support in one scheme from shared to self-contained accommodation.

- 191** In schemes that we visited we found examples of high quality services that are making improvements to the lives many people and were spoken highly of by the service users. Examples include the opportunities to make decisions about the service and develop skills. Service users were able to demonstrate their involvement in drawing up their support plans. They emphasised the importance of the support plan as a tool to aid their achievement. As a result of keywork sessions and support plans, service users have been able to develop the management of their finances, access correct welfare benefits, as well as accessing other support and external networking through the guidance of their workers.
- 192** A 'gold award' initiative at one scheme has assisted in the development of service users. In conjunction with support planning the award system encourages service users to develop and improve certain skills and elements of their life and future goals. One user was nominated for an award for obtaining an NVQ in Arts and now plans to go to university. He informed us that he had been able to do this through the encouragement of his support workers and his own determination.
- 193** We did find some negative feedback. Residents at one scheme raised concerns about the level and quality of support. Some did not consider that they received adequate support. In particular they said that staff did not consistently follow up on their support needs such as future housing options and progression on their housing application; that there was insufficient support provided for the development of their children, eg educational toys and equipment; and that the provider did not actively deal with their complaints regarding accommodation associated issues.
- 194** In Lewisham people with learning disabilities get a high level of care and support to help them live independently. This has resulted in positive effects on the lives of many people. However, delays in decision-making have lead to uncertainty for providers making it harder to plan, employ permanent staff and implement changes and improvements.

Case study 1: Support for high level learning disabilities

Service user M was taken into state care at the age of four. She then lived in a succession of hospital wards and institutions until eight years ago. She was described as being unable to ever 'function in the community' but, as a result of the high quality of support she receives, she now does live in the community and her abilities continue to develop and surprise those around her.

She receives support from the service provider. M has a tendency to damage property, including household appliances, soft furnishings and she rips her clothes regularly. She can be aggressive to staff and so requires staff to be present 24 hours a day and often requires two, particularly during outings and activities and at night. As a result of this high level of support, M is able to live in her own flat (within a house with other service users all covered by the same service provider) and lead a full life as an active member of the local community.

The service provider has worked to raise the quality of its services using the QAF and has developed a model of Person Centred Planning. M is now included in all decisions that may affect her and her support is responsive to her needs. With both support and care provided M is able to do the vast majority of her own personal care, including washing and dressing. She is able to assist in the preparation of meals and in the supermarket can pick out items that she likes. She attends several social clubs and a nightclub for people with learning disabilities in Lewisham where she loves to dance.

Although this has been a success for M, Lewisham has been slow to review this very high cost service. The Supporting People grant pays for activities that are not eligible. The Commissioning Body will not decide until after March 2006 by how much the Supporting People grant will be reduced. No decision has been made yet as to whether the funding gap will be made up.

- 195** The quality of outcomes for service users have been compromised by the quality of the homelessness service in Lewisham. The Council's homeless persons unit moves vulnerable people from hostel to hostel in a way that is damaging to some people's mental health. The provision of appropriate referrals for housing-related support is inconsistent and the support provided at the hostels is not always appropriate. Similarly the lack of easy to access, up front and honest information on processes for being housed makes it more difficult, particularly for vulnerable users. While Supporting People has not managed to ensure that support provided in homeless hostels is appropriate, it has managed to mitigate some of the harmful effects.

Case study 2 - Floating support for mental health

Service user G is a working professional with two teenage sons aged 13 and 14 who has been made homeless in the last few months suffering from depression. She has been in five different hostels in the borough since being made homeless despite the fact that her depression is made worse by her insecure housing situation. Low level floating support was organised beginning whilst in the hostel and continuing until G could be re-housed.

She receives a one hour visit each week which mainly involves the provision of information. She particularly valued a realistic explanation of the housing situation in the borough with honest advice about the length of time she may have to wait for a property and contact details for health professionals who could provide assistance for her son (who suffers from ADHD⁹).

Suffering from depression appears to be worsened by inadequate housing and the accompanying chaotic lifestyle that this brings. G has two teenage sons and as such, a single room in a hostel for the three of them is inappropriate. The floating support worker has assisted with paperwork, making arrangements and reassured G that somebody understands her situation.

This service user is aware that, had it not been for a particular staff member in a hostel, she may not have found out about housing-related support at all. She explained how the support providers do not make themselves readily available for people at the Housing Options Centre and suggests that they should advertise more effectively or have standard referral routes. She was very happy to be accepted for floating support within two weeks of her assessment interview and has found the support to be invaluable. However, out of the five hostels she has been in, only one mentioned the possibility of receiving additional support.

The floating support service is relatively low cost but has made a significant difference for this family.

- 196** There are examples where the services for mental health have been both flexible and focused on helping service users to gain their independence. This ability to support somebody appropriately while they turn their life around is central to the aims of Supporting People.

⁹ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Case study 3 - Responsive mental health services

Service user A was first admitted to supported accommodation in Lewisham in July 2003. He had been homeless for four months with a history of clinical depression; he was on Prozac to maintain stability around his health problems.

Staff helped him to stabilise his mental health. With support he improved his living skills around budgeting and becoming more socially skilled and employable. Staff used the assessment, key-working and support planning process to ensure that the support work was targeted and effective. Service user A was encouraged to take his medication more regularly. He was also supported to begin and maintain English lessons to improve his English.

A moved on to a package of lower support, second stage accommodation where he began to put his new skills and motivation to good use by passing his medical examinations and resuming his medical training.

A was eventually supported to gain access to employment and is now working as a trainee GP in a medical centre. He left the project in February 2005 but was supported for six further months after his move away from the project.

- 197** The lack of adequate move-on reduces the choices and quality of service for service users. In the Audit Commission survey, 63 per cent of providers said they were dissatisfied with move-on arrangements in Lewisham. For example where users have progressed through the two stages of supported housing (alcohol-related) and consider that they are ready for independent living. The management of the current system can lead to difficulties in securing move on accommodation. They have concerns that their successful supported development will be negatively affected by the barrier now in place for permanent accommodation.
- 198** The Council has not done all that it can to remedy the lack of move on as outlined in the value for money section below. These important lack of outcomes are not measured. Lewisham Supporting People does not know how many users in each client group in the borough are ready to move on but cannot. The problems with move on have been recognised by the CSG. The Pathways forum was introduced to discuss the development, and since then a united referral form and referral and assessment group for move-on has been introduced. There is not yet any evidence of a significant improvement.

- 199 There are some weaknesses in choices offered to service users. Choices for young people are limited and they can be restricted to accommodation tied floating support for young people. There is a lack of leaflets that outline the options for young people thereby limiting their ability to make choices. The need for more floating support is identified in the five-year plan and there is a plan to provide more floating support is due to be carried out in the autumn of 2006.
- 200 The Council does not have any mechanisms in place to identify and quantify outcomes for service users. Standard performance indicators are collated and reported. There are plans progressing in partnership with Lambeth and Southwark to develop and make use of the Outcome Star methodology used by St Mungos.

Value for money

How do costs compare?

