

Supporting People

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

March 2009



Contents

Supporting People Inspections	3
Summary	4
Scoring the programme	6
Recommendations	10
Report	14
How good is the Supporting People programme?	17
What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?	47
Appendix 1 – Performance indicators	58
Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken	70
Appendix 3 – Progress against previous Recommendations	71
Appendix 4 – Positive practice	75

Supporting People Inspections

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

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

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

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

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

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

The former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)¹ 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.

¹ Now the Department for CLG (CLG).

Summary

- 1 Overall we judge that City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council now administers a fair, one-star Supporting People programme which has promising prospects for improvement. Previous inspections in December 2005 and June 2007 assessed the Council as delivering a poor, no-star programme with uncertain prospects for improvement and poor, no-star programme with poor prospects for improvement, respectively.
- 2 Bradford is in West Yorkshire, in the north of England and covers an area of some 141 square miles over Airedale, Wharfedale and the Worth Valley with a population of 493,100². The percentage of the BME population is higher at 27 per cent³ compared to the national figure of 10.44 per cent. No political party has overall control of the Council, and the annual budget for 2008/09 was £408,600 million. The Supporting People programme covers 301 contracts. The programme grant from CLG in 2008/09 totalled £19.21 million. This delivers 11,481 units of supporting housing comprising of 6,650 accommodation units, 296 floating support units and 4,535 community alarm units.
- 3 There has been a shift in the direction of the programme and speed of improvement over the last twelve months and this is beginning to result in improved outcomes for vulnerable people and service users. This can be attributed to the completion of the needs analysis that provided a sound basis for the development of the five-year strategy, and identified commissioning priorities. This coincided with the introduction of new officers in the posts of Accountable Officer and Lead Officer providing clear direction and improved leadership to the programme, along with the repositioning of the team in Adult Services. Previous inspection recommendations have provided a focus on the key areas of improvement, and the Council has responded well to additional support from the CLG and Audit Commission over the last year. This has resulted in improvements such as stronger governance arrangements, better relationships with providers, effective service user involvement, and an improved approach to contracting and procurement.
- 4 However, a number of weaknesses still exist in delivery of the programme. Delays in, carrying out the needs analysis, reviewing the five-year strategy and lack of commissioning have impacted considerably on the delivery of the programme to date. This has resulted in delays in re-shaping services in line with local needs. Areas for improvement include access arrangements, value for money issues and the development of outcome measures.

² Source - ONS 2006 mid year estimate

³ Source - ONS 2005 ethnic group mid year estimates

Summary

- 5 The Council has promising prospects for improvement. The programme has clear direction and the pace of improvement has significantly increased recently. Demonstrable outcomes for service users include more relevant and better quality services and appropriate opportunities for service user involvement. The restructure of the team and strong leadership, with the permanent appointment of officers to key positions, provides greater capacity for the programme to deliver planned improvements. Some concerns remain over the reporting of outcomes and the approach to diversity and value for money.

Scoring the programme

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

Figure 1 Scoring chart⁴

	Prospects for improvement?					'a fair programme that has promising prospects for improvement'
Excellent					A good programme?	
Promising		⚙				
Uncertain						
Poor						
	Poor	Fair ★	Good ★★	Excellent ★★★		

Source: Audit Commission

- 7 We found the programme to be fair because it has a range of strengths including the following.
- Clear corporate commitment to the delivery and improvement of the programme.
 - Governance arrangements strengthened and capacity enhanced with the inclusion of service users.
 - Appropriate arrangements in place for MAPPA⁵ and adult and child protection.
 - A comprehensive five-year strategy with a clear vision, agreed priorities and clear plans for delivery.
 - A robust needs analysis carried out resulting in an agreed commissioning plan and action being taken to address gaps in services.

⁴ The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the programme is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a programme that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent programme (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the programme, also on a four-point scale.

⁵ Police and Multi Agency Protection Panel arrangements (MAPPA) were set up in England and Wales in 2001. Police and probation take the leading role with other agencies such as housing health and social services. Agencies share information to ensure accurate assessments of risk are made about potentially dangerous offenders and plans put in place to robustly manage those risks.

Scoring the programme

- Improvements to the management and performance of the team.
 - Strong service user involvement with several examples of changes following service user involvement and some positive outcomes for those service users who have been directly involved.
 - Positive engagement sessions enable service users, providers and other stakeholders to be involved in shaping improvements to the programme.
 - Many examples of positive outcomes for service users in receipt of SP funded services.
 - Information for service users is comprehensive and available through the website and a range of outlets.
 - The retraction of significant ineligible funding which has been completed twelve months prior to the original plan, enabling reinvestment in new services.
 - Leadership of the programme has been strengthened and the team has benefited from the move into Adult Services.
 - A robust approach to contract management developing, all contracts are now steady state providing greater confidence amongst providers.
 - An efficient approach to procurement has been developed with provider support and service user involvement.
 - Risks to the programme are reported on a quarterly basis to the Commissioning Body through a formalised risk register.
- 8 However, there are some areas which require improvement. These include:
- awareness of SP services in front line services is not strong and recent actions taken to raise awareness have yet to demonstrate an improvement;
 - the new approach to quality assurance has yet to demonstrate its effectiveness and there are few services that have been visited more recently as part of the renewed approach to contract management;
 - decommissioning of services to date has been limited and in some cases has not been satisfactory;
 - no dedicated resource for service user involvement in the team leading to a lack of progress in some areas;
 - there are few outcomes to date from the recently agreed approach to VFM, there are no efficiency targets in place and no evidence of efficiencies achieved to date;
 - limited outcomes from use of benchmarking information to achieve value for money savings;
 - fairer charging has not been focussed on those who may be most in need in order to improve take up;
 - actions to progress access to move-on accommodation have had limited success to date;

- there have been considerable delays in increasing the choice of services available to meet the needs of service users as a result of delays in reconfiguring services or commissioning new services; and
 - appropriate arrangements are not yet in place to enable the measurement of outcomes from the programme; contracts with providers are not yet based on outcomes.
- 9 The programme has promising prospects for improvement because:
- a number of key weaknesses have been addressed resulting in a considerable improvement in the direction of the programme over the last 12 months;
 - the pace of change has been appropriate with a focus on ensuring high quality outcomes;
 - there is now an emerging track record of delivering change and improvement with a change of direction and pace that has helped to ensure improvements to the programme are delivered;
 - targets set in relation to performance have been exceeded;
 - the vision, aims and objectives for the programme are clearly aligned to other key strategies and throughout improvement plans;
 - there are plans in place that will address identified weaknesses;
 - some improvements for service users are evident such as service user involvement and an increase in provision which meets priority needs;
 - actions are already planned which address many of the areas for improvement identified during this inspection;
 - financial plans and funding are in place to deliver improvements through the commissioning plan, funding has been retracted from ineligible services and is now available to spend on new services;
 - the approach to procurement has been streamlined and ensures diversity in the market is retained;
 - there is a strong commitment to improving the SP programme, corporate support is available for the programme including support to address performance; and
 - support has been provided to strengthen the team and plans to ensure there is sufficient capacity and skills to deliver further improvements to the programme are well advanced.

Scoring the programme

- 10 However, there are some barriers to improvement. These include the following.
- There have been considerable delays in some areas such as progress in driving improvements in quality and changes to the overall shape of provision.
 - There are some weaknesses in the approach to addressing diversity, there has not been sufficient focus on ensuring any potential barriers to services for diverse groups are addressed.
 - Delays in addressing value for money have resulted in a lack of progress in achieving efficiency savings.
 - Outcomes are not yet being reported through the performance management arrangements and the Council is not yet able to identify the contribution Supporting People makes to wider social care, housing, health and probation targets and indicators.

Recommendations

11 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 costs⁶ and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context, the inspection team recommends that the Council shares the findings of this report with service users, service providers and Councillors; and takes action to address all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation

R1 The Council should ensure there is an increasing focus on addressing equality and diversity by.

- ensuring all staff and councillors receive high quality equality and diversity training at regular intervals;
- working with providers to ensure services are accessible, culturally sensitive and appropriate to meet service user needs, and
- ensure there is a comprehensive programme of impact assessments to be carried out for SP.

12 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- staff will be well equipped to assess if services are able to meet diverse needs;
- potential barriers to diverse groups can be addressed ;
- governance and scrutiny arrangements will be strengthened through a better understanding of equality and diversity; and
- the physical accessibility of services will be assessed.

13 The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented within six months of publication of this report.

⁶ 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.

Recommendations

Recommendation

R2 Improve access to the programme and information relating to services by:

- improving frontline awareness, signposting and the customer experience at all customer access points;
- putting in place regular checks with service users to ensure access to services is improving;
- ensuring the council builds on the success of involving service users in procurement approaches to commission new 'access to housing' services;
- working with providers to assess the level of potential Fairer Charging take up and to actively promote Fairer Charging to target groups;
- ensuring stakeholders are involved in developing and shaping plans to improve access to housing;
- taking action to progress actions to improve move-on, including clear monitoring and updates of outcomes following actions, and
- ensuring information on how to complain is widely promoted and regular reports to governance groups are provided on outcomes and learning following complaints.

14 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- vulnerable people will find it easier to find out about information on services and know what choices they have;
- information will be targeted more effectively;
- access will be assessed from a service user perspective; and
- access to services will be improved.

15 The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented within six months of publication of this report.

Recommendation

R3 Improve opportunities for service user involvement in the delivery and development of the programme by:

- improving and formalising arrangements for the involvement of carers and advocates in the delivery and development of the programme;
- ensuring all service users have an opportunity to participate in a range of ways and that those not currently represented are better engaged;
- implementing the arrangements for the involvement of service users in contract monitoring; and
- ensuring feedback to service users is timely and regular updates and monitoring of progress against the strategy is reported.

16 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- service users understand the programme better;
- all service users have opportunities to influence and shape the programme through appropriate and formalised arrangements; and

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented within three months of publication of this report.

Recommendation

R4 Strengthen the approach to achieving value for money by:

- ensuring all stakeholders are clear about the approach being taken to achieving VFM;
- reporting on the outcomes achieved from the renewed approach to VFM; and
- ensuring there is a focus on efficiencies by putting in place targets and making the links between finance to performance.

17 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- able to demonstrate the efficiencies and value for money that is being delivered;
- where savings are planned they can be re-invested into new priorities.

18 The implementation of this recommendation will have medium impact with low costs. This should be implemented within three months of the publication of this report.

Recommendations

Recommendation

R5 Improve performance reporting and outcome monitoring of the programme by:

- ensuring reporting arrangements capture the outcomes the programme delivers for service users;
- developing local performance indicators to monitor delivery of the programme;
- ensuring all future work is included in the forward plan for the SCG and CB to ensure they are able to effectively plan;
- re-shaping the service plan to ensure it is an effective tool for monitoring purposes and it is focused on outcomes;
- making performance reports easy to understand and helpful particularly for the non SP expert;
- reporting on the outcomes from the improved approach to quality assessment,;
- streamlining the approach to contract management to minimise the burden on providers where possible;
- identifying and monitoring existing related and joint targets with all relevant partner agencies, and
- reviews of progress of the five year plan being included in the forward plan for SCG and CB.

