

Supporting People Inspection

Sheffield City Council

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Supporting People Inspections

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

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

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

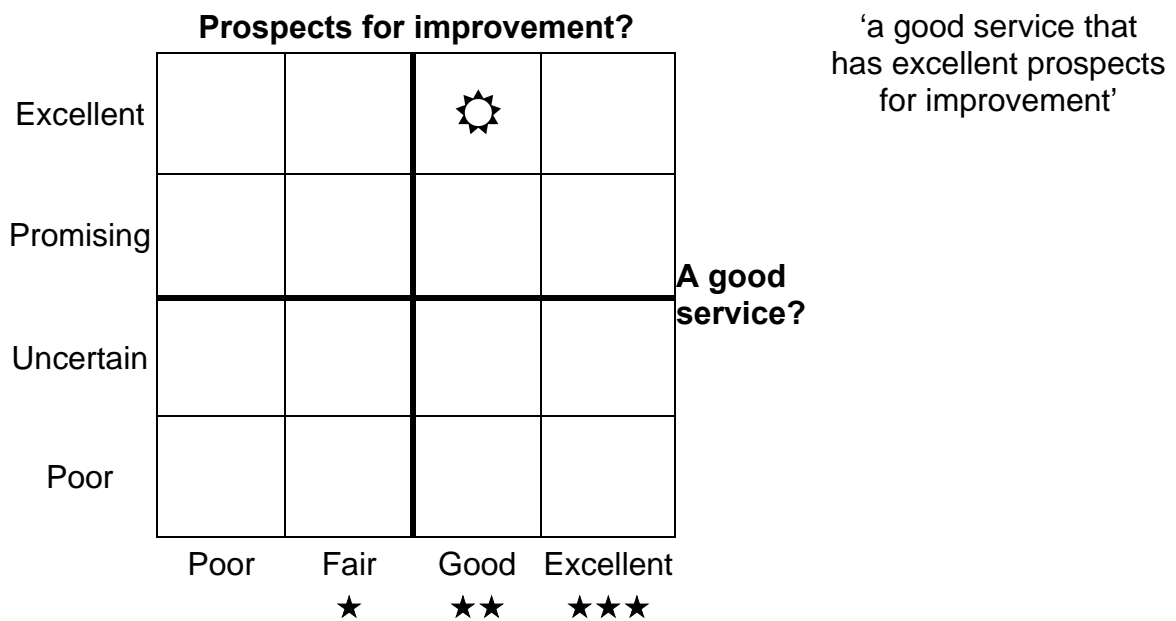
Summary

- 1 Sheffield City Council is a metropolitan city council in Yorkshire. It has a population of 512,000, of which 10.8 per cent come from minority ethnic groups. Sheffield is the fourth largest city in England.
- 2 Sheffield City Council employs 18,000 staff across all services.
- 3 The Council was judged to be an 'excellent' council by the Audit Commission in its 2004 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

Scoring the service

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

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 The Sheffield Supporting People programme is providing a good service for users and areas of positive features in the way the programme has been implemented, include:
- the review process is largely completed and providers are positive about the role of the Supporting People team in managing the review programme. In addition providers have described the review process as being challenging and robust with consideration given to value for money issues;
 - governance is good, with clear reporting and monitoring mechanisms in place;
 - pre-review interviews are undertaken with providers to ensure that both parties are informed and aware of the review process;
 - relevant key documentation has been translated into the main community languages;
 - service reviews are reported to the Strategic Commissioning Group (SCG) and actions are taken with regard to service providers at risk or where there is possible decommissioning;
 - the Supporting People programme is embedded in the Council and there is clear corporate support for the Supporting People agenda from members and Chief Officers;
 - the delivery of clear service improvements, which include greater choice and flexibility for service users;
 - Supporting People aims have been prioritised and there are clear outcome measures which link to the overall aims of key partners such as reduction of delayed hospital discharges;
 - the provision of additional financial resources from the Council to support the administration of the programme and ensure the effective delivery of the Supporting People programme;
 - the programme is supported by robust performance monitoring framework; and
 - a value for money approach has been applied across reviews, which have been rigorous and challenging.
- 6 However, we found a number of weaknesses with the delivery of the Supporting People programme. These include:
- limited and underdeveloped service user involvement;
 - a focus on process in delivering reviews and not on service user engagement;
 - not always accessing local resources to support accessibility of user information; and
 - the MAPPA protocol is underdeveloped.

- 7 We have judged that the Supporting People Programme has excellent prospects for delivering further improvements. We found the following strengths:
- there is clear evidence of ownership of Supporting People by senior officers and elected members. The Council has recognised the need for the programme to be an integral part of the day-to-day operations across many areas of the Council and the redesign of the service to supported housing service recognises this;
 - there is clear commitment and dedication from staff across the services who have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Supporting People agenda. Staff have seen improvements in services and new developments particularly in the area of frail elderly older people with the development of new extra care/retirement villages;
 - there are clear risk management and contingency plans in place to address the potential issues of service failures to users;
 - there is clear evidence of strong partnership working within the Council;
 - performance management and monitoring is robust, strong and effective; and
 - information from reviews is driving changes to meet service user needs, such as remodelling services to provide more appropriate support and to link in with strategic priorities.
- 8 There are, however, some areas in which the Council needs to improve:
- the links and learning from good practice within the Council are not always made and used to drive improvement; and
 - some actions in service plans are not fully articulated and developed in strategic planning, such as the need to improve service user involvement.

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.
- 10 It should be noted that the Council has responded positively to the recommendations within this report and has incorporated them into action plans. A number of recommendations have been addressed since the inspection, resulting in improvement to the service.

Recommendation

R1 Improve and strengthen the relationship with providers by:

- *developing improved information sharing opportunities between Supporting People Implementation Group/Strategy and Commissioning Group and providers;*
- *providing accessible guidance on value for money and diversity to providers to support improvement in these areas;*
- *providing information on commissioning and the decision-making processes within SP; and*
- *collecting and sharing good practice between providers.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- to improve the understanding and involvement of providers and enhance the relationship between the Council and providers; and
- to allow service improvements to be developed from existing good practice.

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

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.

Recommendation

R2 Strengthen the approach to service user development through:

- *providing clear, appropriate information to which users have had an input;*
- *consider improvements to web-based information to make it more user focused and user friendly;*
- *explore opportunities to develop innovative methods of user engagement;*
- *develop a mechanism to share review feedback with service users and in particular with those involved in reviews;*
- *develop methods to more effectively gather service user satisfaction which can be used to drive improvement;*
- *explore opportunities for service users to be actively involved in the strategic development of services, in a meaningful and representative way; and*
- *promote the role of advocates with providers.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improving the engagement and involvement of service users in the programme, and
- ensuring that developments of services can be evidenced to be addressing the needs of service users.

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

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

Dates of inspection: 27 to 31 March 2006.

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Report

Context

The locality

- 11 Sheffield City Council is a metropolitan council in Yorkshire. It has a population of 512,000 people of which 10.8 per cent are from BME groups, including significant numbers from the Pakistani, Somali and Yemeni communities.
- 12 Sheffield has seen the decline of its traditional industries such as mining and steel over the past 20 years. As a result, the Council has had to consider economic changes to ensure the economic stability of the area. The largest employers in the city are the city council, the teaching hospital and telecommunication firms. There is currently an unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent compared to the 3.1 per cent national average.
- 13 The 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation show that the city has a number of areas of deprivation, with over 20 per cent of the population living in areas that are in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. The 2001 Census found 20 per cent of the population are living with a long-term limiting illness and there are above average numbers of older people living in the city.
- 14 The city's housing stock includes 30 per cent that is council owned, and 63 per cent owner-occupation, which is lower than the national average. In 2004 the Council's housing stock was transferred to Sheffield Homes arms length management organisation and a significant programme of investment is currently underway. In addition large parts of Sheffield fall within the Transform South Yorkshire housing market renewal area, and as a result will benefit from large-scale investment in neighbourhoods and housing.

The Council

- 15 The Council is Labour-controlled, with Labour holding 44 of the 84 seats. There are 36 Liberal Democrats, 2 conservatives, 1 Green Party member and 1 Independent. The Council has a Leader and Cabinet structure in place, with 6 executive members.

The Supporting People programme

- 16 Sheffield City Council acts as the administering authority (Accountable Local Authority - ALA) for the Supporting People programme in the area. The Council received a Supporting People grant of £26.7 million in 2004/05 and £25.3 million in 2005/06.

- 17 The Supporting People team is located within the Neighbourhoods and Community Care Directorate. The Supporting People team consists of 13 staff made up of 1 Lead Officer; 3 assistant managers (performance and review/strategy and development/finance and systems); 2 contracts and review officers; 3 project officers; 1 systems management officer; 1 review support officer and 1 information and monitoring officer and 1 business support officer.
- 18 In Sheffield 64 service providers deliver a total of 238 schemes and in total the programme funds 15,600 units of housing-related support.
- 19 A breakdown of spending in 2004/05 shows:
- 25.5 per cent of budget allocated to people with a learning disability;
 - 15.3 per cent of the budget is spent on older people with support needs; and
 - 10.6 per cent of the budget is allocated to services for single people with support needs.
- There is an identified under-provision of services for the frail elderly.
 - The highest cost service at £666.83 per week is a domestic violence refuge for Asian women. The lowest cost service of £1.94 a week is an alarm service for older people.
- 20 The Council's strategic aims are set out in the five-year strategy as:
- focus services more clearly on prevention of crises such as homelessness, working with service users to assess and manage risks;
 - ensure that services become more closely aligned with wider strategic aims of the city, such as 'Closing the Gap', developing successful neighbourhoods and improving community safety;
 - improve access to supported housing services to ensure capacity is used effectively and meets the highest priority needs;
 - ensure that vulnerable people from black and minority ethnic groups have fair access to supported housing services;
 - ensure that vulnerable people in all tenures are able to access a similar range of services and have their housing support needs met; and
 - through our commissioning framework, to improve value for money by encouraging innovation and service development by providers.

How good is the service?

Governance

- 21** There are good governance arrangements in place in Sheffield. The Strategy and Commissioning Group (SCG) is the Commissioning Body with the Supporting People Implementation Group (SPIG) acting as the core strategy group. There are strong links between the SCG and the SPIG and both are working effectively. Probation and primary care trust partners are engaged in planning and delivery, as are other key stakeholders. Terms of reference and memorandum of understanding are clear and deal with conflicts of interest and potential conflicts between partners. Performance management and monitoring of the programme is well developed and robust. Councillors have a good understanding of the SP objectives with the Cabinet Member for Social Regeneration responsible for SP at a political level. However, involvement of service providers and service users in planning and delivery of the programme requires further development to build on actions already in progress.
- 22** Corporate commitment to the Supporting People programme in terms of resources and commitment from officers and councillors is strong. Additional funding has been provided to the administration of the programme to ensure that the team has the resources to deliver the programme. There are good links between the Supporting People programme and councillors to ensure that the programme addresses corporate objectives.
- 23** The Strategy and Commissioning Group provides clear leadership and has the appropriate representation from senior and strategic partners. The SCG has overall responsibility for ensuring the delivery and development of the Supporting People programme and the Supporting People programme functions. Minutes of the SCG meetings demonstrate that all the key partners are in regular attendance and actively participate in the meetings. This demonstrates a consistency of approach and decision-making.
- 24** There is evidence of clear decision-making and a strong strategic steer by the SCG. There are links to corporate and strategic priorities and to those of partner agencies. Significant changes which may impact on the programme are highlighted and the group is well informed about changes in policy with details of action to be taken following reports being recorded. The SCG is not afraid to make difficult decisions in order to ensure effective delivery of the programme examples of this include the decommissioning of a service which was failing.