- 201 The costs of services in Lewisham are above average but they are rarely in the highest 25 per cent. The costs of the administration of the programme are well below average.
- 202 The cost of the services per head of population and per unit are considerably more than the average for London or the rest of England as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)¹⁰

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Lewisham	£ 1.41	£ 63.54	£ 88.62	£ 125.39
London	£ 0.97	£ 42.37	£ 48.73	£ 68.40
England	£ 0.70	£ 28.30	£ 34.71	£ 76.37

¹⁰ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003

- 203** However, the figures in the five-year strategy show that average costs per client group are not in the highest 25 per cent (upper quartile) for most client groups. The exceptions to this are:
- travellers - £72.45 compared to a national upper quartile of £29.15; and
 - offenders - £194.99 compared to a regional upper quartile of £182.94.
- 204** The cost of the administration of Supporting People is relatively low. The government provides all administering local authorities with a grant to administer the programme. Lewisham receives £233,000. This amount, as a proportion of the money it administers is the eighth smallest out of 150 administering authorities. This is topped up by £187,000 by the Council. The SP team compares its costs with six other London authorities. This demonstrates that the Council has the second lowest costs, as a proportion of the money that it administers, when compared to the others.

How is value for money managed?

- 205** The strengths outweigh weaknesses in value for money. The administration of the grant is managed at a relatively low cost, the value for money assessments and methodology are thorough and have produced results. High cost services were prioritised but delays in eligibility judgements have prevented significant savings being secured.
- 206** The Council has a thorough guide to assessing value for money in service reviews that was published in November 2004 and made available to providers and is on the internet. It is based on the following issues:
- strategic relevance and current supply of services;
 - the quality of the service and expertise;
 - outcomes for service users; and
 - service costs compared with others with similar service user profiles and outcomes.
- 207** This guide lists the main questions to be asked to determine whether the current funding reflects the actual costs of service delivery. This includes how much staff actually cost, who should be included in direct staff costs, other direct costs, indirect costs, overheads and more. Definitions and explanations are provided along with approaches such as that the Council considers indirect costs of between 15 to 20 per cent of overall contract value to be reasonable.
- 208** Some providers have had difficulty following the methodology. The information is written in an easy to read style and available on the website. The Council has carried out workshops on it with providers but recognises that some providers feel they lack financial skills and so have planned more events.

- 209** The Council successfully timetabled high cost providers early in the review process but has been very slow at dealing with high cost outliers for learning disabilities. Four high cost providers have had the conclusion of their review delayed by over a year. The decision on approximately £400,000 of funding remains uncertain. The conclusion might not be reached until the end of March 2006 with implementation taking longer after that. The various partnerships have not decided who will fill the funding gap yet or whether the result will be a significant drop in quality of support for this client group.
- 210** This delay was due to the Council not anticipating the need for robust eligibility criteria. These services were timetabled for review early in the process. However, the first eligibility criteria were not able to adequately differentiate the complex care and support services although all other aspects of the review processes were completed.
- 211** Benchmarking of scheme costs is mainly carried out in a standard way relying on ODPM figures of national and regional (London) figures. In the five-year strategy this was restricted to comparisons with the upper and lower quartile. The use of benchmarking in scheme review reports is inconsistent with some using average, some using upper and lower quartile figures and some using both. Staff say that benchmarking goes beyond ODPM national and regional figures but were not able to provide any evidence of this. There is no mention of this in the service reviews. Needs analysis work does compare provision with inner London and Southwark and Lewisham.
- 212** The Council has been successful at making improvements in value for money year-on-year. In 2005/06 grants savings on contracts were worth £944,000. Taken over a full year they will be worth £1.9 million. The greatest area of improvement was in single homelessness where costs were reduced by £960,000 over a full year of which £785,000 was due to reducing costs and the rest through decommissioning. In total, eight services were decommissioned at an annual saving of £775,000.
- 213** Many improvements have been achieved through applying the original eligibility criteria. For example the service review of one scheme reduced the costs by £60,000 and due to eligibility. As a result, the provider is seeking to fund through alternative funding arrangements. Providers we have spoken to have thought that the process has been reasonably well handled.
- 214** Savings have been used appropriately, mainly to compensate for grant reductions. As the full value of the 2005/06 savings are realised more money will be available for re-provision. There has been some transfer of funding into new provision so far, in particular £10,000 has been allocated to expand the number of people in fear of domestic violence who have access to Linkline. Two support assessment and referral officers for young people have been appointed and a teenage parent scheme (pending agreement for capital funding from the Housing Corporation).

- 215** The Council is not sufficiently proactive in facilitating move-on accommodation which has had a significant effect on the value for money of the Supporting People grant. Lack of adequate move-on in Lewisham means that service users who are ready to move on to independent living remain using up SP resources in an unproductive way. The key weakness is the lack of a proper rent deposit scheme in the borough making it much more difficult to move service users into independent living or to lower levels of (floating) support in the private sector. There is a plan in place to address this following a best value review.
- 216** The Council does not achieve maximum value for money. There is a quota system whereby users in supported accommodation who do not have priority for social housing are given a special higher priority in the choice-based letting scheme. However, many service users who are ready to move on are applying through the choice-based lettings scheme week after week with no success, thereby wasting Supporting People grant money.
- 217** The Council does not monitor the move-on problem adequately. The Council does receive individual figures from some providers on the number of users waiting to move on. However, this is not done systematically so there is no overall measure of the level of demand and the amount of resources being lost as a result. Discussions are underway on how to improve move-on but agreements to date only cover decants from supported housing schemes. The Pathways forum was introduced to discuss the development, and has produced a single referral form and introduced a referral and assessment group for move-on. Plans are in place that will make improvements in the future.
- 218** The Council has achieved improvements in efficiency through cross-authority working. Examples include:
- the joint accreditation process;
 - the joint working protocol;
 - a three-day training course on carrying out service reviews;
 - plans being completed on the procurement of a joint HIV service; and
 - a project to produce a methodology for measuring the outcome of services for service users.

Summary

- 219** Lewisham council administers a fair Supporting People programme. It has strong partnership links with health and productive cross-authority working systems. Eligibility criteria are clear and well written, finance and service review systems are well monitored. There are forums and workshops that provide valuable opportunities for providers to be involved and informed about the programme. Service reviews have been well monitored and have improved services and made significant savings through a robust approach to value for money.

- 220** However, the service has been held back by inadequate participation from the Probation service and a lack of effective MAPPA links with providers. Staff illness and turnover in the Supporting People team has produced an inconsistent quality of service. Needs mapping have not been thorough in all areas and strategic plans for learning disabilities have not been produced. The second eligibility criteria were produced late resulting in delays in value for money savings. Performance monitoring has been weak, targets have only just been set and work plans are not well formatted making monitoring of them more difficult.
- 221** There are no structures for service user involvement, and limited involvement in the five-year strategy. There is no directory of services and a paternalistic uninformative approach to service users looking for information. Assessment and referral systems are not strong. There is a lack of focus on diversity and inadequate steps to co-ordinate improved move-on accommodation.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- 222** Lewisham has delivered improvements in outputs and processes. It has successfully delivered change with the new directorate providing greater support to the team around planning and performance management. Nearly all the service reviews have been finished and improved eligibility criteria has been produced and the majority of work plan for the year has been delivered. The indicators relating to Supporting People are good and improving. However, plans on service user involvement have not been delivered.
- 223** The 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment by the Audit Commission concluded that corporately the Council is improving well. It has established a track record of improvements across its priority service areas within social care, education, community safety and environment services.
- 224** Specifically on Supporting People, the Council has delivered government plans and requirements. It has governance arrangements in place, it has produced eligibility criteria, produced the five-year strategy on time and service reviews are being completed on time. The year-on-year cost reductions are being met while maintaining and improving services.
- 225** Lewisham has shown that it can implement change successfully when restructuring. The move of Supporting People from the old Regeneration directorate to the new Community Services directorate has been successful. Some elements of that change have been slow, such as gaining full strategic planning and control over the Supporting People programme. However, the directorate is moving forward to complete the process of leadership change and develop the strategic direction further.