19 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- areas of achievement and under-achievement will be known;
- all stakeholders will know how the programme is performing;
- progress against shared targets will be known; and
- the Council can intervene if remedial action becomes necessary.

20 The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented within six months of the publication of this report.

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

Dates of inspection: 12 January 2009

Report

Context

- 22** Bradford has a diverse population and the⁷ mid year census update in 2006 recorded a population of 493,100 with 27 per cent from minority ethnic communities (national average 10 per cent), of whom 86 per cent are of Asian heritage. The district has a large young population with 23 per cent under 16. In line with national trends there has also been an increase in the number of older people – between 1971 and 2004 the number of people over 85 increased from 3,705 to 7,781. Overall Bradford population levels are forecast to rise over the next few years.
- 23** Historically Bradford was dominated by the textile industry, and was the centre of the West Riding wool Industry. This has however declined and the main employers are now in areas such as finance, retail, electronics and manufacturing. Companies located in the city include, the Yorkshire Building Society, Bradford and Bingley plc, Abbey/Group, Provident Financial plc, Morrison's supermarkets, Grattan Mail Order, Pace Micro, Filtronic, NG Bailey, Manufacturing, Denso Marston, CIBA Chemicals
- 24** In terms of deprivation, Bradford is ranked 52 out of 354 authorities, where 1 is the most deprived and 354 is the least⁸. Over a third of the area is in the 20 per cent most deprived in England and approximately 43 per cent of the population live in those areas. At 3.4 per cent, unemployment is higher than the national average of 2.4 per cent.
- 25** Claimants for unemployment benefit rose 4.5 per cent from the period July 2007 to July 2008 compared with the national average rise of 1.3 per cent.⁹

The locality

- 26** City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is in West Yorkshire, in the north of England and covers an area of some 141 square miles over Airedale, Wharfedale and the Worth Valley. The District includes Bradford City and the towns of Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Ilkley.

The Council

- 27** No political party has overall control of the Council, the Labour party have 36 seats, Conservative party 35, Liberal Democrat 14, the Green Party with 3 seats and British National Party 2. Bradford has transferred its housing stock in a large scale voluntary transfer to In Communities (following a name change previously Bradford Community Housing Trust). A Care Trust, established as a partnership between the Council and the Primary Care Trust with pooled budgets, has responsibility for delivering care services for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems.

⁷ Source - ONS 2006 mid year estimate

⁸ ODPM Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

⁹ The Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber

Report

- 28 The Council employs the equivalent of 8,236 full time employees. In 2008/09 the annual net council budget was £408.6 million of which £5.5 million was allocated to housing and £108.3 million to social services.
- 29 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council acts as the administering authority for the Supporting People programme in its area. The Council works in partnership with Bradford and Airedale Primary Care Trust (tPCT) and the West Yorkshire Probation Service.

The Supporting People programme

- Supporting People funding available in 2008/09 is £19.21 million and to fulfil its role as the administering authority the Council received an administration grant of £316,800 in 2008/09 and there was additional funding of £280,000 provided by the Council.
- 30 The service is located within the Adult Services Directorate. It was relocated there in July 2007. Previously and at the time of the last inspection it was located within the Regeneration and Housing Directorate as a joint service of Supporting People and Access to Housing functions. It consists of a team of 16 staff made up of one lead officer, one Service Development and Research Manager, one Finance and IT Manager, one Research Coordinator, five Service Development Officers and seven admin and finance staff.
- 31 Unit costs per household unit for the services that are commissioned are lower than the regional averages, when community alarms and sheltered housing are excluded. The average 2007/08 unit costs of services in Bradford were £144.68 compared to the regional average of £157.40.¹⁰
- 32 The highest cost service, at £585.73 per unit per week, is an accommodation-based service for people with learning disabilities. The lowest cost services are community alarm services at 0.76p.
- 33 In total the programme funds 11,481 units of accommodation-based support through 301 contracts, 361 units of floating support and 200 units covered by the Home Improvement Agency. Three-quarters of the services are for vulnerable older people in the shape of sheltered housing and community alarms. A breakdown of current spending shows:
- a high level of expenditure on services for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems;
 - low levels of floating support across all client groups; and
 - no specific Supporting People funded services for older people with mental health problems.

¹⁰ Source - Bradford SP 2007/08

- 34 The Bradford MDC Supporting People programme was previously inspected in September 2005 and again in June 2007. The inspection report in 2005, assessed the Council as providing a poor, no star service with uncertain prospects for improvement and poor, and in 2007 the service was assessed as a no star service with poor prospects for improvement. This re-inspection report tracks progress against areas highlighted for improvement and is set in the context of the performance of comparator Councils in this, the sixth year of programme implementation, and against the standards of a revised and updated Key Line of Enquiry (April 2008). It focuses on determining the effectiveness of current service delivery, the value for money achieved from existing commissioning and contracting arrangements as well as the outcomes that have been achieved for vulnerable people.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

What has the programme aimed to achieve?

35 The vision and key priorities for the Supporting People programme in Bradford are set out in the Council's new five-year strategy 2008 to 2013. The vision is:

- 'We will ensure that housing related support is used as a means to successfully transform our district into a place where communities thrive and where vulnerable people are confident and supported to make a full and positive contribution.'

36 Its key priorities are as follows.

- To place the needs, choice and aspirations of service users at the centre of our vision to benefit individuals and the community as a whole.
- To ensure housing related supports services are developed and managed through multi agency strategic partnerships (including the voluntary and private sectors) to ensure a strategic and integrated response across services.
- To ensure future housing related support services are developed strategically in line with identified local need.
- To develop and promote accessible and responsive housing related support services which aim to meet the needs of all communities within Bradford District.
- To establish and maintain cost-effective and efficient procurement, commissioning and administration of housing related support services, that do not duplicate nor increase unnecessary bureaucracy, but ensure the delivery of high quality and value for money housing related services.

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

37 The assessment was based on the following key issues.

- Governance and partnerships.
- Grant compliance, strategy and needs.
- Delivery arrangements.
- Commissioning, procurement and quality assurance.
- Value for money.
- Service user involvement.
- Access to services and information.
- Diversity.
- Outcomes for service users.

Governance and partnerships

38 The CLG¹¹ has set out the following structural arrangements for the governance, development and delivery of the Supporting People programme.

- Accountable Officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process.
- Inclusive forum: consults with service providers and service users.
- Core strategy group: proposes strategic direction, service review procedures and timetables and work needed to secure the effective and efficient delivery and development of the programme.
- Commissioning body: agrees strategic direction, compliance with grant conditions, outcomes of service reviews and monitors the delivery and development of the programme.
- Councillors: approve key decisions of the Commissioning Body.
- Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.

39 In the last inspection we found that weaknesses outweighed strengths. Despite good engagement from all partners in both the Commissioning Body (CB) and Strategic Core Group (SCG), we found that neither group had provided strategic direction or impetus to drive the programme forward. This was particularly disappointing as the recommendations contained in the previous inspection report gave clear direction as to the important areas where actions were required in a timely manner. Service user involvement and performance management were still underdeveloped and the programme had not progressed in important areas.

¹¹ CLG - Department of Communities and Local Government

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 40 In this inspection we found that strengths now outweigh weaknesses. There is clear corporate support for the programme and members are well informed and able to champion SP across the Council and among partners. The process for decision-making is now clear and there are strong governance arrangements in place through the CB and SCG. Relationships with service providers are positive and there is a strong provider forum and voice on the SCG. In general appropriate links are being made to key strategies among partners. However performance management arrangements are still developing and outcomes of the programme are yet to be comprehensively captured.
- 41 There is clear and demonstrable corporate support for the SP programme. The programme and what it is trying to achieve is clearly understood at a corporate level and its success is championed at the most senior levels within the Council by both members and officers. Regular performance clinic's specific to SP to track progress are chaired by the Chief Executive as a demonstration of the priority given to the programme and to ensure any barriers to improvement are promptly addressed. Additional temporary resources have been provided from the Council, for example on finance and data cleansing. Despite increasing financial demands on the Council there has been a commitment to continue to ringfence SP funding till 2011 to enable the commissioning plan to be fully implemented. This is helping to ensure progress is being made.
- 42 The profile of SP has been raised among councillors. There is cross party support for the programme and members are knowledgeable about SP. They regularly receive reports to the improvement committee for Social Care regarding updates on progress since the last inspection. Two councillors have been identified as link officers for the programme and they meet frequently with the SP team to track progress. There is an increased confidence among councillors with the SP programme. They can see improved relations with service providers and a culture of greater openness and transparency developing that was previously absent and had led to a lack of awareness by members previously regarding progress at the last inspection.
- 43 Housing related support is effectively championed at all levels within the Council and the Local Strategic partnership (LSP). The portfolio holder for Social Care is knowledgeable about SP and acts as a champion of the programme, he is vice chair of the health and wellbeing partnership whose membership also includes the chair of the commissioning body. In addition there is representation from user and voluntary sector groups, including the chair of the provider forum. SP was one of the key partners who attended a workshop to agree the indicators for the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and one of the national SP indicators (NI141)¹² is included in the basket of 35 chosen for the LAA. This ensures that links are appropriately made between the district's priorities and the needs of vulnerable people supported through the SP programme.