- 25 The Council and its partners can demonstrate a robust approach to governance and performance management of the programme. The terms of reference for the SCG are clear and meet the requirements of the Supporting People grant conditions. There is a formalised approach to the performance monitoring and management of the programme by the SCG. Reports about the delivery of the programme in respect of budgetary performance, information about the progress of the review timetable, outcomes of service reviews and accreditation are presented to the SCG for approval. This has resulted in examples of improved service delivery outcomes through, for example, service reconfiguration.
- 26 There are clear established links between the SCG and the SPIG in place. A designated member of the SCG is responsible for attending the six-weekly SPIG meetings and then reporting back directly to the SCG. This approach strengthens the understanding between the wider strategic issues covered by SCG and the operational management of the programme through SPIG and ensures that decisions are joined up in terms of outcomes.
- 27 The Council has been pro active in its approach to involving the voluntary and community sector in the SP programme. Funding is provided from the SP administration grant to Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) as part of a health and social care planning and partnership project funded by the Council and the PCT, aimed at ensuring effective voluntary and community sector involvement in the planning and delivery of housing, health, social care and children's services. The VAS Planning and Partnership Officer is responsible for linking back to the voluntary provider community and has a formal role on the SPIG and SCG. However, the formal reporting structure in place for information from these groups to be shared with all providers is not fully inclusive and as a result a communication gap exists, with some service providers indicating that this limited representation was not currently inclusive or fully effective.
- 28 The SCG is well informed about the Supporting People programme and progress. The group receives detailed reports on service reviews and regular updates on issues that are affecting the Supporting People programme locally, regionally and nationally. Actions from previous meetings are followed up effectively. The remit of the group includes involving partners in policy development; considering cross-cutting issues, review findings and recommendations. This ensures that there is effective direction and support to the programme.
- 29 The role of the Accountable Officer has ensured that there is a strategic overview of the programme. The Accountable Officer is the programme director for Neighbourhoods and Community Care, provides support to the lead officer and the team and monitors the programme and its performance. The Accountable Officer attends the SCG and is proactive in ensuring and promoting links into other relevant strategies and initiatives such as regeneration; older people; refugees and to the LSP. As a result of this approach, opportunities for additional sources of funding to support the impact and outcomes of the programme have been identified and delivered. These include the provision of extra care housing at Guilford Grange and The Meadows.

- 30 Performance management for the programme is well developed. There is regular reporting on progress against improvement plans, finance, ODPM milestones and service reviews, outcomes for service users and progress against the programme's overarching aims. This approach means that all key governance partners are provided with effective information in order to monitor, manage and influence the programme.
- 31 Partners are effectively engaged in the most aspects of the Supporting People programme. Shared strategies such as the housing learning disability strategy have been developed. Health, Social Care, Housing and Probation have been involved in development of the five-year strategy and delivery of the programme through their membership of the SCG. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and operational arrangements are in place to ensure that there is housing and support for high risk offenders. Joint working between probation, housing solutions and the supporting people team has also resulted in the development of a private landlord scheme which is funded by the ODPM and aimed at providing private sector housing for offenders.
- 32 However, the MAPPA protocols do not include service providers. This means that providers of these services are currently outside the accountability, training and development loop in public protection. This gap therefore, has implications for the risk management of these services and their users.
- 33 There is also some indication that commissioning is not always happening on a 'joined up' basis within the Council. For example, the leaving care team is currently commissioning a six unit capital scheme for 16 to 18 year olds and there has been only limited dialogue on the issue with the SP team, although users might be eligible for SP funding once they reach 18. This indicates that existing relationships may not be fully maximising value for money (VFM) in commissioning decision-making.
- 34 The Supporting People programme is supporting health care priorities. For example the development of extra care housing in Sheffield has been evaluated and found to be reducing admissions to hospital and supporting the timely discharge of patients. Evidence to date indicates that in its first year the Guilford Grange development facilitated 20 cases of timely hospital discharge and prevented 14 cases of admission into hospital. Similarly, the joint commissioning with the PCT's for drug services has provided floating support services which have sustained independence for 70 per cent of its clients.
- 35 There are clear terms of reference in place for all the governance groups. These set out the role and membership of each group and all partners are signed up to the agreement. Actions and responsibilities relating to conflict of interest are clearly detailed and are effectively managed.
- 36 The portfolio-holder has regular contact with the SP programme. Updates on Supporting People are included as part of his weekly meeting with the Departmental Management Team and he is briefed monthly specifically on SP issues. This ensures that there is political awareness at an early stage and support for issues arising in delivery of the programme.

- 37 There is no clear structure in place for service user representation on the SPIG, with only limited input from service providers via the officer from VAS, as previously mentioned. As a result, views of both providers and users are not effectively expressed and fed back and an opportunity for views to be used in the development of policies is being missed.
- 38 The sharing of good practice on a regional basis has been limited to date. Key managers from related service areas within the Council were unable to identify positive examples of improved outcomes for service users or of improved processes and procedures as a result of cross-border working or of learning from neighbouring authorities. This means that opportunities to maximise VFM and to improve outcomes are being missed.

Delivery arrangements

- 39 The Council has made a significant corporate commitment to ensuring SP administration is delivered effectively. A £116,000 annual contribution to fund four posts within the team has been made. This supplements a low administration grant (only 1.1 per cent of the main grant, compared with a 2.3 per cent national average) received by the Council and means that service reviews and grant administration are sufficiently well resourced. However, the Council acknowledges that the team currently has limitations in terms of capacity for strategic development as it is focused on delivering a significant review programme, within a tight budget and with a relatively small team. A review of the service, on completion of the SP contract review process, is underway and has a focus on the strategic development of the SP programme.
- 40 The Supporting people team is well managed and has a clear annual service plan in place. Staff at all levels in the Supporting People team are well motivated, focused on the delivery of high quality services and are well regarded by colleagues in Health and Social Care. All staff have regular performance reviews and an annual appraisal with managers. Action plans are developed from this process and training delivered in order to develop their skills and capabilities. As a result, staff are enabled to achieve goals on both a personal and team basis.
- 41 The Supporting People team have the capabilities and skills to provide good training, information and support to providers and work with them to deliver key messages on Supporting People to service users. For example, a DVD has recently been developed with providers through service user groups and will be used with service users to promote active involvement in service development.
- 42 The Council has aimed to have an integrated Supporting People programme across services rather than to be a brand in itself and this has largely been achieved. As a result of clear signposting and information about delivery arrangements for specific services, customers can access appropriate supporting people services.

- 43 Effective working relationships are in place between adult social care and the Supporting People team. The Supporting People team is based within the Neighbourhoods and Community Care Directorate which now encompasses adult Social Services. This structure has enabled closer working between procurement officers, commissioners and the supporting people team. Commissioners have welcomed the positive approach of the supporting people team which they see as robust, rigorous and challenging when necessary but also helpful and flexible.
- 44 The SP team has range of appropriate skills and is able to draw on additional resources from across the Council to build capacity and fill skills gaps, to enable the delivery of service reviews. Although relatively small in comparison to the number of providers and services it contracts, the SP team is appropriately structured, is multidisciplinary, with five officers in Contract and Review roles, of whom two conduct specific duties relating to strategic development of the programme.
- 45 Positively a specialist post, funded by the community care service is based in housing options to advise people with learning disabilities in accessing suitable accommodation and support.
- 46 The Council is fully complying with the grant conditions that are laid down by the ODPM. An eligibility policy has been developed and is being implemented. Consultation on the policy was thorough and involved partner agencies; discussion with cabinet members, extensive consultation with providers and a pilot project which involved 15 services to assess the impact prior to implementation. The policy is based on intention, which allows for flexibility to meet the needs of different client groups, focuses on outcomes for service users and has an exit mechanism which ensures that ineligible activity is managed with no negative impact for service users. Positively a specialist post, funded by the community care service is based in neighbourhood's service to offer housing advice for people who fall outside the eligibility criteria, to ensure users are supported whilst considering options.
- 47 There is clear strategic support for the Supporting People team. Strong links are in place between the Supporting People team and Housing Strategy. This has led to them jointly identifying and developing capital funded provision which address the priorities of the Supporting People programme. There is a clear process in place to ensure that SP has an input into the capital programme development. Managers indicate their needs, the programme is refined and then proposals go to SMT for decision. Although the programme is limited by funding it is still managing to deliver on restricted budgets, for example an extra care scheme and temporary accommodation scheme.
- 48 There has been good progress on the five-year strategy action plan. The strategy was signed up to with partners and complies with ODPM guidance, links to corporate priorities and reflects local priorities with outcomes for service users identified.

- 49 A sound SP procurement strategy has been developed. This is in place and is used to ensure that new services are commissioned with a focus on VFM, including building capacity and maintaining the stability of the sector. The strategy requires commissioners to consider a variety of options prior to service commissioning and as a result, maintain a focus on VFM outcomes. However, it is too early for defined outcomes to be identified.
- 50 The Council has undertaken comprehensive needs mapping. Shortfalls in service provision for client groups have been clearly identified and the information was used to inform the Supporting People five-year strategy. Clear outcomes have resulted from the involvement of partners in mapping needs. The asylum team, for example, provides data on numbers and needs of asylum seekers and refugees and has regular dialogue with the SP team about emerging needs. A recent theme of these discussions has been the gap in provision around supported housing for people from these communities with enduring mental illness and the limited supply of general needs housing for move on. A clear outcome of the relationship with the asylum team is the doubling in size of the 'Safehaven' scheme, which happened directly as a result of information supplied.
- 51 Effective strategic service reviews and tailored research projects are used by the Council to inform its future service provision. A programme of prioritised strategic reviews of client group sectors is currently underway to support the approach to service provision. An early outcome has been around the refugee support provision where the review proposes developing a 'drop in' model of service delivery to enable greater access and a more flexible service. As a result, the Council is looking to develop this type of service later this year. Individual research projects to determine specific needs have also been carried out, for example a study of older peoples housing and health needs which has been used to inform the development of extra care village provision.
- 52 The Council has robust information on supported housing in Sheffield. GIS has been used to map all accommodation-based services and further work is underway to map the provision of floating support. Changing patterns of use can be identified and through links to the comprehensive Successful Neighbourhood Indicator System (SNIS) data analysis of supported housing can take account of neighbourhood and regeneration programmes. This approach ensures that there is a very effective, joined up planning process for the development of supported housing.
- 53 Performance monitoring and management is comprehensive and robust. Performance standards are set and measured and progress is reported, within a regular reporting cycle, using a clear traffic light system. There are strong links between the directorate teams and neighbourhood performance management services with the performance team offering support to managers in developing plans as well as monitoring performance and developing reports. A good quality improvement process supports the framework, using data and information to improve policies and manage change.

- 54 There is a robust performance reporting structure in place. Financial reports are received monthly by the SPIG; corporate SP reports go to SMT three times per year and to DMT twice per year. SP performance is also reported to the cabinet member each month and the LSP twice per year. This approach ensures that there is wide awareness across the Council, of progress and performance with the SP programme and clear accountability to ensure delivery of the programme.
- 55 The Council has good financial understanding of the SP programme. Future financial planning takes account of savings estimated through the service review process and a robust approach to increasing contract prices has been taken, linking to performance and VFM. A hardship pot was offered instead of inflationary increases in 2004/05 with eight services benefiting (total cost £19,700). Inflationary increases have been given in 2005/06 and are planned for 2006/07, where contract prices have been assessed as providing VFM (still projecting savings of £281,410 in 2005/06 and £336,214 in 2006/07). In total, 39 services declined inflationary increases in 2005/06 with one service successfully appealing when not offered an increase. This approach indicates that appropriate stewardship of funds is in place.
- 56 There is regular financial monitoring of the programme. Supporting People financial updates are provided to the financial strategy group and a monthly meeting between the lead officer and head of finance monitors performance against budget headings. Future projections show when the programme will go into deficit (year 2007/08 by an estimated £44,603) and, as a result, clear plans have been made to address this, with the least disruption to the delivery of services.
- 57 Arrangements are in place to effectively manage fairer charging assessments. A clear fairer charging policy is in place which details the basis on which charges are arrived at and who is eligible for charging. Service level agreements are in place with both the fairer charging and housing benefit teams to ensure speedy processing and as a result deliver a customer-focused service.
- 58 Fairer charging is proactively promoted. An information campaign was run in September 2005 to promote fairer charging among users and providers and a guide is in place for providers, who are encouraged to promote fairer charging to users. There is also a good quality leaflet for service users which is supported by sufficient information on the website. However, in spite of this approach only 20 customers have benefited from fairer charging assessments have been carried out to date. The Council has assessed the outcomes from this approach and is exploring alternatives to ensure customers are effectively informed.
- 59 Relationships are good with provider organisations. Larger providers working across the sub-region report that their relationship with the Council is better than with others. This is, in particular, because the SP team in Sheffield regularly discussed its strategic intentions with them and encouraged them to come forward with ideas for meeting gaps in provision. They also report that the team begins decommissioning discussions early and that there is flexibility and healthy dialogue about how and when schemes will be decommissioned. This approach assists providers in effectively managing the process both within their organisation and with the service users involved.