- 226** The three borough provider forum has successfully continued to provide benefit for providers, particularly larger ones who attend fewer meetings while having the opportunity to network and influence the development of processes in a coherent and consistent way between the boroughs. Benefits of cross-borough work include the joint protocol on information between local authorities about service providers agreed across the South East London authorities.
- 227** Services have improved as a result of the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) and the management of contracts. The Council has successfully decommissioned and reconfigured services sensitively. Reviews have delivered improvements in health and safety, risk management, support planning among other issues outlined earlier in the report.
- 228** Most of the items in the annual work plan were successfully carried out in the year although there have been some weaknesses. For example while the development of detailed and well researched eligibility criteria was an example of effective change, the timescale for the change was not as it should have been planned for two years earlier. Assessments and referrals from the housing options centre are a weak area of the service and there are plans to address this. However, whilst they have not delivered significant improvements yet, referrals for young people have started to improve.
- 229** The Council failed to deal with move on, particularly through a rent deposit scheme for the private sector. Some providers have had to develop their own scheme. For many service users, moving on to their own home is the successful outcome that they are looking for and have been unable to achieve due to the Council's failure to tackle this issue better and earlier.
- 230** An aim of the annual work plan that was not successfully implemented was the development of service user representation through client sector workshops. While changes to the workshops and their relations with the Core Strategy Group are progressing, service user representation is not.
- 231** Key performance indicators show that performance is improving at Lewisham. For 2004/05, of the 12 adult services PAF indicators shown in the appendix, all were above average and seven were significantly above average. Compared to the previous year two went down, four went up and the rest stayed the same.
- 232** For the BVPI housing-related indicators, seven are shown in the appendix. Lewisham is in the best 25 per cent for five of the indicators and average for two. One of the indicators shows a move into a better banding and none are worse.

How does the service manage performance?

- 233** There are key weaknesses in managing performance as well as some strengths. The planning process has identified and progressed some issues while important areas have not been identified. The new governance structure is better but has not yet settled in and does not have clarity of purpose and roles. Performance has been weak but is improving.

Service improvement planning

- 234** Lewisham has improvement planning systems that can identify problems and deliver improvements. However, some key weaknesses have not been identified and some problems are not anticipated adequately and are resolved in an unstructured way.
- 235** The aims of the programme are set out in the five-year strategy. This outlines overall values and details about each service sector. It highlights areas for improvement in overall service quality for users in the future.
- 236** The annual planning process does address the corporate priorities but only addresses some of the weaknesses in the SP programme. Other weaknesses have been identified but are not in the plan and not being addressed in a co-ordinated way. The annual plan itself is not well formatted or monitored.
- 237** Key weaknesses in the governance of Lewisham Supporting People are addressed only through informal planning that lacks liaison and co-ordination. One of these is the level of involvement of Probation. This looks likely to be addressed as the local Assistant Chief Officer of Probation is planning to give new local Senior Probation Officers portfolios of responsibility that include Supporting People and therefore the involvement of Probation in the future looks likely to improve to provide more local insight. However, this has not been set out in writing and was not the result of a work plan from the Commissioning Body.
- 238** Another weakness that has been addressed informally is the structure and attendance of the Core Strategy Group which required changing following the completion of the five-year strategy. The changes implemented should lead to much needed improvements. However, this was not in the annual plan and was not done as part of a proper review. As a result, there was a period where the Core Strategy Group was not functioning as well as it could have been. The outcome has been welcomed by the CSG members that we met who considered that it would enable the CSG to be more strategically focused.
- 239** The annual plan does address some areas of weak service such but not adequately. The weak referral system and the lack of move-on accommodation. Were addressed in the annual plan in two ways. Firstly a provider's pathway group was set up. This has analysed and rationalised processes producing a single assessment form and an outcome has been the joint prioritisation of 20 clients for move-on. Secondly an assessment and referral team was set up. However, it is only a pilot and is not yet ambitious enough to resolve all the issues faced. There was a best value review of the homelessness service which will produce important changes such as a rent deposit scheme. However, there was a lack of a one organisation approach to this review with no evidence of the key issues facing Supporting People being included in the aims of the best value review.

- 240** Another key weakness is identified in the plan but without a single successful outcome during the year. Service user involvement is an area that has a strong corporate focus with the *'Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2004-2007'* and the Mayor's Consultation Board. However, this is not filtering down to Supporting People where there is no service user involvement in the programme and the plan to develop service user representation through client sector workshops has not been pursued yet.
- 241** Wider corporate plans should produce improvements for Supporting People. Plans are being implemented to set up a joint intelligence unit between the community services directorate and the PCT. The project is looking at how different data systems can communicate to bridge gaps and allow data to be interrogated across different areas. This should lead to a more co-ordinated service for SP service users.
- 242** Two key weaknesses have not been addressed by the planning system or the self-assessment for this inspection. The provision of information on services is an area that the Council as a whole has recognised needs further work. Information and signposting is inadequate and there is no directory of services. The Council's public access points, housing offices and housing staff are not able to provide adequate information about Supporting People services. The second key weakness that has not been identified is an area of strength for the Council as a whole, which is target setting, monitoring and reporting around diversity.
- 243** There is no system in place for assessing whether tasks are being carried out adequately. For example whether councillors and providers are receiving information being sent out to them. Feedback to the Audit Commission suggested that the information was not being received by all while the Supporting People team had not set a feedback loop to find out if information systems were working.
- 244** Plans are consulted on but not adequately and the format and monitoring are weak. The process of producing plans involves consultation with the providers who are on the Core Strategy Group but it lacks any consultation with service users and the bulk of providers.
- 245** The existing plans are not SMART¹¹ making it hard to measure performance against plans. There is no evidence of the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group monitoring the annual plan regularly.
- 246** The Community Services Directorate has detailed plans to improve the annual planning process for the directorate that will lead to better plans for Supporting People in 2006/07. Guidance went out in January and there are clear processes that will lead to better consultation, a SMART structure, liaison with other plans, and better monitoring. However, we asked for a copy of the draft annual plan for 2006/07 and it was not provided even in the second half of March, suggesting that the process is behind schedule.

¹¹ Specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timebound.