¹² National Indicator 141 measures the percentage of service users who move on from supported accommodation in a planned way.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 44 There is a clear, well understood process for decision-making within the CB and SCG. Roles and responsibilities within the SCG and CB are clear with SCG reviewing and debating the detail and making recommendations to the CB for decision. Meetings are timetabled in sequence to enable recommendations from the SCG to be considered and decisions made by the CB. This utilises the expertise of all stakeholders at the SCG and ensures informed decisions are made at an appropriate level.
- 45 There is a strong Commissioning Body (CB) in place providing clear leadership and direction for the programme. At second tier level in their respective organisations, the partners on the commissioning body provide representation at a sufficiently senior level to enable commissioning decisions to be made. Key partner attendance is strong and is monitored regularly. Named deputies cover when CB members are unable to attend. The CB is supported by a knowledgeable and credible accountable officer and lead officer who have been able to translate the commissioning bodies drive into action. Service users and advocacy groups attend the CB and there is evidence of their influence at this level. There is also a representative from the LSP project team who attends to make the necessary links. This has ensured the commissioning body is more effective.
- 46 The SCG is well managed and effective. It is chaired by the assistant director for Housing and has participation from all stakeholders with regular strong attendance in the majority of cases. Attendance is monitored at every meeting and non attendance is addressed where it occurs. A balance is struck between efficient management of comprehensive agendas and allowing for meaningful discussion and appropriate challenge. Detailed and informative reports are provided to the SCG to facilitate discussion and participation is encouraged and evident from all partners including service users and providers who have a strong voice on the SCG. This demonstrates good partnership working and enables effective progress to be made.
- 47 Governance arrangements have been further strengthened with the inclusion of service users. Service users attend both the CB and SCG and have received training and support to enable them to participate fully. They have an advocate who meets with them before meetings to discuss agenda items and to help them prepare any question or comments. The service users have been elected from the Service User Involvement Group (SUIG) and service users take items to and from the group to ensure an effective feedback mechanism exists. Examples of their influence include reshaping of the service specifications for new services to enhance employment opportunities for service users and minimising the use of jargon in reports and minutes to make them more accessible. Their involvement helps maintain a constant focus on the aims of the programme.
- 48 The Accountable Officer is well placed to champion the SP programme at a strategic level. He is a senior manager within Adult Social Care his responsibilities include commissioning and business development. He has been instrumental in ensuring there is sufficient representation from all partners at the CB and the SCG. Where non attendance has occurred this has been promptly addressed and raised with the relevant partners. He is well regarded and respected among partners and within the Council and is able to influence appropriately as a result. He ensures there is a link between SP and wider social care initiatives and SP staff receive, and regularly feature in, his monthly newsletter to all staff.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 49 Strong links have been maintained with housing through having the Assistant Director, Housing Strategy as chair of the SCG. Although the SP function is located within Adult Services, having a senior member of staff with housing knowledge and expertise chair the SCG is a benefit. He takes the role seriously and did meet with providers prior to taking on the role to better understand their issues. He brings access and links to and from a whole range of housing related issues relevant to SP. These include links to appropriate strategies such as housing and homelessness and to ongoing initiatives such as the current review of the housing allocations policy and access to capital funding required to support revenue bids to meet commissioning priorities.
- 50 Links between Supporting People and Health are strong. The planning of the change programme for people with learning disabilities and the implications for Supporting People in Bradford show evidence of strong partnership working across the PCT and the Council, with commitment, knowledge and skills evident on the part of the lead PCT learning disabilities commissioner. The PCT also made a significant financial contribution of £1.8 million to assist with the retraction programme which represents the PCT's commitment to joint working.
- 51 Probation is a consistently supportive partner in the SP programme. Strong partnership working between the SP team, Probation and the Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Group has resulted in the development of new services to support the rehabilitation of substance misusing offenders which will improve provision in this previously under-resourced sector. Their pro-active involvement has resulted in proposals for the development of a range of improved services for offenders. The recent addition of the Head of the Youth Offending Service to the SCG ensures offender services for young people will be appropriately highlighted. These partnerships have a positive impact on re-offending and supporting offenders to re-establish themselves in the community.
- 52 Service providers are positive about recent improvements in relationships. They are now clear about what the programme expects of providers and their need to evidence improvements in service quality. They report a renewed confidence in the SP team and its leadership. They are confident that their views are listened to and respected. Changes have happened following their involvement, such as their significant concerns regarding the unringfencing of the SP Grant from April 2009. While they acknowledge there are still improvements required to the programme the difference now in the relationship is a willingness to change things on the basis of service provider feedback.
- 53 There is a strong service provider led forum in place. The provider forum has been strengthened more recently by the joining together of two separate groups to provide one unified provider voice. They have five representatives on the SCG elected from the provider forum who provide regular and comprehensive feedback from and to the SCG. They have a healthy relationship with the SP team who are very willing to engage and regularly attend the forum to provide updates on request. Service providers determine the agenda for their meetings. This represents an appropriate challenge and demonstrates a constructive relationship between service providers and the SP programme.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 54 The voluntary and community sector (VCS) has a strong voice within the SP programme. The majority of service providers are from the voluntary and community sector. Work has been carried out with smaller providers to build their capacity and 'buddying' arrangements have been facilitated with other service providers. The Council clearly recognises the importance of the VCS and provides funding for services independently of SP which have been complementary to SP funded services, such as the funding of the 'Choice Advocacy' service for service users. The VCS has a strong voice in the LSP and there is currently a review of the Third Sector which consists of three stands one of which, 'resourcing of the third sector', is led by the Accountable Officer. This ensures appropriate links can be made to complement the work of SP.
- 55 The service plan is more effective as a management tool rather than as a method for tracking progress. Traffic lighting is not effective, it highlights actions as red that are yet to be completed rather than simply those where work is yet to be completed and the target date has been exceeded. This means that progress is not easily tracked and the benefits the programme may be delivering for service users are yet to be fully demonstrated.
- 56 Performance reports are basic and not very helpful for those less knowledgeable about SP. Performance information is provided on key indicators such as KPI1 (sustained independent living), KPI2 (planned move-on), SPI1 (availability), SPI2 (utilisation) and SPI4 (throughput). The indicators being measured are limited and there is no outcome reporting or use of local indicators or impact on shared targets reported. This means that only a limited picture is being provided of what the programme is achieving and this will impact on the ability of the Council to assess, report and share progress with partners, providers and service users.
- 57 The forward plan for the SCG and CB does not currently identify the future work of the governance groups. The current forward plan is from June 2008 to April 2009. There is clarity over when future work is likely to require decisions, for example, in relation to sector reviews and commissioning in line with the agreed priorities however they have yet to be included in the plan. As it stands currently it is not able to be used as an effective work planner for the CB or SCG and this will hinder future progress planning and reporting.

Grant compliance, strategy and needs

- 58 In the last inspection we found that this was an area where there were more weaknesses than strengths. The five-year strategy was sufficiently robust to act as a vehicle for the programme's delivery although the absence of any planned reviews of the document were of concern. No funding had been withdrawn from ineligible services or made available to remodel and expand services, although eligibility criteria had been applied across all services and a retraction plan put in place. This slow progress was exacerbated by steady state contracts being neither agreed nor implemented. Progress had been made on updating needs information, including research into the needs of potential service users for whom there were currently no Supporting People funded services. There had been no concerted effort to improve access to move-on accommodation.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 59 In this inspection there are now more strengths than weaknesses. The retraction of significant ineligible funding has been completed twelve months prior to the original plan. A new five year strategy that has been developed based on robust needs information provides a focus for improvement. Commissioning priorities have been agreed and new services are now being commissioned. Sector reviews are underway which serves to update and refresh needs information. A move on strategy has been developed with an action plan, although outcomes from this planned approach have yet to be demonstrated.
- 60 Eligibility criteria are well understood and, where ineligibility is identified, funding has now been withdrawn. Eligibility criteria were agreed and used as a basis for a £4.5 million retraction plan of ineligible costs (affecting 37 providers). The shortfall in funding for those services following retraction was met jointly by the PCT and the Council demonstrating their commitment to this process and the SP Programme. The retraction plan was completed twelve months earlier than the original forecast, reversing a previous planned deficit in funding and enabling funding to be made available for new services from April 2008.
- 61 The Supporting People five-year strategy (2008 to 2013) is clear and sets out objectives, supply and need based on updated needs information. It has been revised and was approved in September 2008. It includes clear aims, vision and objectives for the programme, with links made to partners and other relevant strategies. It includes a comprehensive analysis of needs and supply information to identify the current position and develop plans for taking the programme forward. Partners, service providers and staff are clear about what the strategy wants to achieve.
- 62 There has been extensive consultation throughout the development of the strategy with commissioners, providers and service users involved in agreeing priority areas. The strategy is based on a comprehensive needs analysis and was consulted on with key stakeholders. The strategy draws on and consolidates a number of key documents that have been developed and consulted on earlier in 2008. These were brought together at a training day in April 2008 for representatives from the Commissioning Body and Strategic Core Group, which included service users. This approach to the development of the strategy provided all stakeholders with the opportunity to shape the five-year strategy.
- 63 The strategy provides a focus for delivery of the programme. The strategy is focussed on increasing choice for users. This includes providing a significant increase in the amount of floating support available, increasing the quality of support or provision and addressing the difficulties faced by people moving on from supported accommodation. It seeks to drive quality improvements in provision, as well as setting out a programme of sector reviews and is supported by a costed commissioning plan covering priorities over the next three years, 2008 to 2011. An easy read version is available on the website. Stakeholders can see clearly what the programme is seeking to achieve and where its priorities lie.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 64 A comprehensive needs survey was completed in April 2008 covering all client groups. This has supported the development of the five-year strategy. Consultants were appointed to carry out the needs analysis and a robust approach was adopted resulting in high quality needs information. Appropriate contributions were made by service users, planners and stakeholders to the development of the needs analysis. This analysis also included, demographic changes, changes in waiting lists, housing, health and social services over time, comparisons of homelessness numbers over time and results from two surveys of sheltered housing previously carried out. This has identified gaps in current services to meet those needs and provided a comprehensive basis on which to agree the priorities for the five year strategy.
- 65 Sector reviews provide a formal opportunity to bring needs information up to date. A programme of sector reviews is identified in the five year strategy. The sector reviews will start to provide a clearer steer on the suitability of existing provision to meet identified needs and enable the reconfiguration or re-commissioning of services if required. The first sector review of young people's services identified that all but one of the services were strategically relevant and although improvements were required to many services there was no need to massively re-shape services. This approach will ensure that in the future services will be in place that meet strategic priorities and locally identified needs.
- 66 Information on the needs of local people is beginning to be shared more effectively in Bradford. The needs survey carried out for SP was used to inform the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA). Needs information is being centralised to ensure it is accessible and provides a consistent approach to informing strategies within the district. The Bradford Observatory is being developed with the PCT. It is a database identifying demographics, health, and social needs as well as data on crime and disorder and information from the recently completed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It will therefore become a useful tool to ensure up to date needs information is informing the planning and delivery of services.
- 67 Commissioning priorities have been agreed and are being put in place. The commissioning plan is starting to be implemented with the first services out to tender currently. Services being commissioned will provide support to 55 service users over three schemes by February 2009 and a further 356 service users by the end of 2010. Pilot services are being developed in the interim to address other service shortfalls and to provide opportunities to explore new and innovative ways of working. Funding is in place and the ringfence of SP funding has been agreed to ensure the commissioning priorities can be addressed.
- 68 Plans to reshape provision to best meet identified needs are robust and based on good needs information. There is starting to be a shift away from accommodation based services towards floating support in line with the priorities within the five year strategy. To date limited remodelling of services has taken place. However there is now a focus on ensuring more floating support services are available and a recent opportunity to reconfigure 400 accommodation based services to become floating support has been taken in recognition of that identified need. This is starting to shift the balance of provision resulting in a wider choice of provision being made available.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 69** The Council has put in place a comprehensive move-on strategy and action plan. There is a clear understanding of the issues related to move-on. An action plan has been put in place to deal with the main barriers. Actions include a dedicated move on co-ordinator to focus specifically on this issue, a tenancy ready accredited scheme to identify and certify that people are ready to move on. The rent bond guarantee has been extended from 30 to 85 units, and there has been an expansion of floating support services. This provides a clear framework for tackling difficulties preventing people moving on from short term supported accommodation services into general needs housing.
- 70** However actions to make move-on easier for vulnerable people have had limited success to date. It is still early days for the tenancy ready accreditation scheme, only a small number of providers operate their own tenancy ready scheme. The move-on coordinator and staff employed to improve access to move-on accommodation have only just been appointed. Measures are not in place to monitor the number of people who are ready to move on and ensure they move as soon as they are ready. Performance measures do show that the throughput of people exceeds targets set, indicating that people are moving on. However there is no data available at this time that shows if new tenancies are being maintained over time. Only limited outcomes from this planned approach to move-on have been delivered to date and success has yet to be fully demonstrated.