- 60** However, there is a mixed response from providers as to the effectiveness of the provider forum. The forum has wide and inclusive membership, although due to its size attendance is limited to one representative per provider, which some providers found restrictive. The forum has two distinct parts, one provider led and the other led by the Supporting People team. This split resulted from provider feedback and allows providers to discuss issues common to them all which can then be fed back into the forum, while the supporting people team use the other part of the forum to share information, training and updates with providers. However, insufficient feedback is given to the Provider Forum from the SCG, SPIG and from previous provider forums. Large providers working across the sub-region report that this is done better in neighbouring areas and that, although there is effective discussion of strategic issues on a one-to-one basis with the team, they would like to be involved in more collective discussion about strategic issues. This approach is leading to a sense of marginalisation for some providers. During the inspection the Council accepted the need for improvement and has implemented changes to address the issues raised.
- 61** A number of providers indicated they had a lack of understanding around both the make up of the SP structures and commissioning decision-making processes. This was true of some who regularly attend the provider forum, as well as others. As a result, they were not always able to understand the process behind some decisions relating to changes in service provision, both at a strategic and local level and as a result could not input as effectively as they would like to. However, the Council has accepted these comments and indicated that information will be produced to support providers.
- 62** Communication from the SP team to providers is not always fully effective. Some providers indicated that information from the SP team can at times be viewed as over intellectualised. All information is sent direct to providers by email or hard copy according to their preference. However, providers indicated that there is heavy reliance on the use of the Council website, which is not seen by all providers, as the most convenient method of communication and as a result some providers indicated that they were unaware of some information or initiatives. Similarly, there is no mechanism to share good practice from reviews with providers. As a result, the Council is missing an opportunity for services to develop further through shared learning.
- 63** A level playing field has been established between in-house and external providers in the approach and delivery of service reviews. During the Transitional Housing Benefit period, the Council took the decision to develop a network of floating support services, procured through competitive tender, which resulted in development of 1,200 units of provision. There is a mix of citywide, geographically based, specialist and generic floating support services that are in line with the Council's generic approach to 'closing the gap'. Identical processes have been used to review all services and in-house providers consider that reviews have been as rigorous for their services as for those of external providers.

- 64 Provider organisations are very positive about plans to link capital and revenue commissioning decisions in future. This has already taken place on new schemes such as The Meadows and Cuthbert Bank with the South Yorkshire Housing Association. As a result, the lessons learned there have informed formalised procedures for the future, which providers think will result in major improvements and will assist in ensuring a 'joined - up' approach to commissioning.
- 65 There is a clear recognition of the importance of cross-authority partnership working. The lead officer is the vice-chair of the regional strategy group and the Council works with its sub-regional partners through Transform South Yorkshire and South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership and has secured funding of £90 million for 2006/08 to deliver sub-regional priorities such as extra care housing provision. Sheffield is also working with other South Yorkshire authorities to deliver training for providers on procurement issues, in order to build capacity in the area.
- 66 Sheffield has led and supported some cross-authority working, but progress on outcomes has been slow to date as a result of some resistance from other authorities. Providers working at a sub-regional level confirm that this is the case and, indicate that this is due more to reluctance on the part of neighbouring authorities to participate, rather than Sheffield's inability to provide a regional lead, As a result, this has restricted learning and meant some providers are not benefiting from the VFM which might result.
- 67 Risks to the programme are effectively managed. Comprehensive risk registers, which are reviewed on a monthly basis, have been developed for the programme and service risks, and form part of the corporate Business Continuity Planning process. The programme risk register links into the directorate risk register which is reported to SPIG, SCG and quarterly to DMT. A risk management tool is used which uses a traffic light process and is updated monthly at a Risk and Review Planning Group. Clear contingency plans are in place for major risks such as problems with provider payment. This robust approach to risk and contingency planning ensures protection to services delivered through the programme.
- 68 Sheffield council has successfully uploaded ODPM SPLS data on time each quarter. A data cleansing exercise was undertaken by the SP team and mechanisms are in place to ensure that information submitted by providers to the SP team is accurate. As result information is being provided to the ODPM to support the national picture on SP.
- 69 The Council was not initially seeking to measure and therefore cannot manage the 'revolving door' nature of service take up amongst client groups with chaotic lifestyles. Although some users will re-present intermittently to services such as those for the single homeless and street drinkers, the Council's new outcome measurement model did not seek to examine this issue and providers confirmed that, although the issue is a significant one for some of them, it has not been discussed at the provider forum or during the development of the model. The SP team responded positively to this issue when raised during inspection and have now included this within the outcome model to measure this area.

Service reviews

- 70** The Supporting People team has made good progress in undertaking service reviews. Completion of reviews will fall outside the ODPM deadline however, only a small number remain and these are small low risk services. Progress reports on reviews are made to the SCG and there is evidence of reviews and action plans being implemented that result in improvements in quality of services for users.
- 71** Progress on the meeting the service review programme is good. There are 238 provider services of which 229 (97 per cent) have been completed at the time of this inspection. Services with reviews outstanding are currently in progress and have been identified as low risk. The Council took the pragmatic decision to undertake robust reviews and although the ODPM date of 31 March 2006, for the completion of reviews has not been met, those currently in progress will be fully completed by the end of April 2006. The outcomes of service reviews are reported to the Commissioning Body for approval and there is evidence that outcomes are challenged for example on the decommissioning of schemes.
- 72** There is a sound approach to risk assessing the review programme. Low demand, high cost, small, specialist, BME and schemes developed without SP partnership approval were covered in year one. Identified poor performers, low cost, small, specialist, BME and new schemes developed in 2001/02 were covered in year two and new services developed 2002/03, schemes with least competition or scope for change and well established projects/providers were covered in year three. Desktop reviews have only been done on six services (registered care homes which have not continued to be funded via SP), which is positive.
- 73** Comprehensive processes and procedures have been developed to support the review process. The service review policy is clear, concise and outlines each stage of the process as well as covering the general issues of equal opportunities, confidentiality and Health and Safety. The typical timescale from notification of review to reporting is six months and where the final report has been delayed by finalising the eligibility policy, interim reports on Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) are issued to support providers in developing improvement plans.
- 74** Providers can normally respond to initial verbal feedback from the review process, which has resulted in some quick changes to procedures or corrected misunderstandings which are reflected in the final report. However, review processes in a small number of cases identified by providers were found to be inflexible at times with operational pressure within the SP team limiting the feedback process resulting in, for example an appeal, which could otherwise have been resolved amicably.
- 75** There is a clear appeals process in place which is understood by providers. A number of appeals have been made to date although none have yet reached the SCG stage. The SP team aims to resolve issues through an established relationship and dialogue at an early stage.

- 76 Review reports are well presented. They are concise, with sufficient evidence to support judgments, have an appropriate emphasis on value for money (VFM) and include clear recommendations for improvement. Reviews include an appropriate level of partner input, although as indicated previously this was found in some cases to be compromised, incorporating a stakeholder survey for commissioning partners and referring agencies. All review reports are moderated by the SP manager to ensure consistency of approach. As a result, providers receive consistent and clear messages about where services require improvement and that risks posed to vulnerable people are clearly highlighted.
- 77 The service review process has also been peer reviewed, as part of a regional programme of peer reviews, by a regional SP development worker and a member of another SP team. As a result, some changes are being implemented to the delivery of the review process.
- 78 The SP team have the appropriate skills and capacity to effectively deliver the review programme. Review officers come from a range of backgrounds and bring different skills to the team. Training courses have been used to develop skills and capabilities and staff have access to training. For example, some managers have been on management development training and joint training for providers on procurement was delivered jointly with other South Yorkshire authorities.
- 79 The Supporting People team utilises expertise from other services areas when undertaking reviews and developing the recommendations from service reviews, in order to fully understand the diverse needs of specific user groups. For example, the Probation service has been involved in the review of services, including those where offenders are not the primary service users. This approach assists in drawing together crime reduction and public protection more widely across the programme.
- 80 There is evidence to indicate that joint working has been used to shape future commissioning proposals. For example in respect of the floating support service for physical and learning disabilities. The Supporting People team and Commissioners jointly considered the findings of the service review and used this to shape future commissioning proposals before the review report was written. As a result, commissioning proposals are agreed and contain the views of the relevant agencies.
- 81 The Supporting People Team deal effectively with issues of poor performance. Prompt action has been taken as result of service reviews where failing services have been identified, such as de-commissioning a service that was clearly not providing housing-related support and the provider could not be encouraged to provide an acceptable service. Feedback from the review process is used to support strategically relevant services. For example in a small dispersed floating support scheme for users with medium to high support needs, most of whom have been discharged from long-term institutional care. Challenging messages were fed back about governance, financial management, business planning and user involvement when the service was reviewed. The SP team and Adult Mental Health Services have supported the new manager in resolving most of these problems, including attending Board meetings and this has resulted in positive service improvements.

- 82 Action plans seen during the inspection are comprehensive, achievable and address the issues raised during the review. Timescales for improvement are clear and there is a timetable for follow-up. The Supporting People team help providers to improve their services, supporting and working with them to help them to implement agreed action plans following the service reviews. For example, a cluster project was subject to an early review and the association, which is a major provider partner across the sub-region, reports that the SP team gave the association significant support to improve the service following the review. This approach indicates a commitment and focus by the team to driving up quality across services.
- 83 Responses from providers indicated that overall they found the review process positive and the SP team approachable and supportive. However, there is a small number of providers who felt that further improvement around the issue of consistency could be made to the process. Examples indicated by providers include not enough training and support from the SP Team had been provided to complete forms accurately. Response to a request for information resulted in substantially differing advice which would have adversely affected a contract. It was also indicated that two very similar schemes had been reviewed in dissimilar ways and that they had been given different advice about the same process, which affected the service they could now offer.
- 84 Services have changed and improved as a result of reviews. For example:
- a service has enhanced its strategic role and is accepting higher risk clients;
 - service costs have been reduced in a number of schemes;
 - a families project has increased its number of units; and
 - a service for women has improved its accessibility.
- 85 The Council is using learning from the review process to improve services. At a local level under performing providers have been linked with strong performing providers to encourage the development of good practice. As the service review process is nearing completion the team has been able to focus on a strategic approach to managing outcomes. For example by developing the previous mentioned outcome management framework pilot project to test methods for managing outcomes for service users.
- 86 There is a clear mechanism in place to report review findings. Summary reports and recommendations on commissioning are reported to both the SPIG and SCG, with findings being approved. Risks posed to vulnerable people are clearly highlighted through the process and as a result the review findings and outcomes are widely shared across strategic and commissioning partners.
- 87 Outcomes from cross-authority working on service reviews and joint accreditation have been limited to date. Although there is some sharing of outcomes of reviews for providers working cross-authority through the South Yorkshire group, the Council has not made progress with joint accreditation or support planning with shared providers and has not carried out joint reviews on a cross-authority basis. As a result, opportunities for shared learning and VFM are not being maximised.

- 88 The review process is seen as a positive driver to service improvement. Providers indicated that review reports are incisive and helpful catalysts for change and service improvement. Team members are generally considered to be knowledgeable and very keen to engage with providers in constructive dialogue during and after reviews and to have a rigorous approach to identifying strengths and weaknesses in services.
- 89 There is a partnership working approach in delivering elements of the SP programme. For example the South Yorkshire Probation area has recognised that the MAPPA arrangements need further development and are planning to address this deficit as they tackle the integration of supported housing services through the Safer Communities approach with offenders and people at risk of offending, across the programme.
- 90 There is a lack of clarity by some providers around what the SP team are looking for in some areas of the QAF. For example some providers were critical that the SP team does not issue supplementary guidance to the QAF on key issues such as diversity and risk assessment. They fear that lack of clarity means subjective judgements can be made by the SP team and the process is open to staff taking a 'tick box' approach which may not take sufficient account of the richness of the diversity work done by some providers.