Leadership and culture for continuous improvement

- 247** There is a mixture of strengths and weakness in the leadership and delivery at of Supporting People the Council. There is a momentum towards improvement in the leadership but the one council approach has not always been successfully delivery for Supporting People.
- 248** The Council has a clear focus and ethos that is well understood in the management of Supporting People. This is around the three strands of customer focus, efficiency and a whole council approach that avoids departmentalism.
- 249** The focus and ethos of the Council is not consistently carried out. The customer focus is lacking in the provision of information on Supporting People outlined under *Access to services and information* above. Similarly the one council approach is not always evident. The best value review the Homelessness Service did not address some of the difficulties facing Supporting People. The Supporting People team are not always informed when inadequate referrals are made to council providers.
- 250** The governance structure of Supporting People is not performing to strength; it is only six months old and still settling in. The structure itself, placing Supporting People under crime prevention in the Community Services Directorate is welcomed by all for a variety of reasons set out in the governance section earlier in this report.
- 251** However, there is not yet clarity among managers and councillors about their roles. The portfolio councillor is a member of the Commissioning Body but she does not appear as such in the new memorandum of understanding passed in February 2006. The Councillor has been unable to attend any Commissioning Body meetings as she has not been available on the dates and times that it has been scheduled for. There is a risk that this can lead to the Councillor playing more of a reactive than a proactive role in Supporting People.
- 252** The Accountable Officer is only partly settled into her role. She has not yet taken on board the strategic leadership role but is getting to understand and effectively support and deal with the current issues facing the service. The commitment and support of the new AO has been recognised by CSG members. Her attendance at the Lewisham stakeholders meeting was welcomed. Through her position in crime prevention she has already identified and opened up alternative funding arrangements through the provision of DIP assessment officers (via the Pathways CSW).
- 253** The Commissioning Body has demonstrated it can see through decisions that are hard to implement. It has decided to decommission a number of services and some of them have put up a strong opposition making representations with the elected councillors.

- 254** There are weaknesses in the performance management culture. Failures in performance delivery are not routinely reported to those who need to know. An example is where the homeless persons unit have made inappropriate referrals for example filling vacancies traditionally for learning disabilities with homeless people. This causes concerns for the support workers and carers as the block is carefully managed. The Supporting People team were unaware of this problem.
- 255** Documentation is not always clear and information is missing. Important documents like the memorandum of understanding are produced with no date on them and with key figures like a councillor missing from the membership list. Minutes of the Client Sector Workshops record attendees by name only and not organisation. Minutes of the Core Strategy Group do not note whether the previous minutes are accurate and some copies have gone missing.

Performance management

- 256** Performance management has been weak through 2005; there have been recent improvements but the process is not yet strong. There has not been regular quarterly reporting of performance against targets with varying levels of detail as appropriate for different levels of management. The new leadership of Supporting People within the Community Services Directorate is starting to address this.
- 257** The team is improving its approach to performance management. KPIs are provided at the CSG and a paper was presented at the last meeting that set out some performance targets for the SP team for example on complaints. £20,000 has also been secured via the three borough provider forum and a consultant is developing measures for providers for example rates of re-offending, rates in older peoples admissions. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in June 2006, and then piloted on two identified service areas of single homeless and ex-offenders.
- 258** A new 'dashboard' has been introduced that gives an overview of seven ODPM KPIs. These do not yet have targets and the figures do not show comparisons with other authorities and the commentary does not explain the performance.
- 259** There are processes in place to learn both internally and from others but these could be improved. The various cross-authority structures that exist enable the Council to learn from other South London boroughs. There is evidence of sharing of practice and ideas and some forms and policies have been copied from high performing authorities in the North of London. There is no evidence of structured processes for learning from best practice around the country.
- 260** Lewisham SP lacks a consistent process for providers and the SP team to learn lessons from complaints. Complaints are discussed at team meetings where relevant. However, there is no log of lessons learnt for providers and future staff to learn from.

Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- 261 Lewisham Supporting People has the capacity to improve. It is within a Council that is improving well within a directorate that has the plans and capacity to support improvements in planning and performance management. Human resources and training are in place and computer systems are already delivering and are set to improve further.
- 262 The Council has appropriate human resources process in place necessary to aid in the improvement of the service. Staff have Personal Evaluation System meetings two or three times a year and one-to-one supervision meetings at least once every two months. Team members are set personal targets relevant to the goals of SP. There is a planned but not extensive training programme set out for each member of staff. On average each team member received two days training over the year.
- 263 Training has been provided which will improve expertise in IT. The IT officer is currently taking part in NVQ level 2 training in IT, and has undergone other IT-related training including systems training and refresher courses for various applications. Other staff have received central training on the SWIFT system, and more job-related training by the IT officer.
- 264 The Supporting People programme will benefit from skills and resources provided by the Community Services Directorate that will help achieve aims and priorities. Issues such as performance planning, collating performance information, risk management and focusing on outcomes are all areas where SP will benefit from the focused attention of support teams.
- 265 The future engagement of Probation in the partnership running the Supporting People programme is uncertain. It has not been adequate to date and there are no firmly established plans to address this. Proper engagement by Probation should provide a series of benefits in improving the work with offenders.
- 266 The capacity within the SP team is limited by the resources available. Providers that work with other boroughs considered that the size of the team was relatively small compared to other boroughs with similar programme grants. This has held the team back and limited work to service reviews and not leaving enough resources to properly monitor providers outside of reviews, instigate better user involvement and significantly improve the level of information available to service users, providers and staff within the Council. The team did not have the capacity to cope with the challenges of staff sicknesses without significant disruption to work.
- 267 The team has sufficient IT facilities to carry out and improve the delivery of objectives with capacity being regularly improved. The main SWIFT system has already provided benefits and there are plans to improve it. The system is shared with the care team, providing the ability to name search against Social Services data. The foster parent section recently joint funded an amendment to the system to improve the facility for making provider payments via journal. The success of this will create an automated payment system that will be more efficient.

- 268** There is further capacity for IT developments. The system will be able to load accreditation, QAF and service review data. However, there is no fixed timetable for these development and yet has to be discussed within the SP team for completion. The introduction of the corporate 'share-point' IT system will enable the SP team to have its own internal website page. This will enable it to share information internally to other teams and directorates. However, it needs to consider how this level of information will be open to its partners, for example Probation and the PCT.
- 269** The Council was not able to provide evidence that the IT systems had been evaluated for value for money. It might be the case that other systems would be more cost effective but this has not been tested.
- 270** Lewisham SP has had small successes seeking external funding to support strategic service priorities. Probation asked SP to fund a worker for on-site assessments of housing need. SP facilitated the funding from DIP (although SP will be funding it from April).