Delivery arrangements

- 71** In the last inspection we found weaknesses in the programme's administration were largely due to ineffective management. There was a lack of constructive and effective management of the programme, exacerbated by the ineffective use of performance plans, monitoring and reporting. The performance of the team lacked clear and effective direction and focus. Those weaknesses had not been identified and challenged at a corporate level and the Council had failed to effectively monitor and manage performance, including that against the recommendations from the first inspection.
- 72** In this inspection we found that there are more strengths than weaknesses. Leadership of the programme has been strengthened and team members have the required skills. The team has benefited from the move into Adult Services. There is a strong commitment to improve the administration of the SP programme and monitoring of performance has been carried out at a senior level within the Council. Staff are supported, have been trained and receive regular supervision. Safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable adults and young people are strong and SP is well linked with training and information available for service providers. Fairer charging promotion has been recently carried out, although this has not been targeted at those who may benefit the most. The service plan has some weaknesses and is not focussed on outcomes.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 73** The leadership of the SP programme has been strengthened. A new lead officer was appointed in April 2008. She has brought a number of skills to the team and there is now a clear direction and identification of priorities and informed decisions are now being made. Improvements in leadership have been welcomed by the team, service providers, service users, councillors and the Council. Although relatively recent, improvements have been rapid in the time since the appointment of the lead officer. Along with support and direction from the CB and the accountable officer, there has been a refocus on priorities and credibility has been restored to the programme as a result. The programme now has greater momentum and purpose.
- 74** Team members have the required skills to manage the programme. There are a range of skills already in the team such as contract management, finance and IT. Plans are underway to restructure the team to enable them to be more outward focussed and to ensure they have the necessary skill set to meet the future challenges. In addition to the dedicated SP team the programme has also benefited from relevant corporate expertise where required, such as procurement expertise in setting up the preferred supplier list. This combined with improved leadership is ensuring that progress is being made.
- 75** The SP team is benefiting from its move into Adult Services. The team is benefiting from improved senior management support and direction in Adult Services by both the Accountable Officer but also the Director of Adult Services who is also the CB chair. Both understand and recognise and value the importance of SP. There are better links to safeguarding arrangements both in adult and children's services which have helped strengthen the links with SP. Links with the Housing department have been maintained and there is good joint working between the departments. This effective working is resulting in a better response to meeting the needs of vulnerable service users.
- 76** Progress on the improved SP work plan is regularly monitored by staff and managers. The plan has been strengthened and now includes all recommendations from previous inspections; links to the SP Strategy and the Community Strategy, 'The Big Plan'. The team track their progress against the plan through regular supervisions and the Lead Officer and Accountable officer meet regularly to have a more detailed review of actions to track positive progress as well as areas that still need to be actioned. Evidence of improvement is validated by the corporate improvement team before the plan can be updated. This ensures all team members and partners are clear on what is expected of them.
- 77** The service plan has some weaknesses; it is not costed or fully focussed on outcomes. Outcomes to be achieved are noted although often it is outputs that are recorded rather than outcomes. The plan allocates responsibility for actions but does not highlight if any resources other than staff are required to deliver it. This makes it difficult to assess if the plan is achievable.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 78** Safeguarding arrangements for both children's and adults' services are well linked, appropriate and relevant. Systems ensure through communication with SP staff that adults or young people receiving SP funded services would be clearly identified where safeguarding concerns are raised. Records are appropriately maintained and concerns followed through to a conclusion which could involve a range of activities, such as staff training or working with service users. The two lead officers for safeguarding, adults and children, meet regularly to exchange information. Both officers reported that over the last 12 months links and contacts with the SP team had improved, covering both cases and themes. All but one SP staff member have received awareness training in the last year regarding protection and abuse issues. SP have links to both the Children and Adult safeguarding boards. All cases we reviewed with one exception, which has taken too long, had been dealt with appropriately.
- 79** Safeguarding training for SP Providers has increased. The 'People to People' training pilot has been offered to service providers. They also have access to the menu of courses provided by the safeguarding teams which is highlighted on the website for service providers. The safeguarding magazine 'Monkey Business' is sent out to all providers to ensure they are kept up to date with current initiatives and or changes in practice. Safeguarding is now embedded in the SP contract management and review to ensure that providers are aware of safeguarding and are responding appropriately.
- 80** Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)¹³ are in place and working well. MAPPA arrangements are very well managed. In Bradford, there are effective protocols and all the relevant agencies are reliably and continuously represented, including social services, housing and mental health. Where appropriate, members of the Supporting People team have been involved in these at an operational level.
- 81** A renewed approach to fairer charging has recently been launched. A new Fairer Charging leaflet was developed and distributed to all providers, libraries, post offices, frontline offices and agencies. The SP programme has been engaged in a major take-up initiative for fairer charging in partnership with Age Concern (October 2008 to March 2009) which has seen fairer charging information extended to include community centres, GPs surgeries and advice centres. Age Concern has agreed to promote fairer charging in their publications sent to a high number of older people in Bradford.
- 82** Fairer charging promotion has not been targeted on those most likely to qualify for assistance. To date take up of fairer charging has been low with only 69 applications received, only 31 of which have resulted in fairer charging being applied. Information has been sent out on a large scale but has not been targeted at those who may be more likely to need it or as part of a wider campaign to address benefit maximisation.

¹³ Multi Agency Protection Panel arrangements (MAPPA) were set up in England and Wales in 2001. Police and probation take the leading role with other agencies such as housing health and social services. Agencies share information to ensure accurate assessments of risk are made about potentially dangerous offenders and plans put in place to robustly manage those risks.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 83** SP are engaged with the Council's developing approach to the personalisation agenda. They have engaged an independent consultant to support and work with the Council on a transformation approach to the introduction of personalisation for adult services. SP will be considered within a number of the planned workstreams such as finance, IT, and how users engage with this within Bradford. This is a priority for the Council and national indicator NI 130 on self directed support has been included in the LAA in recognition of this. This is developing and is work in progress. A report has yet to go to the CB for discussion and agreement on this issue. However relevant SP officers are involved in the developments so that they will be well placed to influence and inform the approach.
- 84** Bradford SP is well engaged and benefiting from cross authority working. This includes a recently developed regional service user group. The lead officer chairs the regional housing support group (RHSG) previously known as the regional implementation group (RIG)). There is an action plan in place for RHSG and Bradford is leading on commissioning and the approach to procurement. Other staff are engaged in the sub groups on finance and contract management and Bradford hosts the regional co-ordinator for Yorkshire and Humberside.
- 85** A lot of work has been done to improve the quality of data held on the SPLS.¹⁴ One of the benefits of the improvements in data quality has been the identification of over £1 million underspending annually on subsidy contracts which, although contributing to the overall underspend, is now accurate and any increase in available funds can be used to meet identified priorities. An internal audit identified a number of weaknesses with the way SP is administered as a result of the previous poor data quality. The majority of recommendations in the report have been accepted and implemented to ensure all the weaknesses are addressed. This means that data is more reliable and returns and reports are more accurate
- 86** Finances are closely controlled and regularly monitored at appropriate levels within the governance bodies of the Supporting People programme and within the Council. Reports are provided monthly to the Strategic Core Group with a summary for the Commissioning Body. Financial projection reports are updated and provided quarterly to the Commissioning Body. Projections include the latest information on finance and planning is based on up to date financial information.
- 87** Risk is reported on a quarterly basis to the CB through a formalised risk register. The overall performance of the SP programme has been identified as a corporate risk and is reported to each corporate performance clinic which is attended by the Council's corporate management team. Supporting People programme risks have been identified to ensure continuity of the key functions, in particular around maintaining payments to providers, and these form part of the corporate business continuity management.

¹⁴ SPLS - Supporting People Local System - this is the IT system for SP.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

Commissioning, procurement and quality assurance

- 88** In the last inspection we found that there were more weaknesses than strengths in this area. Steady state contracts were not yet agreed or in place; the complaints system was basic and not well publicised; appeals were not yet resolved; outcomes for service users were not captured; and there were limited outputs from cross-authority work. Service reviews although completed in accordance with the local definition and reported to meet the extended CLG deadline for Bradford of 30 June 2006, needed additional work relating to value for money and eligibility after that date. The service reviews were fully complete after the extended deadline in December 2006. A future contract monitoring and review process had been agreed to carry quality assurance forward.
- 89** In this inspection we found that there is now a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Steady state contracts are in place and priorities are being addressed through the commissioning of new services. An efficient approach to procurement has been developed which has service provider support and involves service users. There is a robust approach to contract management developing and a mechanism for reviewing risks to services on a regular basis. Sector reviews are helping to inform the best fit of existing services alongside the strategic assessment matrix (SAM). There is a focus on driving improvements which is raising the quality of services. However the new approach to quality assurance has yet to fully demonstrate its effectiveness and there are few services that have been visited more recently as part of the renewed approach to contract management. Improvement planning is not widespread and is not currently closely monitored. Decommissioning of services to date has been limited and not all have been satisfactory and there have yet to be any gains from a shared approach to contract management with other commissioners.
- 90** The programme has now developed clear commissioning priorities and has begun to commission new services to plug gaps in services. The commissioning priorities were identified on the basis of a robust assessment of needs completed in April 2008. A three year commissioning plan has been drawn up and the first year priorities are starting to be commissioned. In addition a range of temporary enhancements to provision are being made. Services are now being put into place that address previous gaps, provide greater opportunities for vulnerable people and enables the Council to meet its' objectives.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 91 The council has developed an efficient approach to SP procurement. This has received elected member approval and approved supplier list is being developed. This includes only accredited suppliers where financial and organisational viability has been checked and all service providers have to demonstrate they have experience in the sector and can deliver quality services that meet quality QAF¹⁵ level B. In addition to going to the approved list, services are advertised on the SCMS portal¹⁶. Trained service users are involved in the selection of contractors (see section on service user involvement). This approach helps retain existing local specialist providers while still encouraging new providers, drives up the quality of services and ensures that the procurement time can be shortened.
- 92 Service providers have confidence in the agreed approach to procurement. It is relatively straightforward for them to become included on the preferred provider list and this will enable them to sign up to future contracts and bid for new services if they so wish. Not all providers have yet applied to be on the list and some work is required to ensure providers are clear of the need to be on the list, not just for new developments, but for existing contract renewals. However this approach does provide some stability in the market while still enabling growth and demonstrates a commitment to support local and smaller providers. The benefits of previous support to providers are starting to pay off as quality levels are driven up in SP funded contracts.
- 93 A robust approach to contract management is developing. All contracts now are steady state. All services are now subject to an annual review of their service. Where possible contract expiry dates have been determined to coincide with sector reviews so that any remodelling or reshaping of services can take place following reviews. There is a rolling programme of sector reviews which has recently commenced. Service provider returns are monitored quarterly against contract requirements and risk assessed. Any schemes with a risk categorised as red (high) or (amber) are identified for immediate or possible visit. This provides an efficient approach ensuring all contract are closely monitored and targets visiting resources according to risk.
- 94 The programme is focussed on improving the quality of services. No providers are currently assessed at less than level C and 24.4 per cent of the 304 services are rated as B. This number is expected to increase when the annual assessment of older people's services is complete and indications show the target of having 33 per cent of all services at level B by March 2009 is likely to be met. Where improvements have been required the SP team has facilitated the sharing of good practice among providers. Providers do work well together and the SP team has brokered a more joined up approach to provider involvement with the merging of two provider forums into one. This ensures there is a focus on improvement and provides opportunities to share what works well.