Service user involvement

- 91 Service user involvement has been slow to develop. There is a lack of information and feedback for service users around service reviews. Service user involvement at a strategic level is underdeveloped although some engagement activity is being developed and delivering outcomes. However, the Council has recognised that user involvement is an area for further development and is aware of the need to take a structured approach to involving service users in order that services fully reflect their needs.
- 92 There is a lack of information and feedback to service users. Although they are involved and participate in service reviews no newsletter is produced for service users, direct contact between the SP team and users, carers or advocates is limited and providers are expected to provide feedback to users on review outcomes. Similarly a satisfaction survey of service users, about involvement opportunities was carried out last year but the results have not yet been fed back. This approach indicates a gap in meaningful engagement with service users.
- 93 The Council has used a number of mechanisms to engage and consult with hard-to-reach groups. A Service User Engagement (SUE) review project has been used to provide links to agencies and forum, these include the Sheffield Domestic Abuse Forum and the Black Community Forum. Results from this area of work are currently being analysed and as a result it is too early to identify clear outcomes from the project.

- 94 The Council has not made significant progress in the strategic involvement of service users since it carried out its initial research over two years ago. The research established general principles for engagement around 'user choice' rather than 'user engagement' but momentum was lost because a Service User Engagement (SUE) worker was not then appointed for 12 months and the abolition of health and social care reference groups as part of the move to partnership boards and local implementation groups, meant these could not be used as a starting point for engagement with users and carers who were already active. It is, however, recognized that the preparatory work undertaken has created a platform for user engagement work in 2006. The SUE project worker attends the local Elders Congress and Learning Disabilities Parliament and has raised SP issues there, but these meetings have a very broad scope and activists are very busy. As a result, there are no examples provided about how this activity has directly impacted strategically on SP.
- 95 Service users are routinely interviewed as part of reviews. However, some providers report that both they and the SP team could do more to engage with service users, carers and advocates at an early stage, to explain the review process. Some key partner providers were of the view that the SP team could be more forceful in expecting them to take on this role. This approach would help to ensure that the exercise was as productive as possible.
- 96 The Council has been flexible in their approach to involving service users in reviews. Methods have been tailored to address specific needs, for example use of telephone interviews as well as face-to-face and questionnaires for floating support services, provision of translated questionnaires and one-to-one meetings with as appropriate interpreters and/or support workers present in a refugee service and use of a group meeting and then a follow on feedback meeting post-review to answer service users queries within a mental health project. However, in a small number of cases the approach did not meet the needs of users. For example it was indicated that several users were uncomfortable about filling in survey forms at the review and specifically requested an interview as an alternative but this was not pursued by the team. Overall, however, as a result of this bespoke approach to service user involvement in reviews, a wide range of users have been able to have their say in the process.
- 97 There are no systematic or formal processes in place to capture user engagement activity outside of reviews. Although the SUE worker attends both the SPIG and SCG meetings, providers do not necessarily feed back activity carried out in individual schemes to the SUE worker, and as a result reports about the wide range of involvement work being undertaken to key bodies cannot be made.

- 98 The Council also does not have an inclusive forum in place. Key figures within the Council and VAS consider that the lack of an Inclusive Forum has been a significant hindrance to moving forward on working with hard-to-reach groups. There is a view from a number of providers that the SP team perceives difficulties in engaging with some groups because it has not had the opportunity for trial and error which an inclusive forum would represent. It was also indicated from providers that the team was concerned about how such a forum could be made meaningful for the broad range of users.
- 99 Some progress has, however, been made on developing systems to bring new users into activity. Training has taken place with providers, who have received resource packs on good practice in engagement and the SUE worker has visited a number of schemes to talk to users about how they want to be involved. A user friendly web-based resource is also being developed, by the SUE project officer, which is aimed at providers to assist them in service user engagement.
- 100 A recent service outcome has resulted from user engagement. The SUE project has involved users in developing a DVD (launched during the on-site week) about encouraging user involvement in services. The DVD provides a baseline for other IT projects involving users in future.

Access to services and information

- 101 There is a range of good, accessible information available for services users. The Council has taken the decision not to brand information specifically as 'Supporting People', taking the view that it is not helpful to service users who would not necessarily recognise the term. Information provided is customer-focused and there is sufficient accessible information available in leaflet form on SP services which includes those specifically aimed at younger people. However, although there is a focus on delivering customer-focused information which is jargon free for users, leaflets produced are not always in plain English and there is no editorial panel of service users to support this area of development. As a result, leaflets and information may not always be user friendly.
- 102 A good informative and user friendly newsletter is produced by the Supporting People team. This is sent regularly to providers and other stakeholders and contains relevant information and updates which ensures that they are informed about emerging Supporting People issues.
- 103 Access and referral is clear, fair and transparent across all services. Staff are trained and signpost effectively to services. As part of the inspection a number of anonymous enquiries were made at Council offices, requesting information or assistance with housing-related support. Responses to these 'mystery shopper' enquiries were met courteously, with Staff at Howden House providing professional and effective service, and in the majority of cases good information, including signposting, was provided. As a result, services users can access relevant information to support their needs.

- 104** There is a range of directories and easy access guides produced by partnership bodies, for example on homelessness, and there is a comprehensive directory of Supported accommodation which includes information on all SP services. However, the Directory is only accessible via staff at council offices or on the Council's internet site. As a result, availability of this information for service users is limited. In response to our onsite comments the Council has put in place arrangements for the directory to be provided and distributed to key access points by May 2006.
- 105** There is a Supporting People page on the Council's website which can be accessed through the find a page facility. The website has information available in other languages; changeable fonts sizes and browse aloud capability. The page contains information on Supporting People services and has links to other pages and sites including those of partners. However, the site is not easily navigable for service users making information difficult to find but the Council has put in place immediate changes to give easier access to the site following our on-site feedback.
- 106** The Council has developed a Better Care Higher Standards charter which is a generic statement of standards instead of a guide to service availability. The Charter clearly details standards which reflect customer service standards applying to services funded through Supporting People programme.
- 107** There is a lack of quality in some areas of information sharing between partners and providers. For example the quality of referral material and information from Probation to providers was not always good. This needs to be improved to ensure that effective and appropriate responses can be made by providers to assist users.
- 108** The SP team has not always accessed resources available locally to make information for service users more accessible. For example, the Learning Disability Partnership Network produces an easy access version of minutes of its meetings and VAS regularly uses symbols and easy read formats in its literature but this local expertise has not been tapped into. As a result, opportunities to enhance the accessibility of information are being missed.
- 109** Similarly the Council has developed an excellent LD website which is easily accessible, easy to navigate and has been specifically developed to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities. However, the SP team has not used this good practice and learning to improve the accessibility of the SP website.

Diversity

- 110** Diversity and equality is seen as a core corporate value for the Council. The diverse perspective of the area and the challenges attached to this are clearly recognised by the Council and there is a clear understanding of local demographics which have been defined through a range of information.

- 111 The Council has a clear focus and ambition on the diversity and equalities agenda. Currently the Council has assessed itself as achieving level three of the Equalities Standard in Local Government (ESLG) and aims to achieve level four by April 2006. Diversity and equality is integral and embedded in all aspects of service delivery and we found this to be the case in discussions with staff at all levels. As a result, the supporting people team is sensitive to the diverse needs of service users in delivering the programme.
- 112 The Council has used baseline data, such as the housing demand survey, census data, client record data and homelessness returns, to provide robust information about need and supply which was used to inform the development of the five-year strategy and strategic priorities for the service. For example the Council has compared client record data and census data which have indicated that the proportion of service users from BME groups is higher when compared to the proportion of the population. This suggests that positive access is available and there is good BME representation in many support services.
- 113 The Council are identifying and addressing the gaps in services for specific groups in a range of ways in line with the Council's ethos of generic service provision as part of its 'closing the gap' agenda. For example rough sleepers and HIV/aids customers are being catered for in generic services, there is a high level of support services for refugees and there are specialist BME providers for mental health and domestic violence service users. Low access by BME service users to sheltered housing has also been recognised and information from service reviews is being used to identify barriers, such as information, access and culture and develop appropriate actions to address this gap. This approach aims to ensure that services address the specific needs of these groups.
- 114 There is no formal mechanism in place for the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups in the decision-making structure. However, there is some evidence that commissioning decisions have been influenced by excluded groups and their advocates. For example a member of the SP team regularly attends the Refugee Forum, which is a multi-agency group that has done significant work in developing the city's refugee integration strategy and works closely with a number of refugee community associations. As a result of this involvement, there have been changes in a floating support scheme for refugees which were formerly dedicated to Somalian refugees and the scope of which has now been expanded, in line with the integration agenda, to cover all refugee groups.
- 115 Service reviews have provided the opportunity for services for hard-to-reach groups to be changed or improved to better reflect identified needs. For example:
- increased units and funding for a service that facilitates the resettlement of prisoners being discharged from custody;
 - increased numbers of units of floating support provision for homeless; and
 - reconfiguration of hostel to provide units for homeless people with complex needs and improved direct access provision for women.

- 116** There are some indications that the Council has a culturally sensitive approach to providing services. For example, when the SP team carried out a review of one service for BME users with mental health needs a great deal of effort was put into supporting the scheme to ensure it met QAF standards. Similarly, a number of refugee support schemes were given enhanced support to achieve the required standard.

Outcomes for service users

- 117** The wide range of services provided through the SP programme is meeting the needs of people who use them. Services have been designed to meet specific identified gaps and remodelled to better address the needs of service users. The quality of services seen by inspectors was high and it is clear that they are helping people to live as independently as possible.
- 118** A number of innovative initiatives have been developed with SP partners. These initiatives provide specialist and focused support to vulnerable service users and include:
- use of ODPM and SP funding to operate a winter bed scheme for homeless and high risk clients. This provided rough sleepers with a bed and intensive support between October and March;
 - provision of a transitional housing support service, funded through an existing floating support service, for prospective tenants of a new extra care scheme. This will support them through the process and manage the house move.
 - a families project to support families causing anti-social behaviour; and
 - private landlords' scheme with Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to enable vulnerable people to access private rented accommodation and receive support, giving them greater choice of accommodation.
- 119** New services developed through Supporting People funding have had a clear impact on addressing local and national targets. These new services include the Sheffield Families Project and development of extra care housing which both address local and national agenda, such as reduction and prevention of antisocial behaviour and hospital admissions, respectively.
- 120** There is a strong strategic and operational relationship between Community Care and SP to deliver services for people with learning disabilities. Examples of this include developing a 'key ring 'service to offer greater choice of independent living and new devices through tele care services which support independent living and address complex needs of users.
- 121** The Council has developed an outcome measure framework. A comprehensive performance management framework is being piloted at present with 15 providers and aims to change the emphasis of the SP programme from input to outcome. However, it is too early to measure outcomes from the pilot at this stage.

- 122 There have been clear improvements to the quality of services. For example:
- joint commissioning of drug services with PCT's has combined counselling with support and enabled clients to sustain independence;
 - at a service for mental health and learning disabilities users. The service was previously very care centred and a shift in approach has resulted in users being now being empowered rather than cared for; and
 - a Refugee Foyer was developed as a result of the review process. Previously this was a failing service which was helped to turn around and now provides support and engages users.
- 123 During our inspection, visits were made to 19 services. A broad range of services were visited to provide an informed view from providers and people who use the services. Overall our impression of the provider schemes that we visited and from our discussions with service users is that they are generally of high quality. In many cases service users indicated what a positive effect the schemes have had on their quality of life and how they are being equipped to live more independently.
- 124 Support plans are in place across most services and have been developed and agreed with service users. The plans are robust, comprehensive and are complementary to any care plans which may be in place. There is a focus on increasing independence for the service user identified in the support plans and these are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of the service user.
- 125 Lack of move on accommodation is identified by a number of providers as an increasing issue, for example, in moving service users out of the women's refuge. The Council has recognised this at a strategic level and has plans in place to address this issue. The private landlord scheme developed with the ODPM is seen as an element in improving the availability of move on accommodation for vulnerable people.

Value for money

- 126 The Council has a strong focus and approach to achieving value for money. Service reviews have been rigorous, challenging and transparent. A value for money approach has been applied consistently across reviews and service providers have been actively involved leading to improvements both in cost and quality. There is a clear eligibility policy in place and administration costs are closely monitored to ensure value for money. There are clear efficiency targets in place, which are effectively monitored and delivered, and the development of an SP procurement policy supports this approach.

How do costs compare?