Summary

- 271** The Council has promising prospects of improving the administration of the Supporting People programme. The new directorate is providing greater support than existed before on a number of levels in particular work planning and performance monitoring. The annual work plan for 2005/06 addressed some of the weaknesses in the service and has been largely carried out. Services and value for money are improving, and there are a series of successful cross-authority initiatives. IT systems are working well with plans to develop them further.
- 272** Barriers to improvement exist. Plans to improve service user involvement and access to move on accommodation have been slow to deliver. Key areas of weakness around diversity and information have not been addressed in the plans. Performance management systems are not yet strong.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

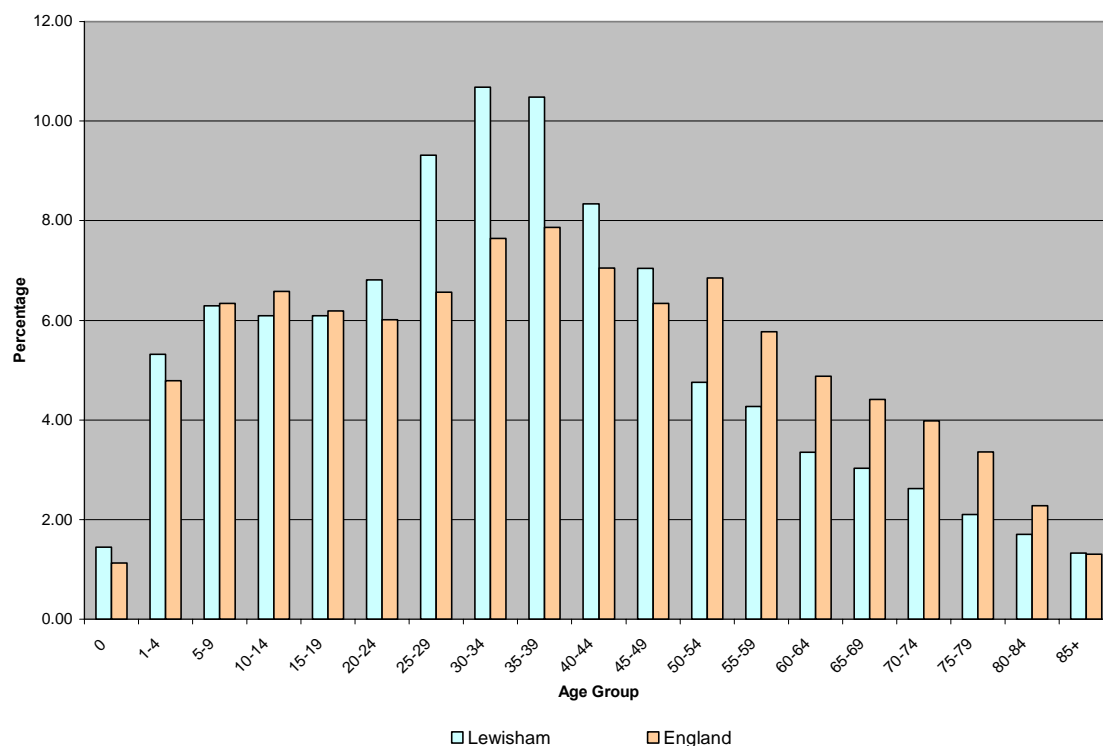
Demographic information

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

Table 3

Measure	Lewisham	England
Population (mid-2004) ¹²	247,000	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2004)	12.5	18.5
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than white British 2004)	34.1	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ¹³	4.6	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ¹⁴	57	-

Figure 2 Percentage of the population¹⁵ in each age group compared with England



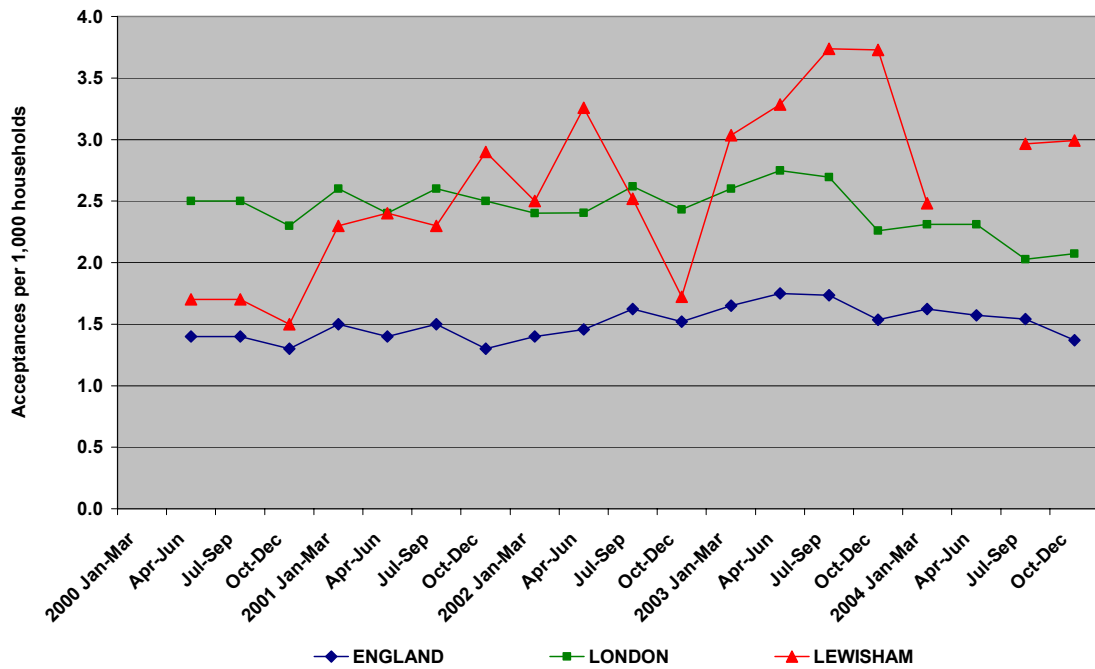
¹² Source: midyear population estimates (2004).

¹³ Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (November 2005).

¹⁴ Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

¹⁵ Source: midyear population estimates (2004).