¹⁵ QAF - Is the quality assessment framework used to assess the level of quality in Supporting People funded services. Levels are from A to D with A being the highest and D being the minimum standard. If services were at level D that would be below the minimum acceptable standards.

¹⁶ SCMS portal - a public sector supplier and contract management website.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 95 Appropriate quality assurance measures have been put in place but have yet to demonstrate their effectiveness. As part of the new annual contract monitoring and sector review arrangements a sample, around 10 per cent, of review reports are to be examined by the lead officer and a smaller sample by the Accountable Officer. However few reports have yet reached this stage. This moderation process is designed to ensure that staff follow the new procedures consistently and assessments are accurate. Managers have also accompanied staff on a number of validation visits as part of this process to ensure it is robust. To date the quality assurance processes have not been used to validate the effectiveness of this new approach.
- 96 Only a relatively small number of services have been visited recently. Validation visits are carried out in a variety of circumstances. For example where a risk is highlighted through quarterly monitoring; as part of the annual contract monitoring (to validate increased or reduced QAF performance); and as part of sector reviews where a sample of services will be visited. To date this amounts to a relatively small proportion with only 23 of the 302 contracted services visited although the number is not yet known for the annual contract monitoring. All services must be visited within a three-year period and the number of schemes visited each year will increase as the sector and annual contract reviews progress. However this means that to date only a limited check has been carried out on front line services.
- 97 There have yet to be any shared approaches to contract management developed between SP and social care services. The benefits of SP being in adult social care have yet to be translated into a shared approach to contract management of providers who are jointly funded by SP and social care. There is a commitment to explore this and there has been a sharing of expertise among teams on the approach to contract management but this has yet to be put into practice. There is an opportunity to minimise resources required through contract management as a result of more joint working and a minimising of the burden of regulation on service providers but this has yet to be realised.
- 98 The first sector review of services for young people is providing a robust approach to identifying the strategic fit of services within identified priorities. It is currently nearing completion and the review has identified that all services are strategically relevant and the quality of services are improving. There is a clear and pragmatic rationale for the sector review programme. The approach brings together commissioners of services for particular client groups, makes a strategic assessment of services required based on need and draws a clear comparison with the range and volume of services available. Sector reviews provide the opportunity to take a strategic view of services to a particular client group across and beyond housing related support.
- 99 A new strategic assessment matrix (SAM) is being introduced to improve the way strategic relevance is assessed. The SAM is designed to assess services against the priority targets in the sustainable community strategy to ensure that they align with the wider community priorities. SAM is to be used as part of sector reviews to determine how much services contribute to strategic objectives and inform future procurement decisions. They are being applied to the services for young people currently undergoing a sector review. This provides a consistent and comprehensive way of determining if services are meeting local needs and priorities.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 100** Contracts are not yet based around outcomes. Nor do they yet include specific targets that align to the priorities in the sustainable community strategy or LAA¹⁷. A sub-group of service providers are to see how best this can be done in the next 12 months. Current contracts require service providers to complete returns for the CLG outcomes framework but there are no targets yet included in contracts to drive improvements in these areas. This means that it won't be possible to identify where outcomes are not being achieved and there is no basis for addressing non-compliance as a result.
- 101** Decommissioning of services to date has not been satisfactory due to the time taken to implement decisions and the outcomes from actions taken. For example, a decision was made to decommission a service in 2006 because of poor quality and ineligible services and yet funding was not actually withdrawn until June 2008. Extensions to the contract were agreed to enable service users to be relocated. When funding was finally withdrawn it is not clear how many of the 21 service users had been re-located and whether there were no longer any concerns regarding service users at this service. A decision was taken to decommission another service due to serious concerns regarding service user safety and the quality of support and yet that service is still being funded despite those serious concerns of risk to the service users. Reports to the Commissioning Body do not ensure an up to date picture is presented. This was recognised during the inspection and more robust reporting and monitoring mechanisms are being put in place. However delays to date have limited the opportunities to reshape some services.
- 102** The appeals process in place for providers is out of date. It is limited to appeals following service review or accreditation. The procedure was updated last in October 2007 but makes no reference to appeals providers may wish to make in relation to decommissioning decisions for example or following a sector review. It also makes reference to an outdated approach to service reviews. Service providers are not clear about their rights to challenge current decisions concerning the quality assessments of the services they provide and the contracts offered to them.
- 103** The Supporting People programme in Bradford is not commissioning any cross boundary services. These could be specialist services where demand is low or services provided to service users who choose to move out of their home area. The Council is in discussions with neighbouring councils through the regional group about the need for such services but no conclusions have been reached yet. This has limited the opportunities to develop a more co-ordinated approach.
- 104** Although there are clear procedures for monitoring the implementation of actions contained in improvement plans, no plans are currently being monitored. A spreadsheet is maintained to record and check that officers from the SP team are monitoring progress against any actions required. Links are made to their supervision plan. However, with only 24 per cent of service providers current rated as QAF level B, we would expect to see more current plans in place driving quality standards up. The use of improvement plans will rise as a result of the current sector and annual contract reviews.

¹⁷ LAA - this is the Local area agreement which is a set of 35 performance indicators agreed by the council and its partners which represent their priorities within Bradford, these will be monitored by the Local Strategic Partnership.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

Value for money

- 105** In the last inspection we found that weaknesses outweighed strengths. Value for money (VFM) and eligibility assessments had only recently been completed. Intentions were in place to utilise identified savings but these had not yet commenced. Within the value for money process there was a lack of balance in the consideration of the quality of services and their outcomes and how this was recorded and fed into the final judgement and decisions made. There was overall good budgetary planning and scrutiny.
- 106** In this inspection we found that there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. A new VFM methodology clearly defines how the assessment will be made bringing together cost, quality, performance and feedback from service users. Benchmarks show Bradford's unit costs to be lower than average compared with the region. Benchmarking data has been identified and is starting to be applied to services to make cost comparisons. Some benchmarking of administrative arrangements has been carried out. Plans are in place to utilise the underspend following retraction. However there are few outcomes to date from the recently agreed approach to VFM as it has only recently been applied and awareness of the approach is mixed. There are no efficiency targets in place and no evidence of efficiencies achieved to date. There has been no benchmarking of administration costs to demonstrate VFM.

How do costs compare?

- 107** Bradford's overall average unit costs of accommodation based services are lower than the regional average. In 2007/08 the average unit cost of services in Bradford was £144.68 compared to the Yorkshire and Humberside figure of £157.40. However there are differences across the range of client groups with average unit costs being cheaper in Bradford in six out of 11 comparisons. The highest weekly unit cost in Bradford is £585.73 accommodation-based service for people with learning disabilities and its lowest cost is £0.76 per unit per week for a community alarm service for older people in 2008/09.
- 108** A range of benchmarking information was used to compare unit costs for Bradford. This data was based on a small sample of providers' data on costs, national information from SITRA and some regional comparisons with other local authorities. It assesses the cost of services and levels of support and sets out parameters for high medium and low average costs.

How is value for money managed?

- 109** The VFM assessment methodology has been refreshed and is now clearly defined in the Contract Management Policy. It brings together cost, quality and performance with traffic light indicators and was based on good practice in this area from a high performing authority. It is aligned with the Council's VFM strategy. This provides a comprehensive and consistent approach to the assessment of VFM.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 110** The new VFM policy however has only been applied to a small proportion of services. It forms part of the contract management policy agreed in July 2008 but the VFM section was only agreed in September 2008. It is starting to be applied to services but until November 2008 only thirty five services (or 10 per cent) had been compared to the established benchmarks. Of those thirty five, nineteen were considered amber and two red, which indicated that twenty one services were over the highest benchmark set although to varying degrees, only one significantly and three were below the lowest benchmark. Costs were to be addressed with service providers as part of the sector reviews and changes agreed but to date there have been no outcomes from this renewed approach to the assessment of VFM. Earlier cost comparisons of services have been carried out as part of the service review process that concluded in 2006.
- 111** Service providers demonstrate mixed awareness and understanding of the new methodology. The team has taken action to improve provider awareness of the approach to VFM and benchmarking. A presentation was given to service providers as part of the preparation for the first sector review on young people's services, although this only represented a limited number of providers. Updates have been provided to the service provider forum through lead officer feedback. However this has not reached all the service providers as they expressed different levels of understanding. Without a full understanding service providers cannot properly self assess and take action to be properly prepared when their formal assessment is due.
- 112** Comparisons have been made to benchmark the size and function of the SP team with other similar authorities. There has been some benchmarking undertaken with others in relation to the size of the team and the roles within it. This benchmarking has been used to inform the proposed re-structure of the team which will include a reduction in administration functions alongside additional posts created to cover partnerships and service user involvement.
- 113** Benchmarking has not however been carried out to determine if use of the administration grant and additional Council resources provides VFM. The comparisons that have been made of the team have been comparisons of structure and not how spending compares and what is delivered in return. For example there has been no comparison of staff, accommodation or IT costs and what the programme delivers in return in terms of outputs, such as contract management, validation visits and service provider and user involvement and ultimately, what changes the programme has made in terms of improving quality and choice. In addition to the administration grant of £316,800 the Council provided an additional £280,000 for 2008/09 to fund the administration of the programme. This does not demonstrate that compared to others VFM is being achieved in the use of resources allocated to the administration of the programme.
- 114** The programme has plans to spend money released by retraction funding which have already commenced during 2008/09. £4.5 million of retracted funding to date is now being reinvested, some is being used to meet the previous overspend, approximately £1 million is committed to pilot services in 2008/09; a further £1 million is committed for commissioning priorities in 2008/09 with new services already commissioned and further services currently out to tender to be completed by March 2009. These are clearly identified and costed in a three-year commissioning priority plan.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

115 Bradford's SP programme has yet to demonstrate improved efficiencies from their approach to value for money. Although action has been taken to achieve improved quality and costs in the past, there has been no regular programme wide report of progress made. The SP programme does not currently have any efficiency targets in place. Historically it has not been in a position to do so and there is no evidence to date of how much efficiency gains have been achieved over previous years. There are proposals to include a 3 per cent Council wide vacancy factor into budgets for 2009/10. However, this would only be implemented for SP where it did not affect the overall delivery of the programme given its priority in the Council. This does not ensure there is a focus on achieving efficiencies or demonstrate what has been achieved to date.