- 127** The Council has made progress in developing its approach to benchmarking. Benchmarking is used as the starting point to identify cost outliers and all such identified services have been reviewed. All service reviews include a benchmarking analysis. The Yorkshire and Humberside benchmarking database which the Council helped to develop, is used together with the core cities benchmarking database.
- 128** The following table shows figures supplied to the ODPM for the Platinum Cut in 2003, and indicates that the average unit cost in Sheffield was significantly above average both with and excluding community alarms and sheltered housing. The figures indicated below are prior to the Council's service review programme.

Table 1

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Sheffield	£1.01	£33.25	£43.12	£138.70
Yorkshire and the Humber	£1.00	£29.53	£30.01	£122.50
England	£0.70	£28.30	£34.71	£76.37

- 129** The Council can show reduced unit costs as a result of its review process and figures calculated at the 31st March 2006 are indicated below:

Table 2

	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Sheffield	£31.91	£42.26	£134.42

- 130** The Council has implemented a contract pricing policy to support its strong approach to VFM in service reviews. The policy takes a wider approach than benchmarking alone and looks at true costs and other data to develop conclusions on pricing. The model ensures a consistent and transparent approach to VFM and forms the basis of negotiation with providers.

- 131 The Supporting People service can evidence improvement in service quality and VFM. The total number of units now delivered has increased since April 2003, while costs have decreased. In April 2003, 5653 units were being delivered with an annual cost of £27.3 million, in April 2006, 5800 units are being delivered at an annual cost of £25.5 million. In terms of measuring quality, 100 per cent of services now meet the minimum QAF standards, with many achieving well above that standard. As a result, service users are receiving services of improved quality with more efficient use of resources available.

How is value for money managed?

- 132 We found that services provide good value for money with costs that are competitive. There is evidence of high quality support and positive outcomes being delivered. Reality checking of service providers found high levels of satisfaction from service users about the services they received, and it is clear that the programme is supporting people with high and complex levels of need.
- 133 Reviews have identified some services that were not delivering cost effective services in line with contracts and the SCG has acted promptly to address this and to realise substantial savings of £281,410, identified earlier in this report.
- 134 It is evident from reports we looked at, that where the recommendation is to reduce contract price or decommission a service based on VFM concerns, the impact of this is detailed in the review report and is clearly linked to issues of service quality through the contract pricing model. To date, 13 services have been decommissioned and 66 services remodelled to better meet the needs of service users. Discussions have taken place with relevant partners to develop action plans and ensure that disruption to service users is minimised.
- 135 The Council has a robust approach to VFM in its methodology. The SP eligibility policy and assessment toolkit give clarity on what activity is fundable and provide a rigorous framework for analysing practice. The contract pricing policy is clear, comprehensive, has been well consulted on with stakeholders and allows for intensive staff support where it is required by high risk user groups.
- 136 There is a clear and focused approach to VFM issues and the reporting mechanism on value for money is robust. There is tight monitoring of the SP budgets and clear efficiency targets are linked to the programme delivery. Targets set are challenging and being delivered. Individual review outcomes are reported to SPIG and SCG and there is global financial and review reporting to both DMT and EMT. Financial projections and cashable savings are built into the Council's efficiency statement.
- 137 There is a new SP procurement strategy in place. The strategy sets out a clear commissioning framework, procurement options, equality and financial implications. The details in the strategy have been developed to support commissioners of services to focus on VFM considerations whilst ensuring that the sector is building capacity and maintaining stability.

- 138** The Council is able to demonstrate quantifiable savings from the SP review process. To date efficiency savings of £402,937 have been made and a projected £818,467 is due from 2006/07, due in part to control of inflationary increases. Clear plans are in place to bridge the £1 million funding gap for 2006/07 to balance the budget through continued efficiency savings.
- 139** VFM is a key area of service reviews. The VFM of each service is assessed individually as part of the review process and the SP team negotiates with providers on the basis of unique factors, looking at staffing and utilisation outturns rather than contracted numbers. Examples include:
- the in-house tenancy support service for homeless people was re contracted at the same price but with 20 additional units of support provided and a similar Shelter service for recently homeless people, was re-contracted in a similar way, with 16 additional units for the same price; and
 - the in-house sheltered service charge was reduced significantly to bring it closer to the regional benchmark and a Domestic Violence (DV) accommodation-based service unit cost reduced from £827.11 to £663.83.
- 140** Savings made through the service review process are being used to contribute to strategic outcomes. Savings have been invested in both new schemes and increased capacity in existing schemes. To date these include:
- 24 units temp accommodation for homeless families, 79 units of extra care, 40 units of category 1 sheltered accommodation and 27 supported living units for learning disability service users; and
 - increased service capacity of 340 additional units in existing schemes and enhanced staffing on a scheme for offenders to allow admission of higher risk clients.
- 141** The Council is able to demonstrate VFM in the use of its ODPM administration grant. The Council took a pragmatic approach to the delivery of the SP programme and determined that the financial resources required to deliver a robust programme were insufficiently funded through the ODPM grant. As a result, the Council has provided additional resources to ensure programme delivery to date. However, as the emphasis on the review process declines the Council is remodelling the Supporting People service into a service focused on Supported Housing which will allow expertise within the directorate to be balanced and used more effectively to deliver outcomes.
- 142** The Council can demonstrate that it has made effective use of SP funding and that this is linked to service review. Due to tight control during the THB period there has been relatively low funding of ineligible activity. There has been a managed under spend each year on the SP budget which has been used to offset grant reductions and safeguard strategically important services.

- 143 The Supporting People team and other strategic services are working in partnership to improve VFM. Examples of this work include plans to reconfigure the homelessness service, currently provided by three organisations, which has already taken on a less traditional and more preventative approach and plans to reduce by half the use of temporary accommodation, in line with government targets, by 2010. As a result, a better quality service for service users, focused on addressing the prevention agenda can be delivered.
- 144 There is a clearly defined approach to identifying VFM in SP services. The SP team is committed to ensuring providers deliver against their targets on length of stay to ensure service user independence and to maximise VFM. Providers are clear about what is expected of them in terms of delivering value for money services and they confirm that this message is reinforced regularly.
- 145 In the past five years Sheffield council has kept tight control on budgets, but has also been very good at bringing on new funding streams. As a result of this approach, it can consolidate and secure existing services and commitments.
- 146 There has been only limited cross-authority working around VFM issues. The Council is working on a cross-authority and regional basis to improve procurement and commissioning arrangements for Supporting People services. For example:
- the Council is working with sub-regional partners through Transform South Yorkshire and the South Yorkshire Housing and Regeneration Partnership. For 2006/08 a sum of £90 million 2006/08 has been secured to deliver sub-regional priorities which include supported housing; and
 - Cross authority procurement vfm training for providers is being delivered to provide more effective commissioning and procurement.
- 147 However, other developments in areas to improve commissioning arrangements for Supporting People have been slow to progress. For example, although a model commissioning framework, adopted by the ODPM as a good practice model, was jointly developed with the Core Cities Group to develop best practice by sharing expertise and resources, no clear outcomes have resulted to date. Similarly, the Council is involved in a Leeds-led ODPM-funded Value Improvement Project which is looking at a best practice procurement model. The project is still in development and as a result has not yet produced outcomes.

Summary

- 148 Overall, we judge that Sheffield is delivering a good Supporting People programme.
- 149 There are effective governance arrangements in place. There is a clear focus on partnership working, including with probation, health and service providers, to improve services to users. Delivery arrangements are strong and comprehensive needs mapping has taken place. Council members are informed and engaged in the Supporting People programme. Performance management and monitoring is strong and supports the effective delivery of the programme.

- 150 The Council has a strong focus on diversity. There is good data to support this approach and information is available in other formats and languages. Special requirements for vulnerable user groups are identified and addressed early on in the review process. Overall there is a good relationship with service providers although improved communication mechanism could support further improvement in this area.
- 151 Services reviews have been rigorous and challenging with the majority of reviews completed within the ODPM deadline. Significant efficiency savings have been made and the quality of services improved. Services provided offer greater choice and a more flexible approach to address community needs and VFM is effectively and appropriately addressed in all reviews.
- 152 Service user engagement is, however, underdeveloped. Although there are pockets of engagement these are not systematic and as a result not bringing wide demonstrable benefits. Information for service users is mostly good although lacks user input and access routes are well publicised.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- 153 The Council has a strong track record in delivering improvements. The Supporting People programme track record is consistent in implementing change and delivering high quality improvements. The Council can demonstrate that services have improved for most vulnerable people, performance management is good and knowledge on unmet needs is robust.
- 154 Service reviews have delivered clear improvements for service users. Over the last two years there have been tangible changes to the quality of the services which users access. For example moving a dependent culture service learning disabilities scheme to a service focused on support and developing independence. These improvements are as a direct result of the service reviews undertaken by the SP team and the resulting action plans that have been implemented. As a result, services are clearly focused on supporting people to main independent living.
- 155 Other relevant inspection and performance reports in terms of services that meet the needs of vulnerable people show that the Council performs well. It has a three-star Social Services assessment and Sheffield Homes, the Council's arms length management organisation (ALMO) has been assessed as a three-star 'excellent service'. The Council is also rated as 'excellent' under CPA.
- 156 The Supporting People programme has a good track record of delivery. The approach to service reviews has been robust and a large number of reviews have been delivered by a relatively small team. However, ODPM milestones for the delivery of the programme were not fully met by the target date of the 31 March 2006 although they will be fully completed by the end of April 2006.

- 157** Joint commissioning activity within the Council is good. The Supporting People, Strategic Housing and Learning Disabilities (LD) services have developed clear strategic aims to support mainstreaming of independent living for LD service users. As a result of this approach, the Council is sustaining service users in the community.
- 158** The Council has made good progress against a number of key corporate improvement priorities and it is clear about its future objectives. There is clarity about the Council's strategic priorities, expressed through the 2005 corporate plan, which have the purpose of taking forward the city strategy and are supported by other strategies which include the supporting people strategy. Corporate capacity has been enhanced through, for example the use of ALMO funding to improve council homes.
- 159** The Council is delivering value for money improvements. The quality of services is being improved alongside savings and there are ambitious targets in place to improve efficiency and VFM. Savings have been generated which have addressed the projected overspend of £600,000 within SP for 2005/06. Outturn savings of £681,000 has been estimated and the unit costs are reducing across services. This approach ensures sufficient funds to deliver a sustainable SP programme and allows for service development.
- 160** Value for money, efficiency and procurement principles are embedded as a part of all council service planning processes. There is a Supporting People procurement strategy in place to challenge the way services are commissioned and there are clear efficiency savings targets in place for the supporting people programme. The Council is on course to meet its target through agreeing savings with providers and through increasing service capacity at no additional cost, whilst effectively balancing these against maintaining the stability of services for users.
- 161** There is a strong focus on value for money which is evident both in the strategic decision-making process, through the SCG and at an operational level through the robust review process. In order to deliver more cost effective and better quality services for users, services have been decommissioned, reconfigured or remodelled and service costs have been rigorously challenged.
- 162** The Council responded extremely positively to comments made by inspectors during the inspection. For example in respect of the measurement of churn and the use of residents to review literature, with immediate action being made to address the issues. Within days of the on-site feedback recommendations have been integrated into the Strategic Supported Housing Service plan action plan. The plan is SMART and includes clear timescales for action and implementation.

- 163** The Council seeks learning to improve its services and consistently accesses good practice from others and uses this in developing services. For example using Beacon Council learning resources, visiting other administering authorities such as Bolton MBC, using good practice from conferences and events with learning being fed back through team meetings and briefings. However, there are examples of the Council failing to learn from some internal good practice, for example the Learning Disabilities website, in improving its Supporting People website.
- 164** The Council's approach to service user involvement within the SP programme has been slow and not consistent across all services. Service reviews and the development of user leaflets are not always reflective of service user views. However, the SCG has agreed that two additional mandatory requirements will be adopted for contracted services as from April 2006. These objectives are consulting and involving service users and empowerment and supporting independence. An implementation plan is place to support and ensure effective implementation. This approach will embed existing good practice in service user involvement and focus providers on improving the standards of involvement.
- 165** Sheffield is developing a lead role in regional joint working, particularly in the area of standard approaches to key areas of work and more effective use of resources. Progress to date has been slow but this has not been due to the lack of enthusiasm and commitment of the Council but due to slow engagement from other partners.
- 166** The Council is driving forward the partnership working with the probation service. The probation service have yet to make the move to fully work with the Supporting People programme across the community safety and public protection dimension to ensure strategically-focused improvements are delivered. This has been recognised by the Council and plans are in place to develop this with the probation service, with a joint meeting date now agreed in April 2006 to take this forward.