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



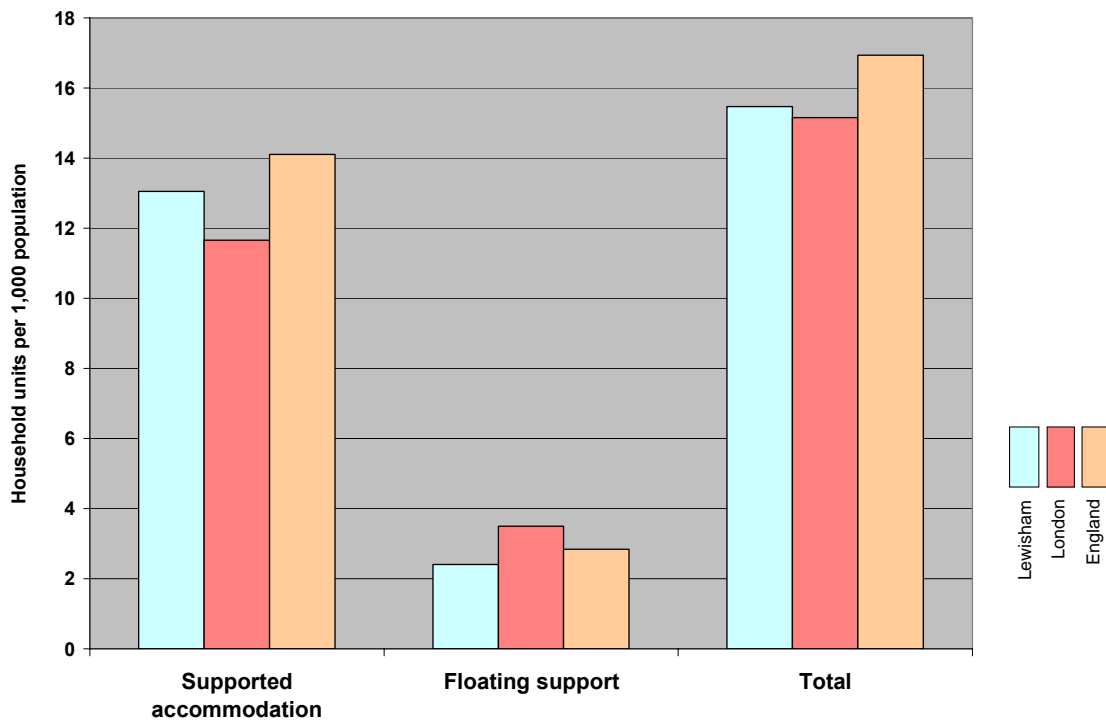
Performance information

274 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 People¹⁶



¹⁶ 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 England¹⁷

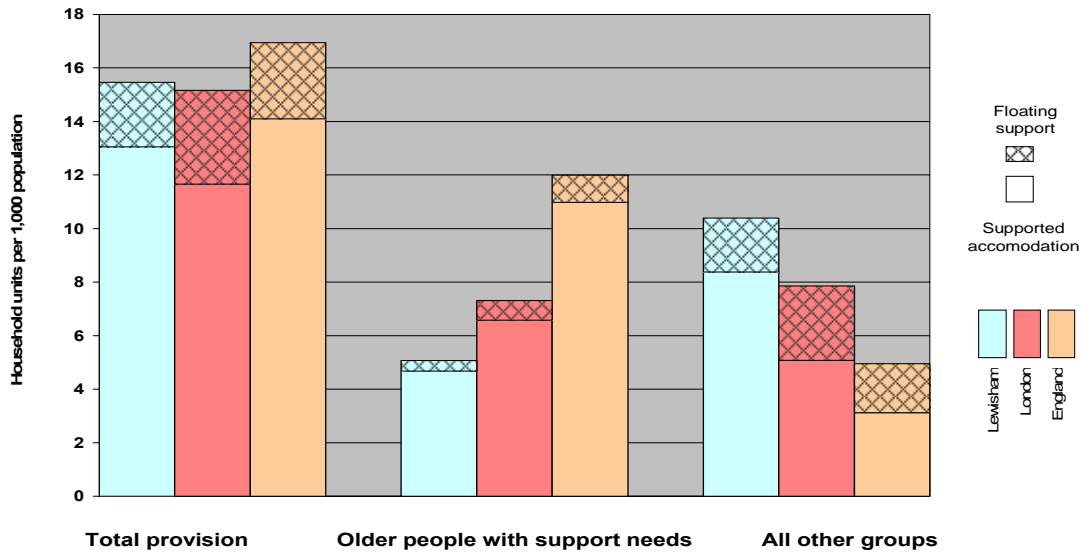
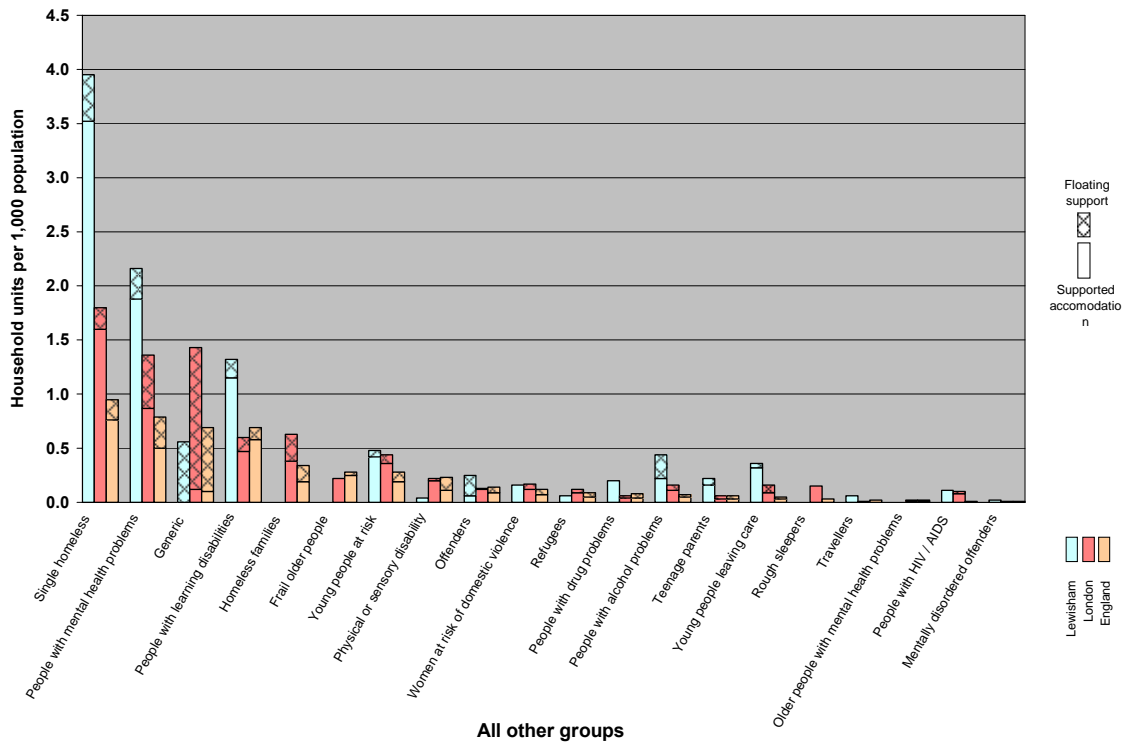


Figure 6 Services for other groups compared with the region and England¹⁸



¹⁷ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

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

Table 4 Funding for Supporting People¹⁹

Lewisham	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£ 18,671,575	£ 18,452,195	£ 17,522,839
Pipeline allocation	£ 214,796	£ 357,520	£ -
Administration grant	£ 305,652	£ 291,827	£ 233,462

Table 5 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)²⁰

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Lewisham	£ 1.41	£ 63.54	£ 88.62	£ 125.39
London	£ 0.97	£ 42.37	£ 48.73	£ 68.40
England	£ 0.70	£ 28.30	£ 34.71	£ 76.37

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

¹⁹ Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

²⁰ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003.