Service user involvement

- 116** In the last inspection there were more weaknesses than strengths in this area, where service user involvement was still significantly underdeveloped. There was a commitment from the Supporting People programme to develop this but this had not yet produced tangible outputs and improvements for the programme. This was particularly disappointing as the recommendations from the previous inspection report highlighted this as an area in which speedy progress was needed. The involvement of service users in governance structures was not yet in place. Individual service user involvement in the reviews of their particular service had been robust, with clear outputs and improvements in the services they receive.
- 117** In this inspection we found there are more strengths than weaknesses. Service user involvement is valued and recognised. Plans have been put in place directly influenced by and agreed with service users. An annual survey is used to gather views and an independent advocacy agency is supporting the development of service user involvement in SP. There are several examples of changes following service user involvement and some positive outcomes for those service users who have been directly involved. Service users have been effectively involved in procuring new services. However there is currently no dedicated resource for service user involvement in the team and some proposals have yet to be progressed or actions taken as a result. Feedback to service users following their involvement has not been timely or sustained and some service user interests are yet to have a strong voice within SP
- 118** Service user involvement in Bradford is valued and their contribution is recognised. Events have been held to gather SP service user views such as the SP engagement event held in April 2008 exploring how services could be improved and gaps in services filled. Service users were involved in agreeing the five year strategy and identifying commissioning priorities. Service users are now closely involved in the governance structures for SP and a reward and recognition policy has been agreed which demonstrates the value placed on their involvement.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 119** Plans are in place, targets set and action has been taken following service user feedback. An annual survey is carried out of service users to gather feedback on their key issues. There was a good response rate in 2008 from service users with 30 per cent or 2068 returns received. A service user involvement strategy has been developed with clear targets established to enable the programme to deliver improved outcomes for service users. As a result these are some of the action that has been taken; the website has been improved; service users have been trained and supported to have an influential role in procurement decisions, which have led to increased floating support services and, service users have been involved in mystery shopping to test awareness of SP services.
- 120** Engaging independent advocates, BACC,¹⁸ to assist with enhancing service user capacity has brought significant benefits to the programme. They have been successful in facilitating several Service User Involvement Group (SUIG) meetings to date, 10 in total so far involving 75 service users from a range of client interest groups. They support service users to be involved in the governance arrangements and service users feel sufficiently confident and well informed to provide relevant and appropriate challenge at those meetings. BACC have been able to draw on their wide distribution and engagement network to promote housing related support among a whole range of forums and information is included on their website and regular newsletter. They produce two reports following each meeting detailing who attended and which client groups were represented and a summary of the key issues discussed. An easy read version of the reports are also produced.
- 121** Service users are effectively engaged in procurement and commissioning in a meaningful way. Service user involvement has already led to changes to the specification template used for commissioning services. Service users who express an interest in being involved in the procurement of new services are provided with training. Organisations tendering are asked to complete a presentation on a subject chosen by service users and they then ask questions to follow that up. Service users are involved in the evaluation and their decisions have a 20 per cent weighting as opposed to the paid staff who have 10 per cent. They then receive feedback on successful tenders and thanks for their involvement. This ensures a service user perspective is considered in the commissioning of and review of services
- 122** There are some positive outcomes achieved for service users as a result of their increased involvement in SP. At an individual level, service users have had their confidence increased and learnt new skills. They have been able to participate in a range of training, receive a reward for their involvement and have been able to share their experiences with other service users to help them improve their approach. Their involvement now in governance arrangements ensures there is a constant reminder of the focus of the programme. Organisations in other parts of the country are now approaching Bradford to learn from their approach.

¹⁸ BACC - Bradford Alliance for Community Care

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 123** There are a range of opportunities for service users to get involved and have their views represented at the SCG and CB. Representatives from the SUIG can take issues to and from the SCG and CB. SP is linked into a range of partnerships where service users are represented such as the learning disabilities and older people partnerships. Members of the SCG are linked to other service users interest groups, although service users themselves may not be directly represented at those interest groups. An update on service user involvement is provided in every SP newsletter and details of SUIG highlighted as well as in BACC publications.
- 124** However there are some service users interests not yet strongly represented. Although the majority of service user client groups now have a route into SP through the SUIG or partnership groups, this may not suit everyone. It does not currently represent all service user client groups. Some groups such as carers, offenders or those with substance abuse problems have a valuable contribution to make but they have yet to have a voice within SP. The SUIG while a useful forum will not be the way all service users choose to get engaged. This is something the SP programme is aware of and are taking steps to rectify this.
- 125** SP has sought to learn from service provider experiences in working with service users to improve their approach. For example, the policy for payments and reward for service users involved in activities or governance arrangements was developed on the basis of an existing policy from one service provider. This demonstrates a willingness to learn from others and use available expertise to enhance capacity to deliver improvements.
- 126** There are positive examples of service user involvement in services funded through SP. Services we visited as part of the inspection highlighted opportunities for service users to be involved in the running of services. In one scheme a service user representative was on the management committee and service users were participating in house meetings and providing feedback on services to ensure they were meeting their needs
- 127** However, there is currently no dedicated resource to develop and promote service user involvement within the team. This is being addressed in the proposed restructure. However the lack of capacity has contributed to the lack of improvements in some areas. For example progress following the appreciative enquiry event and service user survey has not been sufficient or effectively monitored by the governance groups or service users. An initial report was produced following the event but there has been no follow up to say what has changed as a result. Some issues identified by service users through the survey do not appear to be addressed anywhere in actions proposed. For example service users not feeling safe or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) service user perceptions that they are more likely to receive poorer services. This does not ensure sufficient progress is made in this important area.

- 128** Feedback to service users following their involvement has not been timely. There has been no formal feedback to service users following their participation in the survey to tell them what happened as a result. Actions have been progressed but service users have yet to be updated and feedback does not reach wider than the SUIG. Similarly there have been no updates for service users carried out following the positive engagement event in April 2008. There is a danger that as feedback is so late those who participated may no longer be in services and won't receive the feedback on where their views have led to changes being made. In addition any momentum or enthusiasm for change created following the positive engagement may be lost. This does not foster greater involvement by service users. Monitoring of the implementation of the strategy action plan does not take place currently. It is planned to take place at the SUIG in the future but has yet to happen. It is an important area and at the moment lacks the appropriate scrutiny and review to ensure progress is made.
- 129** Housing Strategy as a key partner within SP has yet to benefit from the engagement of service users through SP. Despite improved partnership working and better service user engagement in the SP programme it is disappointing to see a lack of service user engagement in the procurement process for access to housing advice and homelessness which is currently underway. Particularly in light of its link with the housing options trailblazer bid which will allow for radical reshaping and innovation in the way access to services are delivered. Currently the project board involved in the procurement process is limited and does not allow for a representation of wider views which would be useful to the process. This omission will impact on Supporting People service users.

Access to services and information

- 130** In the last inspection we found this was an area where there were more weaknesses than strengths. While the main information leaflet had been updated to include information on fairer charging and distributed to a wide range of service user outlets, a number of these were unable to adequately signpost user enquiries. No briefings had been delivered to ensure up-to-date understanding by current staff. The website is underdeveloped and not geared to the information needs of service users.
- 131** In this inspection we found there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Information for service users is comprehensive and available through the website and a range of outlets. Service users have provided feedback on information which has led to improvements. Action has been taken to improve awareness of SP services among frontline staff and new posts have been established to improve access to services. The website has been updated with additional features added. However awareness of and signposting to services is not strong. An improved response to customer queries has yet to be demonstrated following recent awareness raising and new posts being established. Not all stakeholders are involved in plans to reshape access to housing and support. Information about how to complain is not widely distributed and complaints received have not been dealt with adequately.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 132** Action has been taken to improve awareness of SP among front line service providers and informal access points. There is a comprehensive list of places where the general leaflet about SP is distributed. Numbers of leaflets sent are recorded and, where there are requests for repeat orders, these are noted to determine where there is a high degree of leaflet turnover. Staff follow up leaflet distribution with calls to check safe receipt and to remind agencies of the benefits of displaying the leaflets. Staff attend events wherever possible with SP literature, pens and keyrings to promote the programme. They have carried out presentations to over 100 front line staff and have recently met with teams to highlight a new DVD which details the SP programme and the role of the newly established link officer. An SP focus week was held which included a range of events involving providers and service users in October 2008. This was designed to promote a greater awareness among Council staff and other agencies. It is hoped this new approach will lead to an increased awareness and more effective sign posting as a result.
- 133** Awareness of SP services in front line services is still not strong and recent actions taken to raise awareness have yet to demonstrate an improvement. Two previous mystery shopping exercises, one in 2007 and one in 2008, showed a poor response to shoppers queries, adequate signposting did not take place. Although there was a slight improvement in 2008 in the availability of information in offices generally few improvements had been made and the result was an inadequate response to customer queries to enable access to appropriate information advice and services. A more recent mystery shopping exercise, which was carried out with service users, did not demonstrate that recent awareness raising is leading to an improved response to customer queries. Reality checks carried out as part of the inspection confirmed a lack of awareness by frontline staff in the majority of cases. As a result vulnerable service users may not be properly signposted to the services available.
- 134** Improvements are being put in place to improve access to housing and support. A link officer, funded through SP is based in the team, is able to take enquiries and referrals from a range of agencies or individuals to ensure they receive appropriate information about the services funded through SP. Although the staff member has only been in post for the last two weeks they have already received eleven referrals eight of which have resulted in advice or referrals offered. In addition a move-on co-ordinator and supported housing co-ordinator have been funded through SP to improve access to housing and move-on accommodation. These posts are also recent and it is too early to demonstrate their effect to date.
- 135** Not all stakeholders are involved in plans to reshape access to housing with support. There is a lack of awareness among all partners or evidence currently on the proposals for reshaping access to housing. Bradford has been successful in becoming one of the pilot authorities in the CLG Trailblazer bid for housing options. This is a major opportunity to significantly reshape access to housing and homelessness services in Bradford. The probation service and housing have been working closely together on this bid, however not all partners, including service providers and service users, are aware of the success of the bid and are not involved in shaping and informing the approach. This was acknowledged during the inspection and a commitment to better engage all partners has been given. This is disappointing and a missed opportunity to date to influence plans to improve access to move-on accommodation and housing with support.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 136** The service directory has been updated and improved. In May 2008 the service directory was updated and now includes an interactive version on the website as well as two hard copy versions aimed at service users and professionals. The service user version is clear and easy to use with symbols identifying services available at each scheme. Referral routes are published in both directories. This has been distributed to a range of agencies. The interactive version available on the website benefited from service user input and as a result a filter function was added based on the type of accommodation needed rather than user group. This has been applied to make the directory more accessible.
- 137** Although systems are in place to ensure enquiries to the SP team are dealt with effectively, they are not fully developed. A log of enquiries is kept which all staff have access to and a responsibility to update. It records the date and details of the call and the number of days taken to respond to the enquiry. The majority are responded to very quickly despite a lack of monitoring and no target being in place. Information from the log is not systematically used to inform or improve any future approach or to identify common queries to provide a more proactive response.
- 138** Information about the SP programme is comprehensive and accessible. Information is available in a variety of different formats to meet diverse needs. Leaflets have recently been updated and contain a strapline detailing their availability in different community languages (although it doesn't say what the leaflet is about) A general SP leaflet is available in large print. The Fairer Charging leaflet is easy to read and well designed with a mix of informative text and graphics. Some key documents such as the five year strategy have an easy read version and audio versions on the website. Information from SP has featured in Bradford's talking magazine. This ensures people are easily able to access information in an appropriate format.
- 139** The website has recently been updated and is accessible. Links are provided from the Council's website to SP. On the website information can be changed into larger font and there is an audio version of some information including the five year strategy. The website has an interactive version of the user and carer directory and users have been involved in the development of this. The website has been improved following service users feedback particularly in relation to accessibility for people with learning disabilities. There is now a link to the Learning Disability Partnership website which includes a lot of additional information such as details of advocacy groups and services. People using the website should be able to find the information they need and this will help them to access services.
- 140** Complaints leaflets are not as widely distributed as general SP leaflets. The SP leaflets do not explain how to access the complaints system. They are available on the website and provided when attending awareness raising events or when visiting services. But they are not distributed and tracked in the same systematic way as SP general leaflets. This may be a contributing factor to the low numbers of complaints received due to lack of awareness.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

141 Recent complaints received have been few in number but these have not been dealt with adequately. There is a clear process in place for complaints highlighted in a leaflet and on the website. However of the two complaints received in 2008/09 it is not clear what the outcomes from the complaints were and what follow up action was taken following complaints. Limited records have been kept, the complaints log does not detail all complaints received in 2008/09 or confirm that a satisfactory conclusion has been reached and the complaints procedure has not been followed. It has now been agreed that complaints will be included as part of the reporting arrangements to CB and SCG and it is hoped this will improve the monitoring of outcomes of complaints. Complaints are not being used effectively to improve services provided.