How does the service manage performance?

- 167** The SP programme has clear overarching aims and priorities. There is a Strategic Supported Housing Service plan being developed from May 2006 with a service plan currently in place to ensure the future delivery of both strategic and operational improvements. These plans address the right areas to move the programme forward and to provide continuous improvement. Performance management and monitoring is robust and used to drive service improvement. However, at an operational level there are gaps in provision of performance information to providers and service users.

- 168** There is a five-year strategy in place which provides clear direction for the programme with strategic links to health, social care, community safety and the social inclusion agenda. Priorities are identified and link to other agencies, with outcomes for service users being clearly identified. There are clear and challenging aims which will improve services for users, these include:
- better access routes to services;
 - ensuring service provision is tenure neutral; and
 - ensuring supported housing is delivered in suitable accommodation with a sustainable future.
- 169** These aims have been developed in consultation with partners, service providers and service users and are supported by strong data. Plans are in place to review the five-year strategy with completion by October 2006 to ensure that it is reflective of the changing needs of service users.
- 170** Staff are clear about the aims and priorities of the Supporting People five-year strategy and the service improvement plan. The Council revisits service improvement plans annually in order that there are clear links and actions reflect strategy implementation and changes in operational priorities.
- 171** The Supporting People team have developed an outcome measurement in supported housing system, which is to be piloted with a number of providers, between April 2006 and December 2006. Providers have been heavily involved in developing the system to reflect both their needs and those of users. Service users will play a major part in contributing to this process on what they consider to be good outcomes in establishing and maintaining independence.
- 172** Rigorous and robust performance planning and monitoring arrangements are in place. Performance improvement plans are produced which link directly to service plans and then into service and team improvement workbooks. All plans feed into the Directorate plan which is in turn linked to the corporate strategy and the Council's aims, visions and values.
- 173** There are strong reporting mechanisms in place in respect of SP. The portfolio holder has monthly briefing meetings with the service head, the portfolio holder is then held to account against PI traffic light indicators, at a bi monthly meeting with the deputy leader and leader. Clear action plans are developed from this process and these are monitored against performance. This effective governance framework and structure has enabled members to monitor progress made in delivering supported housing services and to maintain a continued focus on the SP agenda.
- 174** The Supporting People team use an effective finance system to monitor costs. The Supporting People team collate information from the quarterly returns submitted by providers and generate provider service performance monitoring information. Supporting People is mainstreamed into the Council's work with links into the corporate financial monitoring systems, and into the corporate management team framework for delivery.

- 175** There is effective performance monitoring of the Supporting People services that are provided under contracts between the Council and service providers, by the Supporting People team. Performance management arrangements for staff within the Supporting People team are good. Monthly one-to-one meetings take place between staff and managers and an annual appraisal and these are used to set individual targets and identify training needs which are developed through the Employee Training and Development process. As a result, staff are able to identify development needs, access training both work-related and at a personal development level as well as maintaining a focus on service aims.

Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- 176** The Council has a clear vision in aiming to deliver excellent services to the community. Priorities are agreed, there is a performance management culture in place and resources are tightly managed and monitored which assist the Council in meeting its aims.
- 177** There is strong corporate commitment to the supporting people programme. Cabinet members and the portfolio holder clearly understand the role that the supporting people programme and the SCG plays in delivering some of the Councils key targets and priorities, such as the 'closing the gap' corporate aim. This approach ensures that actions and outcomes remain customer and community-focused.
- 178** The Supporting People programme is seen by the Council as part of the hub in delivering its ambitions around community and neighbourhood development. The Supporting People team have used opportunities to develop innovative ways to address and improve the delivery of the programme, such as its eligibility policy, outcome measure framework and contract pricing policy.
- 179** The Council has reacted positively to ensure the delivery of the SP review programme. A capital sum in addition to the ODPM administration grant has been provided to support the current structure of the team. This has ensured that service reviews have been completed in a robust and thorough manner, mostly within the ODPM deadline.
- 180** There is a clear focus and commitment from senior managers to drive forward improvement and deliver person centred, customer-focused services. Service aims are clearly detailed and have realistic targets, which are part of a comprehensive review and monitoring process.
- 181** The Supporting People team is stable and well established. Staff morale is good and there are few sickness absence issues with the team being effectively supported by the corporate human resources service, on such issues.
- 182** The Supporting People team is effectively supported by robust IT systems which provide good performance management data. The system has been developed to allow for the production of information that is appropriate to the service and can feed into the performance review process used both within the neighbourhood service and the Council reporting structure.

- 183** The Councils approach to partnership working is strong. The Council has links with the LSP through Sheffield First and the portfolio holder is a member of a number of cross-cutting boards, which include being the Chair of the Learning Disabilities Board and a member of the mental health partnership board. The Council is also engaged in strategic partnering for example in delivering extra care projects. This approach ensures that effective links with Supporting People programme and agenda are maintained.
- 184** Effective measures are being developed to drive forward the Supporting People programme following completion of service reviews. A new contract management framework is under development which will aim to address the need for continuous improvement and strong risk management against the need to reduce administration and regulation for providers.
- 185** There is an inclusive approach to strategy development within the Neighbourhoods directorate. The housing strategy team is seen as conduit for all strategies developed within the directorate, providing support, information and access to stakeholder groups. As a result, strategies are not developed in isolation and link into the priorities of the overarching housing strategy.
- 186** A robust Supporting People procurement strategy is in place. The strategy indicates that procurement decisions will be made with strategic considerations as well as broad VFM measures. Service quality and user outcomes are being addressed alongside this strategy, through the development of the contract monitoring framework and outcome measurement models, to take the SP programme forward.
- 187** Supporting People in Sheffield is closely linked to other services within the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Supporting People vision reflects the 2005 City Strategy, having a strong emphasis on neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion. Supporting People is seen as a vehicle to fund and deliver a range of services which directly contribute to the delivery of targets relating to crime, health, employment and housing, leading to improved outcomes for the community. At a service level, for example, through the use of ODPM Homeless Innovation Fund grants to increase capacity to support the private landlord's initiative. Other approaches to support funding for future developments include bringing together ADP and market renewal resources, using land value receipts, planning gain and S106 to deliver new supported housing schemes.
- 188** The Council has exposed itself to external challenge. It has been successful in achieving Investors in people accreditation and is aiming to achieve the Charter mark for all services, including Supporting People, by 2007. These challenges ensure that the Council focuses on both internal issues such as behaviour and staff attitudes as well as an external focus on delivering good quality customer-focused services.
- 189** Training for members is good. All members have annual one-to-one which are used to determine and evaluate their individual training needs. A member's skills audit is being conducted at present by a dedicated officer appointed to this task. The results are to be used to provide further focus on the training and development needs of the members.

- 190** The Council is in the process of redesigning its service in order to make best use of staff resources. Faced with further reductions in the administrative grant the Council is forming a new service with effect from May 2006. The service will be formed from the merger of the Supporting People and Older Peoples Housing Strategy teams. Some of the anticipated outcomes of this merger include the alignment of capital and revenue funding to achieve effective supported housing solutions, effective procurement and the development of a strategy for the strategic commissioning of supported housing and housing-related support. As a result of this approach, the Council will use existing skills within the team more effectively and allow for the development of a strategically relevant, cohesive service.
- 191** Further opportunities for flexibility, afforded the Council through its 'excellent' status are being explored. For example following a recent discussion, Government Office Yorkshire and Humberside has agreed that the Council can explore bringing the SP programme into the Stronger Communities block of the local area agreement, with effect from 2007. This approach should allow for a greater focus on delivering local community services to users.
- 192** The Council has ambitious plans to deliver Neighbourhood/Transformational project areas as part of its aim to 'close the gap' within communities. This neighbourhood planning approach aims to address some of the move on accommodation issues identified by some providers. Although the plans are long-term they are already delivering some outcomes for service users, for example provision of extra care schemes for older people.

Summary

- 193** Our judgement is that the SP programme has 'excellent prospects' for improvement. The Council has a good track record in delivering improvements and the Supporting People service has been able to meet most of the targets set.
- 194** There are is strong and effective leadership for the SP programme. Staff morale is good and there is clear direction for the programme. Innovative approaches have been taken, for example, in addressing the future needs of programme delivery through an outcome-focused project.
- 195** The Council has a strong culture of learning and improvement. Learning through inspection, through peers and pilot projects are taken and there is evidence of clear outcomes from this approach. In order to enhance the ability of the Council to deliver its strategic outcomes alternative funding opportunities are explored and developed.
- 196** The Council is provides strong support for the Supporting People programme with officers and members being fully aware of their responsibilities and roles in respect of delivering the programme. This is supported by clear links to the corporate plan, city strategy and the Local Strategic Partnerships.

- 197** A performance management culture is embedded throughout the Council. Effective systems are in place to support the delivery of the SP programme and the performance monitoring framework is robust and effective in ensuring that progress and outcomes from the programme are effectively monitored and reported. Although there is currently a gap in the reporting of performance on the outcome of reviews to service users.
- 198** The Council has developed key strategies to support the delivery of the SP programme. Effective joint working at a strategic level ensures that all strategies are linked. Future restructuring of the Supporting People and Older Peoples housing Strategy teams will enhance the strategic approach.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

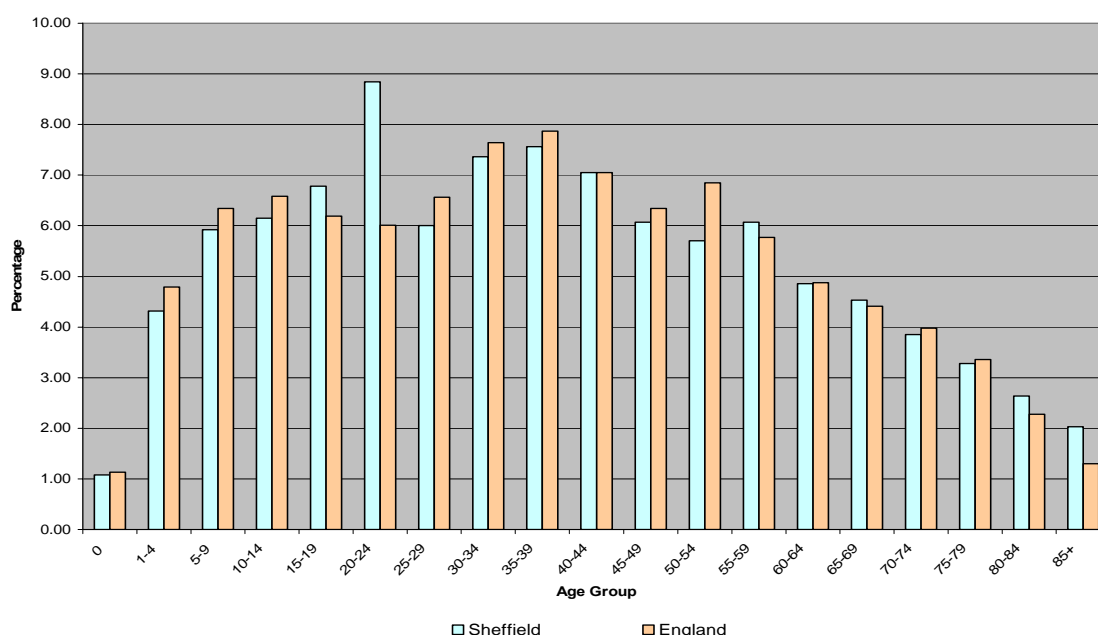
Demographic information

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

Table 3

Measure	Sheffield	England
Population (mid-2004) ³	516,100	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2004)	18.8	18.5
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than white-British 2004)	8.8	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ⁴	2.7	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ⁵	60	-