Figure 7 Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)²¹

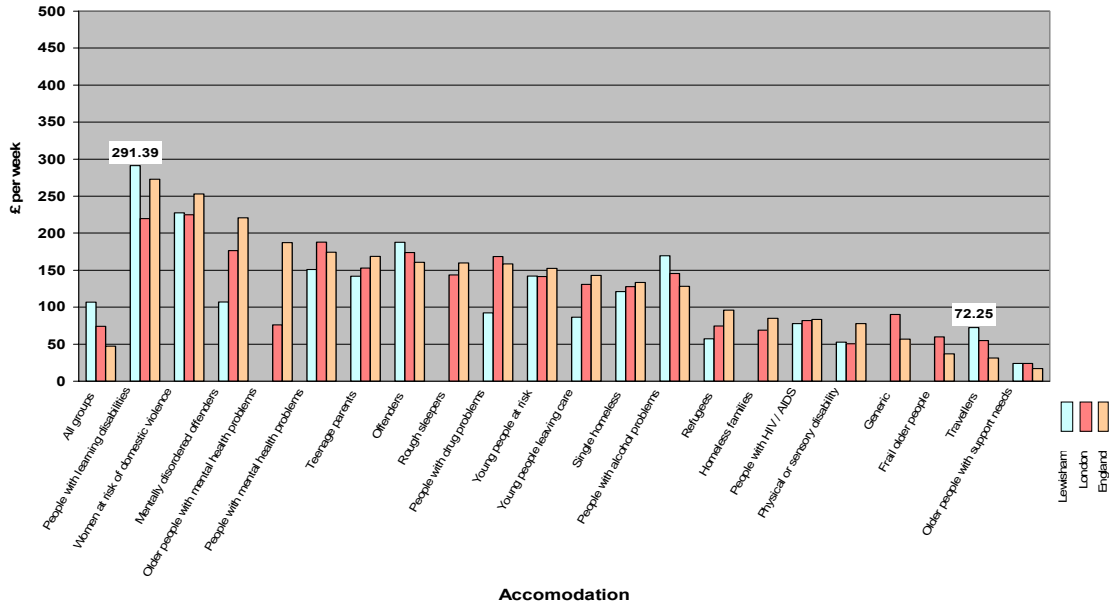
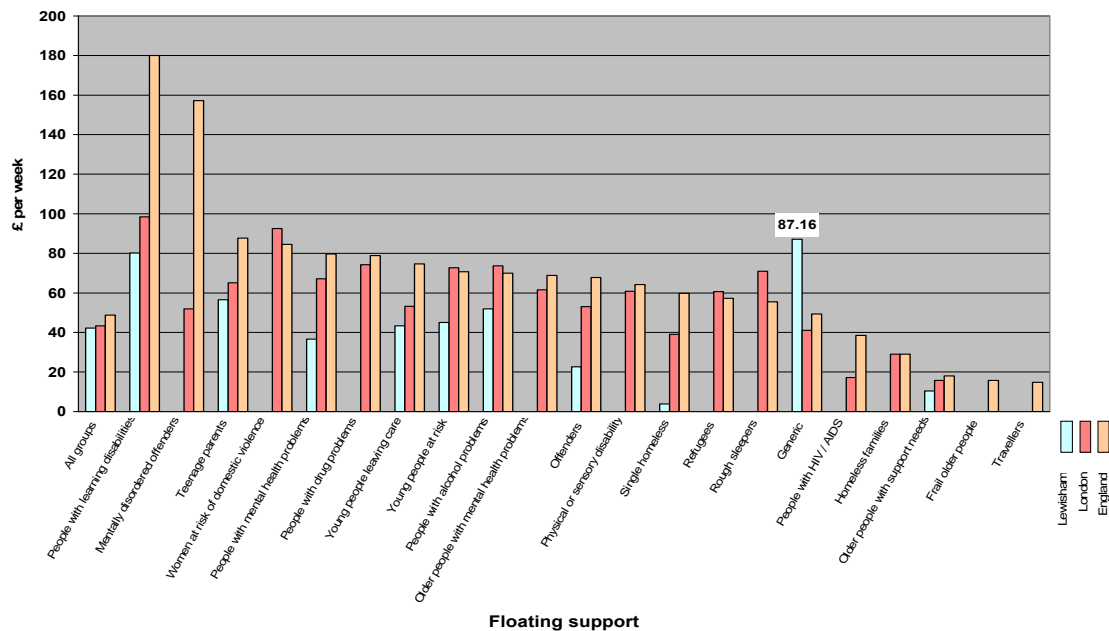


Figure 8 Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)²²



²¹ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

²² Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Figure 9 Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours,²³ all London borough councils and all English councils (2004/05)

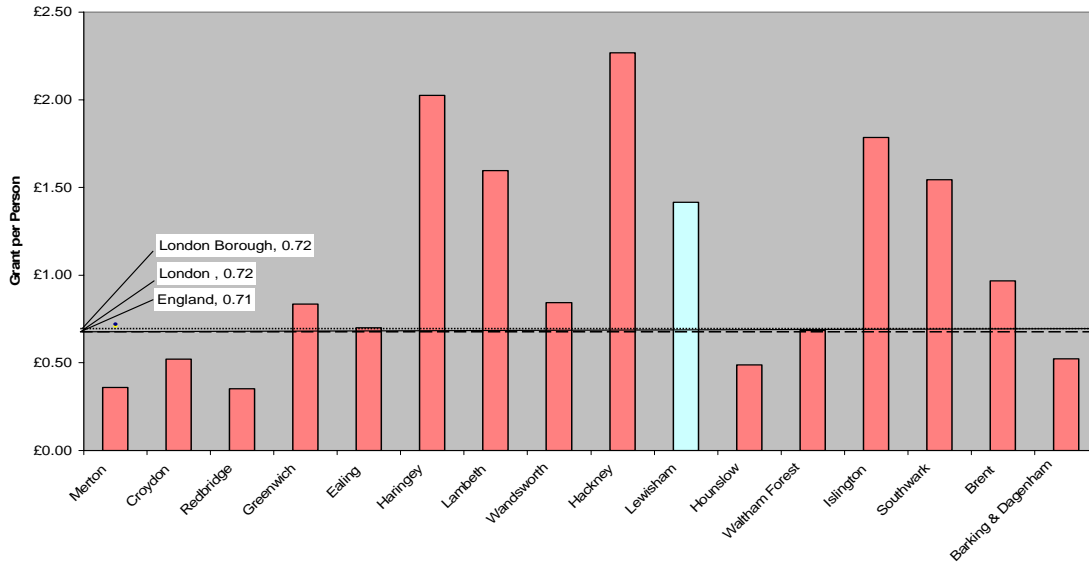
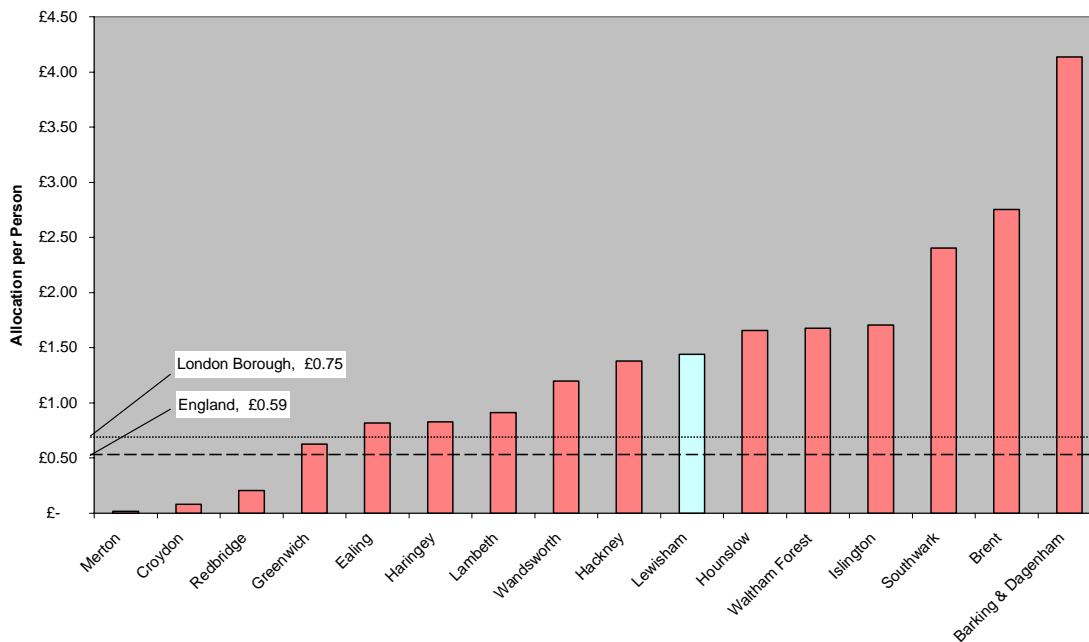


Figure 10 Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours,²⁴ all London borough councils and all English councils



²³ A comparator group of similar councils.