Diversity

142 In the last inspection we found strengths and weaknesses were balanced. Recent cross-authority research into the support needs of Gypsies and Travellers had been commissioned and completed and within Bradford research had commenced on the needs of people with HIV/AIDS. The completion of the service reviews had led to challenges to the cultural sensitivity of services and demonstrable improvements for users. However, collation of data about the diversity of those receiving support was weak and where this was collected it was not used to inform future plans.

143 In this inspection we found there is still a balance of strengths and weaknesses. There is a commitment to improve the approach to equality and diversity as part of the programme. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the strategy and improvements are being made. There is a good understanding of the needs of diverse groups and action is being taken to fill gaps in service provision. However there has been limited work with providers to ensure their services are able to meet the needs of diverse groups and progress has been slow on addressing the physical accessibility of services. SP staff are not required to attend equality and diversity training and have had no recent training. A further programme of equality impact assessments to cover all aspects of SP have yet to be undertaken.

144 There is a commitment to improving equality and promoting diversity in the delivery of the programme. Adult Services has a services equalities group which meets on a regular basis. Supporting People is identified as a priority in 2008/09 for an equality impact assessment in the service plan for 'Commissioning, Performance and Business Support, 2008 to 2011'. The impact assessment of the five year strategy was carried out as a result of that commitment. There are mechanisms being put in place to ensure actions from impact assessments are picked up through the service equality action plan currently under development and that scrutiny of progress will be provided through the departmental equalities group.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 145** An equality impact assessment(EIA) carried out on the five year strategy is leading to changes in ways of working to minimise any adverse impacts for diverse groups. An equality impact assessment has recently been developed in consultation with stakeholders on the five year strategy. It is based on the agreed corporate approach and standard template that has been rigorously applied. It has a useful SMART action plan attached which sets out the timescales for implementation of actions to reduce the potential barriers for diverse groups of the programme and changes are starting to take place. For example the sector review template was amended to look at the impact on four of the six strands of diversity and the strategic assessment matrix has been updated to ensure proposed and existing services are contributing positively to the needs of diverse groups. These changes mean that the diversity of service users is at the forefront of strategic or sector changes.
- 146** However, there is no programme of EIAs to ensure all the business of the SP programme is evaluated. SP was identified as a priority for 2008/09 and a start has been made with an EIA assessment and resulting action plan of the five-year strategy. However there is no clear plan for other aspects of the programme despite its priority for completion by March 2009. Without a clear, monitored plan resources will not be identified and some areas, such as the way the programme specifies and contracts for services, may be missed.
- 147** Comprehensive information is available which helps to identify the diverse needs of service users involved in the Supporting People programme. The needs analysis carried out in 2008 sets out a comprehensive understanding of the needs of all user groups across the borough as well as the demographic profile. This was used to inform the five-year strategy and commissioning plan which identified a shortfall in the amount of floating support provided alongside gaps in services for people with complex needs, rough sleepers, Gypsies and Travellers and people with HIV/AIDS. The programme now has a much clearer understanding of need in order to address the diverse needs of service users.
- 148** The Council has taken action to work with excluded groups and to identify gaps in current service delivery and to involve them in improving services to meet their needs. The positive engagement session held in April 2008 included socially excluded groups. This looked at their experiences of the programme identifying how Supporting People services could be improved and looking at unmet need. The work has been used to identify where services need to be commissioned.
- 149** Progress is being made to address the identified gaps in provision for diverse groups. The following actions have been taken to ensure the needs of diverse groups are better served.
- A floating support service for people with complex needs (20 units) has been commissioned which starts on the 2 February 2009.
 - A proposal to fund a housing related support worker for Gypsies and Travellers has been agreed on a pilot basis until April 2009.
 - A service to provide support to five rough sleepers commenced in December 2008.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- Provision for substance misuse which has been identified as an area of under-representation has been improved with 30 units procured from February 2009.
 - A jointly commissioned renewed approach to home improvements for older people has been established in January 2009.
 - Floating support services for people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties are currently out to tender which will provide an additional 50 units.
 - Proposal for a floating support scheme for 20 people with HIV/physical disability in the commissioning plan for 2009/10.
 - An accommodation based service of 20 units for substance misusers is underway.
 - These new services are filling identified gaps in provision.
- 150** Service providers and service users have developed a good practice guide for diversity and inclusion. The exercise was provider and user led and has pulled together a compendium of positive practice that covers black and minority ethnic issues and also includes sexuality and disability. It is to be shared with other providers to encourage them to develop some of the good practices highlighted.
- 151** To date there has only been a limited assessment of the cultural sensitivity of the services provided. As part of past service reviews, services have all been assessed to ensure they have the necessary equality policies and procedures in place. To reach level QAF B, the programme is expecting services to demonstrate more, addressing the profile of potential and existing service users and staff to reflect the local neighbourhood and have equality action plans in place to raise standards.
- 152** Staff are not required to attend corporate equality and diversity training. None of the staff in the SP team have received recent (in the last two years) equality and diversity training as part of a corporate approach and some staff have been in post for several years. It is not part of a core set of competencies that is required and training is not compulsory in this area. This does not ensure all staff have an awareness of, or are fully equipped to deal with, the needs of diverse groups.
- 153** The Council has been slow to address the physical accessibility of accommodation based services and provider compliance with disability legislation (DDA 1988). An assessment was carried out in March 2007 to see and quantify how much capital investment is required to make buildings accessible. One of the two new supplementary QAF objectives includes a requirement to assess this aspect. These have been introduced for the first time for the annual contract monitoring work on Older People's services that is underway at present. Although service providers have given information for the SP directory on whether services are accessible these will not be robustly tested until the annual contract review stage. Until then, this remains an area that has not been comprehensively assessed and presents potential access barriers for vulnerable people with physical and/or sensory impairment.

Outcomes for service users

- 154** In the last inspection this was an area of weakness we found no new services had been introduced and whilst there were plans in place for the remodelling of some services as part of the outcomes of the review process, none had as yet resulted in significant changes. Although discussions and consultation had been held regionally and locally about outcomes monitoring models. No agreement had been reached in Bradford as to how best to progress this with a decision made to wait for the imminent CLG guidance. Individual services were clearly assisting service users to maintain or to develop their ability to live independently but this was not driven by the Supporting People programme.
- 155** In this inspection we found a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The Council can demonstrate that there have been improvements in the range of Supporting People services provided. New services have been put in place and some services remodelled. Choice and service flexibility is being increased through floating support. There are many examples of positive outcomes for service users through the support provided. However, there has been considerable delay in improving the quality of services and increasing the choice of services available to meet the needs of service users. Appropriate arrangements are not yet in place for outcome measurement.
- 156** The Council has not yet delivered widespread changes to services delivered, nor is the programme significantly focused around outcomes. Contracts are not outcome based and monitoring is not outcome focused. No outcome targets have been identified with partners and outcomes are not measured as a result. Little use is made of the outcomes information provided by service providers, so for example the programme cannot point to the increased opportunities to participate in training, education and qualifications or show improvements in an individual's ability to manage substance misuse or their mental health.
- 157** The programme can demonstrate limited improvements in the quality of services procured. Progress is being made with 33 per cent of services set to achieve level B by March 2009. None are known to be operating at a lower standard, as the two providers operating at level D at the beginning of the year have now successfully implemented their improvement plans. Service providers contend that many are operating at a higher level but their improvement has not yet been validated. While it is positive that improvements are now being made this does represent slow progress in improving the quality of services after six years of administration of the Supporting People programme.
- 158** New and temporary services are now in place to address longstanding gaps in services. These include a service for gypsies and travellers, a service for people with complex needs, people with problems with substance misuse, services for rough sleepers and a home improvement agency service that will enable older people living in private sector property to access support to help them continue to live independently. Some of the most disadvantaged people will now be able to access services in Bradford.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

159 Choice for service users is increasing but is still limited and has been delayed for some time. Overall the amount of housing related support provided by the programme has increased. The level of accommodation based support has decreased and the level of floating support has increased improving choice for service users. Community alarm support the Home Improvement Agency and small repairs service have all increased. Details are included in the table below. However there has been considerable delay in improving choice for service users. There is still a high proportion of accommodation based support (57 per cent) still in place and floating support provision has only changed from 3 per cent of the overall provision in 2006/07 to 5 per cent in 2008/09. Providing more flexible services in the form of floating support is recognised as a priority in the new five year strategy but historically progress has been slow and it will take time to change the shape of provision. The following table shows the split of provision

Table 1 Changes in Housing Related Support Provision - April 2006/07 to 2008/09

TYPE	2006/07	2008/09
Accommodation Based	6903 (60 %)	6853 (56%)
Floating Support	312 (3%)	560 (5 %)
Community Alarms	4142 (36 %)	4204 (34%)
HIA/small repairs service	122 (1%)	600 (5%)
All provision	11479	12217

160 There are a number of individual case studies showing positive outcomes for service users. Support plans are in place for all service users and validated through the contract monitoring process. Individual examples of support planning are leading to positive outcomes for individuals. Services we visited are making a difference to the lives of service users. Service users are encouraged to develop appropriate skills to help maintain their independence and there are several examples of service users being helped to find permanent housing, education and employment to ensure they are able to make a positive contribution and move on to independent living.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 161** Although relatively late, the programme is beginning to modernise some of its housing related support for older people in sheltered housing schemes. The programme has agreed to drop the link between support and accommodation provided to older people in sheltered schemes with the biggest sheltered accommodation provider. This means that the provider does not have to provide support where the service user does not need it even though they live in a sheltered scheme. In return for leaving contracts at the same level, the service provider is required to offer and provide housing related floating support to other older people in need living in the community, both in their own general or sheltered housing stock and outside. It is still in its early stages but provides a lead for other housing associations in the area and brings on board one of the major suppliers for the sector review of older people's services later in 2009.
- 162** An opportunity has been made for all service users to comment on the programme and services they receive. The Council have taken steps to measure the satisfaction of service users. An annual survey indicated that service users are generally satisfied with the support they receive, with 73.5 per cent of respondents citing the quality of support services as good or very good. Seventy two per cent stated they were sufficiently involved in drawing up their support plan. Areas for improvement identified by service users have been incorporated into an action plan. Work is under way to improve the process for the collection of this information in future, including involving service users in the design of questions. This provides one way for the Council to check service users are receiving appropriate support planning arrangements, and to identify areas for improvement.
- 163** There is commitment to improving move on from short term accommodation based services. Arrangements have been put in place through the move on strategy and action plan to address this. The percentage of service users moving on in a planned way from short term services is above target (70per cent) at 72.8 per cent in September 2008 However, the approaches taken to date to address the barriers to move on have had limited outcomes.