Figure 2 Percentage of the population⁶ in each age group compared with England



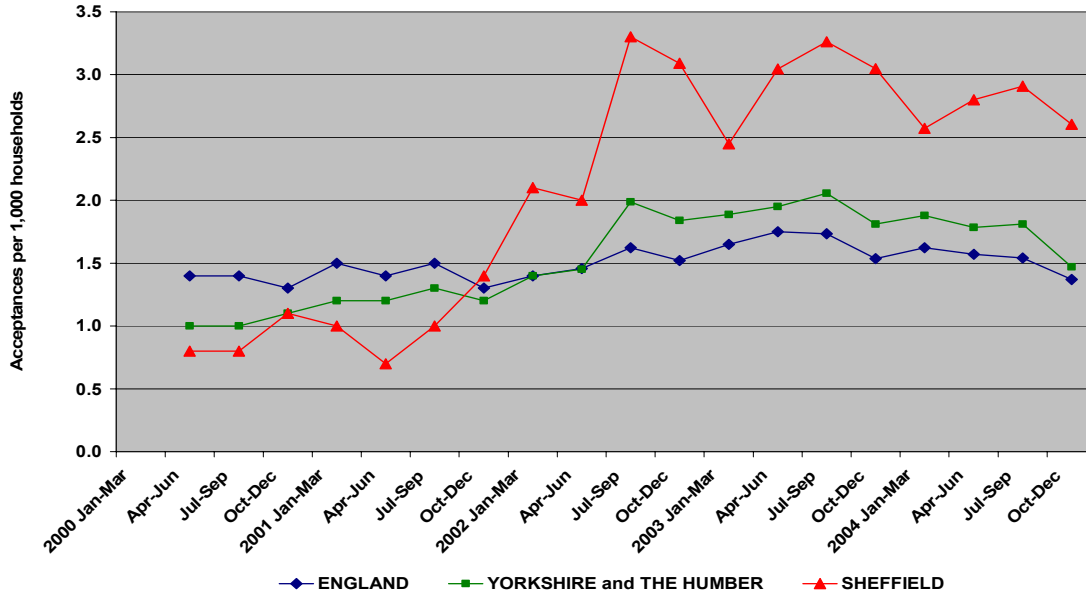
³ Source: mid-year population estimates (2004)

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

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

⁶ 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)

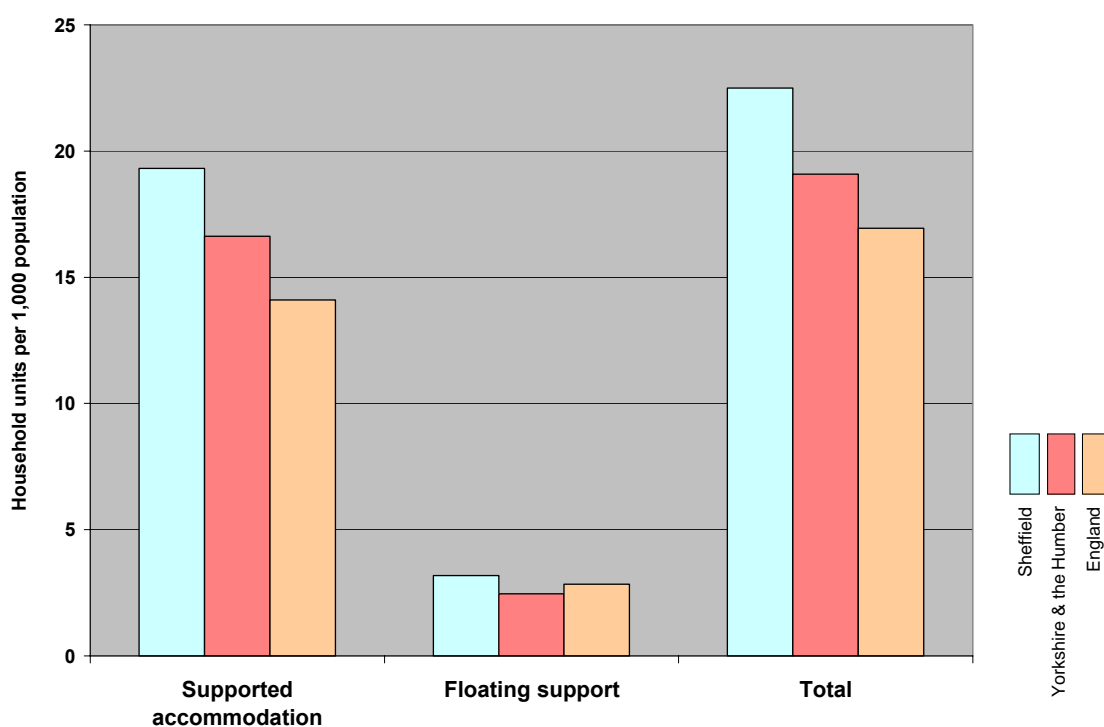


Performance information

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

Supporting People data

Figure 4 Total service provision funded through Supporting People⁷



⁷ 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 England⁸

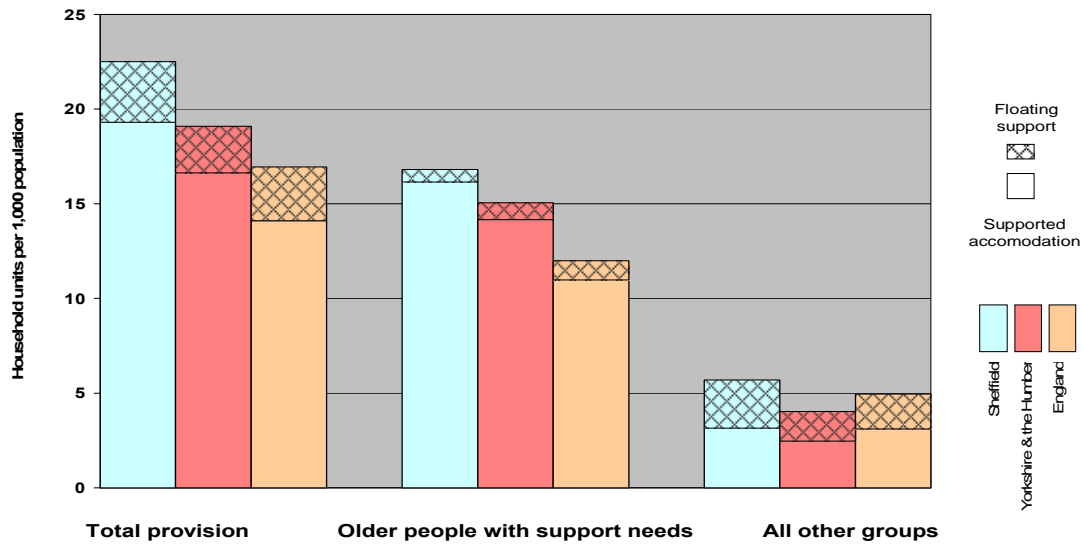
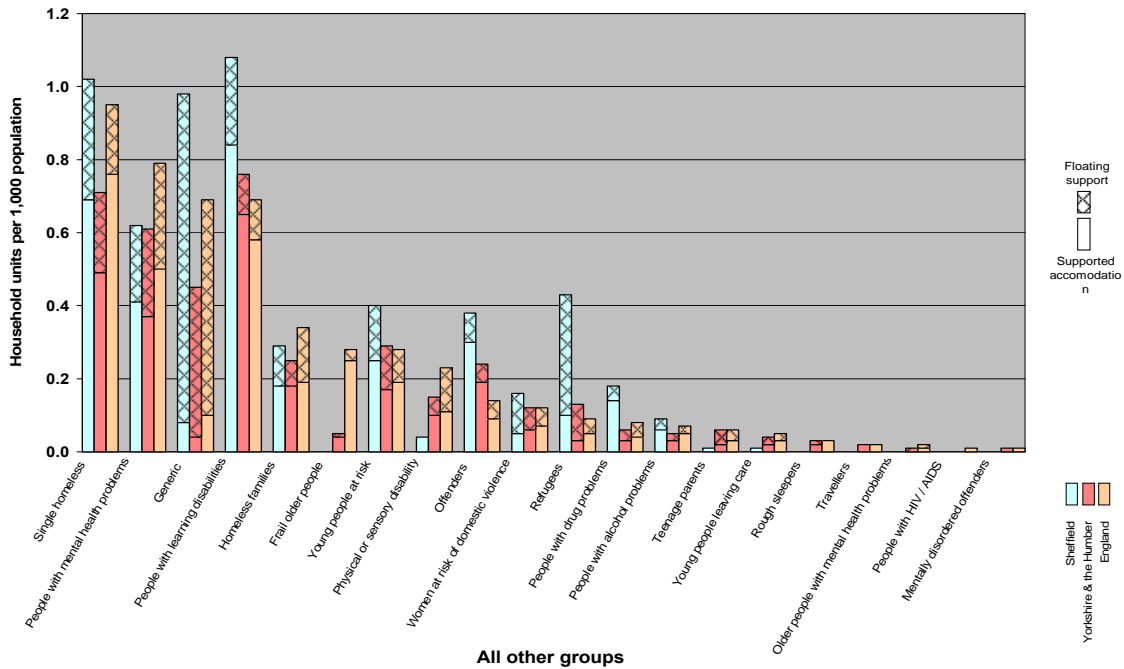


Figure 6 Services for other groups compared with the region and England⁹

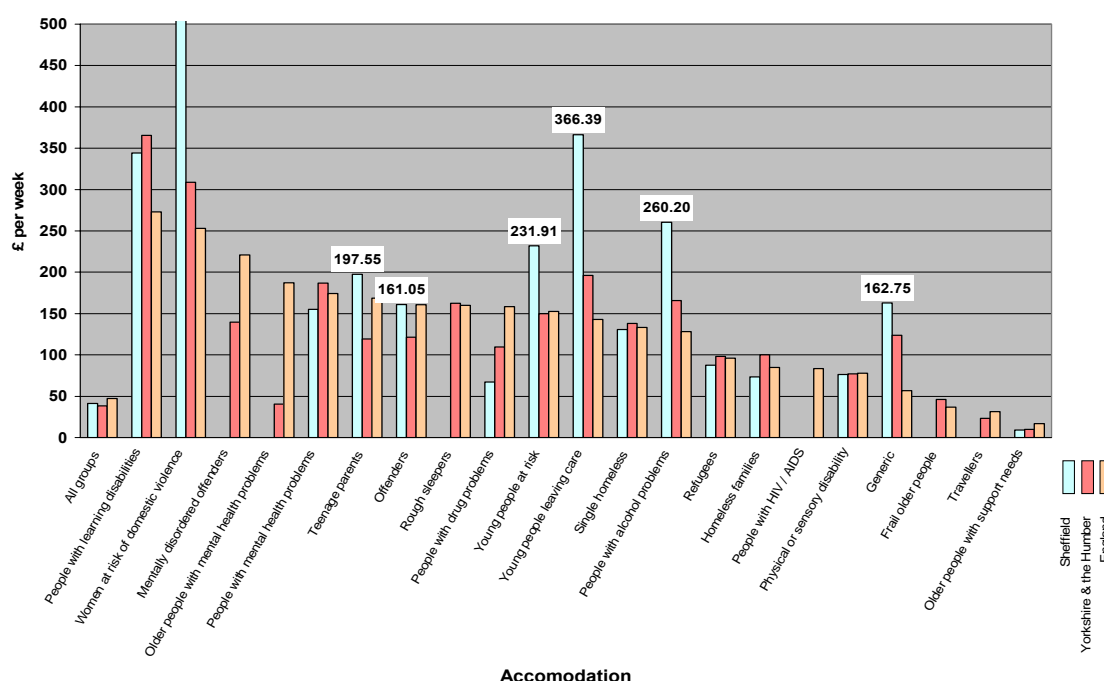


⁸ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

⁹ Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM November 2003. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Table 4 Funding for Supporting People¹⁰

Sheffield	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£26,999,468	£26,621,928	£25,288,885
Pipeline allocation	£264,241	£549,938	£ -
Administration grant	£364,641	£359,723	£287,778