²⁴ A comparator group of similar councils.

Figure 11 Share of spending between user groups (£000s)²⁵

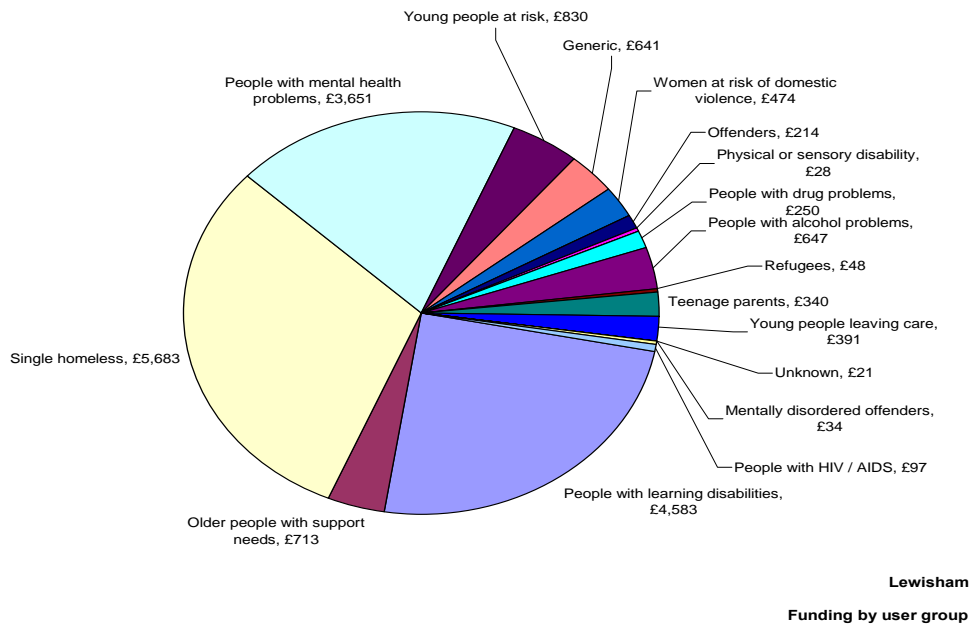
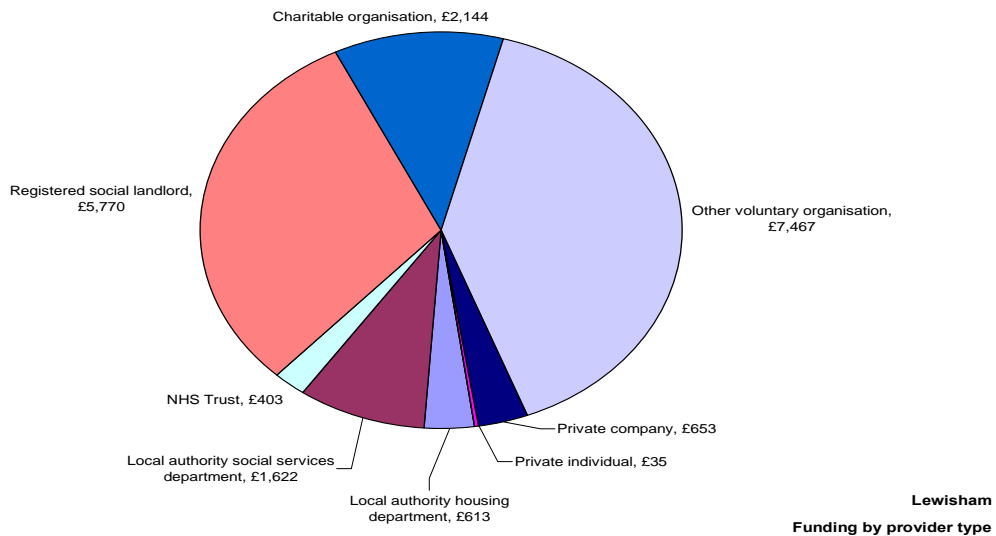


Figure 12 Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)²⁶



²⁵ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

²⁶ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Table 6 Social Services star ratings November 2004

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

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

Social services performance indicators

Table 7 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04

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

Lewisham	2003/04	2004/05
Significantly above average (●●●●)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31)	Same
	Admissions of supported residents aged 18 to 64 to residential/nursing care (C27)	Same
	Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30)	Down one
	Older people helped to live at home (C32)	Same
	Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54) ²⁷	Same
Above average (●●●)	Emergency psychiatric re-admissions (A6) ²⁸	Same
	Admissions of older people to residential/ nursing care (C26)	Up one
	Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39)	Up one

²⁷ Lewisham record this as (●●●●)

²⁸ Lewisham record this as (●●●●●)

Lewisham	2003/04	2004/05
Average (●●●)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40)	Same
	Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29) ²⁹	Down one
	Delayed transfers of care (D41) ³⁰	Up one
Below average (●●)	Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31 March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51)	Up one
Significantly below average (●)	Percentage change on previous year in total emergency admissions to hospital (A5) ³¹	No record for 2004/05
	Employment, education and training for care leavers (A4)	No record
	Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that their opinions and preferences were always taken into account (D57)	No record
	Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that they can contact Social Services easily (D58)	No record

²⁹ Lewisham record this as (●●●●)

³⁰ Lewisham record this as (●●)

³¹ Lewisham record this as (●●)

Best value performance indicators

Table 8 Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 compared with London borough councils

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

Lewisham	2003/04	2004/05
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)	Same
	Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a)	Same
	Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)	Same
	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)	Same
Average	Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63)	Up one
	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) ³²	Same
	Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a)	Same
Within the worst 25 per cent		

³² Lewisham records this as best 25 per cent.

Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed

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

- A Self-assessment
- The Five-year Strategy
- Joint Review (Audit Commission and SSI) Report 2003
- Inspection report on Mental Health Services in Lewisham 2001
- Adults People With Learning Difficulties Service Plan 2005/06
- Fairer Charging Policy
- CB memorandum of Understanding
- CB Terms of Reference
- Strategy Group Terms of Reference
- Supporting People Annual Plan 2005/06
- SP User Consultation Strategy 2002
- Matrix Needs Assessment Report November 2004
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Housing Investment Strategy 2004/07
- Supporting People Strategy Group - Proposal for Change
- Supporting People Risk Register December 2005
- Corporate Performance Plan
- Homelessness Service Best Value Review
- London Probation Housing Strategy 2005/08

Appendix 3 – Reality checks undertaken

276 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;
- mystery shopping at six council offices asking for information;
- mystery shopping phone calls to various numbers asking for information;
- 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 service users; and
- review of a number of service review workbooks.