Figure 7 Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹¹

¹⁰ Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

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

Figure 8 Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹²

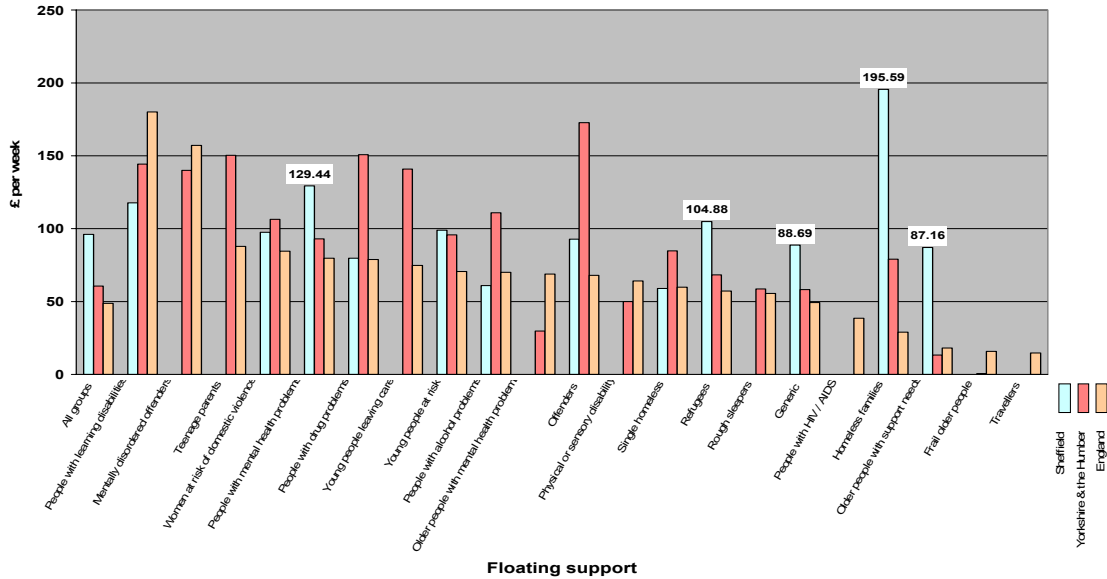
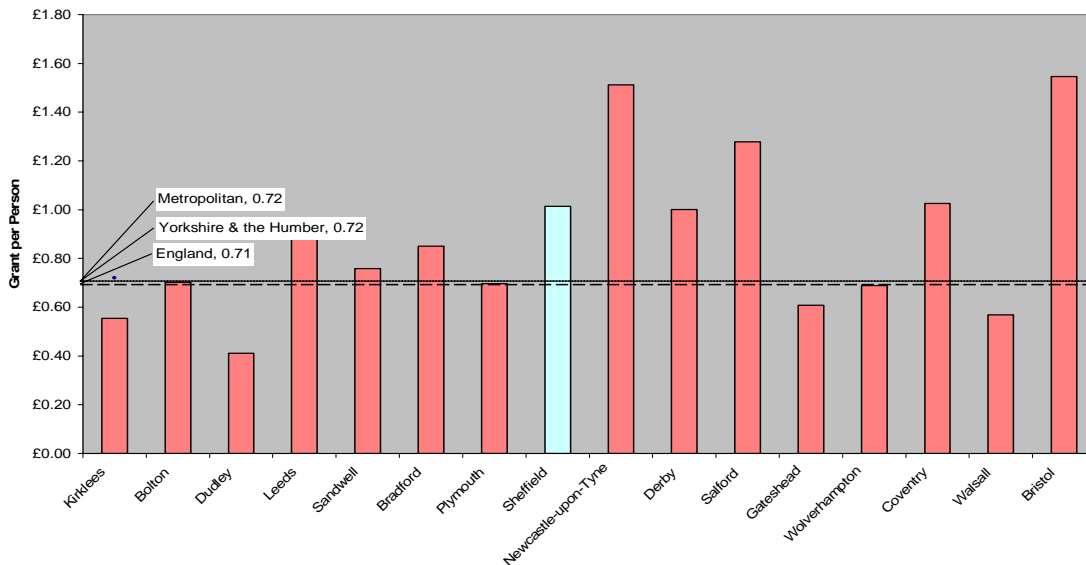


Figure 9 Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours,¹³ all metropolitan councils and all English councils (2004/05)



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

¹³ A comparator group of similar councils.

Figure 10 Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours,¹⁴ all metropolitan councils and all English councils

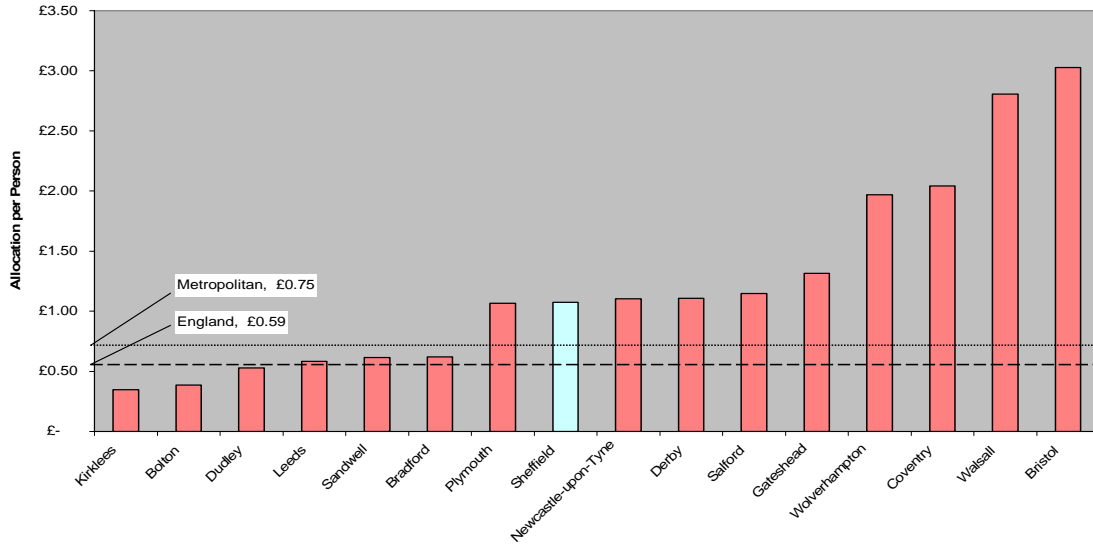
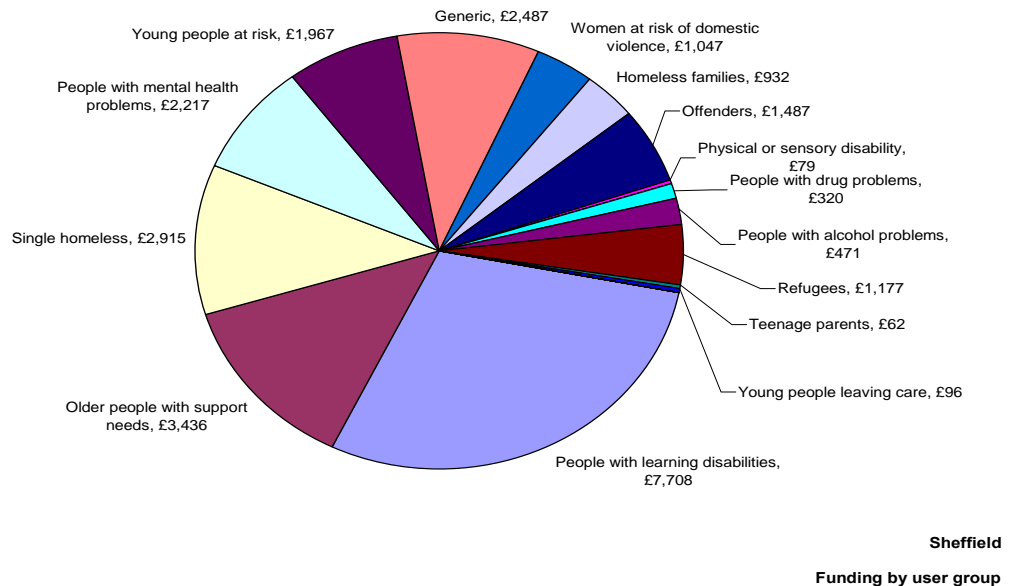


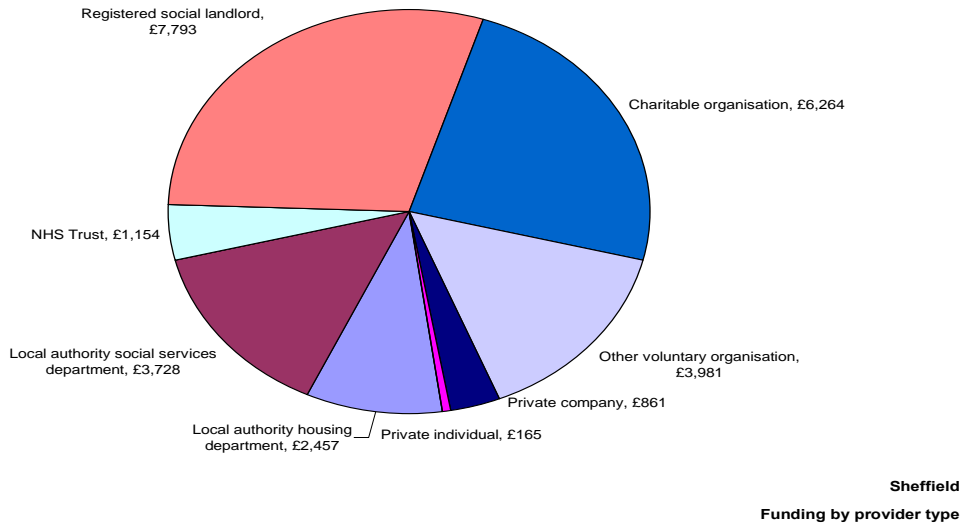
Figure 11 Share of spending between user groups (£000s)¹⁵



¹⁴ A comparator group of similar councils.

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

Figure 12 Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)¹⁶



Social Services star ratings November 2004

Table 5

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

	Serving people well?	Prospects for improvement?	Performance rating (CPA equivalent)
Adults' Services	Some	Promising	★★ (2)
Children's Services	Most	Promising	

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

Social services performance indicators

Table 6 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04

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

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

Best value performance indicators

Table 7 Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 compared with metropolitan councils

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

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

Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed

- 1 Before going on-site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that were provided for us. These included:
 - all of the Council's corporate strategies that impact upon Supporting People, including the corporate plan and housing strategies;
 - plans and strategies from other planning groups and partner agencies such as Primary Care Trust and the Probation service that may impact on Supporting People;
 - needs research information, the five-year Supporting People strategy, the business plan and the review programme; and
 - Supporting People newsletters, the Fairer Charging policy and advice leaflets.

Appendix 3 – Reality checks undertaken

- 1 When we went on-site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on-site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. Our reality checks included:
 - a questionnaire survey which was sent to all providers of housing-related support services;
 - a focus groups for service providers;
 - visits to 19 supported housing schemes, to talk to service users and frontline staff;
 - calls to test how easy it is to access services; and
 - interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Chief Executive of the Council, Director of Housing, Director of Resources, Head of Finance, Accountable Officer, Supporting People Manager and the team, Councillors, Social Services Commissioning Managers, and representatives of the Probation Service and Sheffield Primary Care Trust.

Appendix 4 – Positive practice

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

Title of item of positive practice

Eligibility policy

- 2 An intention-based model which allows flexibility for the needs of different client groups and has a focus on outcomes for users.

Title of item of positive practice

Outcome measurement framework

- 3 Sheffield is leading the development of an outcome measurement framework for the Yorkshire and Humber region. The framework uses a ‘distance travelled’ model to assess outcomes achieved by users and services. It takes a holistic approach that provides not only performance management data but acts as a management tool for service providers and contributes to development of strategic links with other key agendas. The model was developed in partnership with providers with input from regional SP teams, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation. The framework is being piloted with around 20 services in Sheffield from April 2006 and will be rolled out in January 2007 if successful. A number of other authorities in the region are intending to adopt the model, which, it is anticipated, will lead to consistency and reduce the administrative burden for regional providers. Further information is available at <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/safe--sound/supporting-people/reference-library/projects/outcome-measurement-project>.

(SCC have invited, by DCLG, onto a national project group on Outcome Measurement Framework)

Title of item of positive practice

Contract pricing policy

- 4 An approach that analyses true costs and combines these with other tools to arrive at conclusions. This then forms a basis for negotiation.

Title of item of positive practice

Using council tax benefit as passport for subsidy

- 5 This approach has enabled access to services and subsidy to be tenure neutral.