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

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

- 164** In the last inspection we found there was a poor track record of delivering improvements. Lack of ownership, strategic direction and scrutiny within the governance and management structures contributed to the lack of ambition and the inability to agree key actions that would drive the programme forward, including the unlocking of ineligible funding. The overall balance of provision between types of accommodation and those groups benefiting from the services remained largely unchanged. There were, however, improvements in individual services that would immediately impact on users.
- 165** In this inspection we found that this is an area where there are more strengths than weaknesses. A number of key weaknesses have been addressed resulting in a considerable shift in the direction of the programme over the last twelve months. There is a recent and developing track record of delivering change. The pace of change has been appropriate with a focus on ensuring high quality outcomes. There are improvements in a number of areas service users would recognise including increased involvement opportunities, and some increase in provision in line with the five-year strategy. Targets set in relation to performance have been exceeded. However, there have been considerable delays in some areas such as progress in driving improvements in quality, action to address diversity issues including staff training and changes to the overall shape of provision. Delays in addressing value for money have resulted in delays in the achievement of efficiency savings.
- 166** Significant progress has been made in addressing key weaknesses. Historically progress has been slow in a number of areas, including not addressing ineligible funding, weak leadership and management which resulted in lack of communication between service providers and team members and the lack of a robust needs analysis. Over the last twelve months considerable progress has now been made resulting in £4.5 million of ineligible funding being retracted ahead of time. Leadership and governance arrangements have been changed and credibility is being restored to the programme. The quality of services has improved from 10 per cent of providers at level B of the quality assessment framework (QAF) in June 2008 to 24.4 per cent at Level B in December 2008. Relationships with service providers are much improved. There is a clear strategy and vision based on robust and up to date needs information and a commissioning plan in place with new services now being commissioned. The team is now appropriately resourced and managed with increased leadership and corporate support providing the ability to further improve delivery of the programme.

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

- 167** Improvement has been focussed on addressing previous recommendations following inspection. The Audit Commission report in 2007 contained a number of key recommendations with timescales for delivery. Although all the deadlines for completion have passed, the majority of actions are complete or considerable progress has been made towards their completion. Of the 37 actions identified 23 are fully completed and a further 12 are partially complete with only two actions yet to be completed or sufficient progress made. See Appendix 3.
- 168** Other key improvements in delivery of the programme include the following.
- The completion of a comprehensive and robust needs analysis, with arrangements in place to update and review needs information.
 - Agreement on the strategic priorities for future commissioning which reflect identified need and the strategic priorities of all partners. This is reflected in the five-year strategy, and accompanying commissioning plan.
 - Improvements in the way partners, stakeholders and providers are engaged in the programme. This included the use of positive engagement session to enable service user input into the development of the five-year strategy.
 - Improved communication and relationships with providers since the last inspection. This has resulted in providers being engaged in delivery of the programme, and having greater confidence about future services.
- 169** There are a number of areas where the programme can demonstrate improvements that would be recognised and experienced by service users. These include improvements made in relation to service user involvement. Meaningful mechanisms are in place to enable service users to be involved in the development and delivery of the programme. This has been achieved through the engagement of an advocacy group to support service users and the establishment of a service user involvement group which feeds directly into the governance arrangements. Service users are influential in the selection of new service providers, a payment and reward system is now in place for service users and they have mechanisms in place to contribute to different parts of the programme development.
- 170** Previous gaps in provision are now being filled. The level of provision has increased for some groups of service users. Accommodation based services have been reconfigured to provide more floating support. Additional services have been developed to provide service for those previously under represented such as people with complex needs, people with substance misuse difficulties and support services for the Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- 171** SP has benefited from its move into Adult Services whilst maintaining close links with Housing. This has enabled a better alignment with commissioning plans to ensure there are pathways into and through support services. The programme has benefited from the departments expertise on commissioning and user engagement and has been able to use some of the already well established partnerships where service users are effectively engaged for example networks for survivors of domestic abuse, and the partnership board for people with learning disabilities.

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

- 172** Information from the wider Adult Social Care performance information would indicate that there is good performance for people who are vulnerable being supported at home to live independently. The Council is among the top performers in numbers of adults with mental health issues or learning disabilities helped to live at home in 2007/08 and performs above average on numbers of older people and people with physical disabilities helped to live at home. Adult Services have a good and promising rating and .have no indicators below average for 2007/08.
- 173** Performance has been variable in relation to the national Supporting People indicators. The national key performance indicator 1, 'numbers of people sustaining independent living' has been variable from 2006/07 when Bradford was among the worst performers nationally. However the last twelve months have shown a gradual increase in performance culminating in performance at 99 per cent for September 2008 against a target of 98.5 per cent which places Bradford among the top performers. National Key performance indicator 2 'numbers of people moving on in a planned way' was also variable over time. However performance has improved in the last twelve months to a point where Bradford is currently exceeding the national average. Performance in September 2008 was 73 per cent compared to a target of 70 per cent.
- 174** Progress is being made on utilising the grant under spend. Commissioning priorities are being addressed with new services procured and more currently out to tender. Service providers have been invited to submit bids for new services on a temporary basis. Funding has been committed to address new priorities as identified in the commissioning plan up to 2011. This ensures good use is made of the underspend accrued following the retraction of ineligible funding.
- 175** However, the programme has been slow to address value for money issues. A robust value for money methodology is in place based on cost and quality but it is only just starting to be applied. Although work was done to assess how well services provided value for money in the past, details of the efficiencies realised have not been captured. There are still no efficiency targets in place and no savings or efficiencies planned in the future, despite the fact that discussions with providers are just starting in relation to costs compared with recently agreed benchmarking as part of the sector reviews. This means that the SP programme has not benefited from a structured approach to delivering efficiencies, in terms of the same services for less cost, or more or better quality services for the same cost.
- 176** The programme has only recently started to drive up improvements in service quality. Recent validation's of QAF scores are showing that the numbers of providers achieving level B are increasing and Bradford are on track to meet their target of 33 per cent of providers at level B by March 2009. There is a robust contract management approach now in place to enable the validation of QAF scores however this is only partly complete (about 50 out of 300 services currently). In view of the length of time since service reviews, it cannot be demonstrated that QAF scores on services not yet validated remain valid (that there has been no slippage or improvement)

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

177 Although more changes are planned, to date there has been little real change in the overall shape of provision. Only two services have actually been de-commissioned and one is now being re-commissioned. The programme overall is changing with a reduction in accommodation based services and an increase in floating support in line with the priorities within the five year strategy. Services provided by five accommodation based providers have been discontinued and replaced with 400 units of floating support available across tenure. While not increasing the overall level of provision, this will shift the balance of services from accommodation based to more flexible floating support services by almost 10 per cent to 14.5 per cent of the units of support. The sector reviews will start to provide a clearer steer on the suitability of existing provision to meet identified needs and the commissioning plan once implemented will continue to address any remaining gaps in provision. The lack of progress in this area is accepted but the previous historical delays and lack of robust needs information or commissioning plans meant progress was slower. This delay has limited the success of the programme to date and has resulted in delays in driving up the standard of services for vulnerable people.

How well does the Council manage performance?

178 In the last inspection we found that this was an area where there were more weaknesses than strengths. There was limited performance reporting at any level either within the Supporting People programme. This was particularly marked within the Commissioning Body and at corporate level. The lack of strategic leadership by both the Council and the Commissioning Body had not led to challenging questions being asked about performance, although the incorporation of Supporting People performance into the revised corporate monitoring system of performance clinics was positive. The risk management environment and financial planning and monitoring were robust.

179 In this inspection we found that there are now more strengths than weaknesses. The vision, aims and objectives for the programme are clearly aligned to other key strategies, and throughout improvement plans. Improvement planning and monitoring arrangements have improved, and the programme is integrated into strengthening corporate performance management arrangements. Plans to reshape the programme are robust. There are supporting plans in place that will address identified weaknesses. Leadership has been strengthened and there is a willingness to learn from other administering local authorities. There are some weaknesses in the approach to performance management. The framework is not yet adequately reporting on outcomes, performance is not clearly linked to costs nor does it form part of the planning framework.

180 The Supporting People vision and objectives are integrated into wider corporate objectives and improvement planning processes. Links are evident between the SP five year strategy, Adult Services plans, the Council's Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. The objectives within the five-year strategy are clearly defined and key actions in the service plan contribute to the delivery of the objectives. This demonstrates the integration of shared priorities and highlights Supporting People's contribution to them.

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

- 181** The Council has a clear approach to performance management and SP is well integrated into this approach. There are regular performance reports to both the executive and improvement committees. Performance is monitored at a corporate level by exception and detailed performance clinics are held where there are concerns in particular areas, including progress with the SP improvement plans. The CEO of the Council has been personally chairing regular performance clinics for SP to review progress. Senior staff have been involved in monitoring progress and ensuring there are no barriers to improvements being made. Individual directorates hold mini performance clinics where performance dips and each department has its own performance champion who meet regularly with other champions cross the Council. Assistance is provided from the corporate performance management team through link officers
- 182** Corporate performance management arrangements are being strengthened. A performance management IT system is being rolled out across the Council. Currently all directorates operate their own stand alone system. The new system will be linked to business and financial planning arrangements. It is being piloted and there is a twelve month rolling programme in place which includes SP. This integrated system will ensure there are better tools in place for reporting performance.
- 183** Arrangements are in place for improvement planning of the programme .The service plan is comprehensive and encompasses all actions to be completed following previous inspections and from the five year strategy. This will be monitored through the Commissioning Body and strategic core group to ensure delivery and improvement continues. The new service plan is a big improvement on the previous improvement plan. It identifies outcomes to be achieved, with clear targets, it makes links to the strategy and a note of whether each action has been quality assured by the corporate improvement team before it is signed off. However, this plan is not fully costed and its current format makes it more difficult to track progress, this weakness is accepted by the Council and improvements are planned. This approach will ensure that there remains a focus on improvements.
- 184** Key indicators are reported at appropriate intervals to enable progress to be tracked. These include SP NI141 and 142 on numbers of planned moves and numbers of people sustaining independent living. The Council also reports other SP performance indicators which assess, availability, utilisation and throughput of service users. More recently information of number of complaints has been reported. Figures are reported to the SCG, CB, departmental management and into the corporate system. Information goes to the corporate performance clinic where the SP programme has a specific performance clinic attended by senior Council staff and chaired by the Council CEO.
- 185** However, the performance monitoring framework does not yet utilise or report outcomes. Providers are now collecting information on outcomes but these are yet to be captured or reported to demonstrate the benefits of the programme. There are no shared targets with Health, Housing and Probation to date. It is in the work plan to develop this framework but this has yet to be completed. This means outcome information is not used to set contracts or in the planning of services and the picture being presented of the programmes success is very limited and concentrated on outputs rather than outcomes.

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

- 186** Financial plans are not yet linked to service plans or assessed as part of performance to ensure there is a focus on achieving value for money. The Council is developing a robust approach to budget setting with all directorates to identify efficiencies. This is part of a process to embed among all directorates an increased focus on VFM and a way of identifying opportunities for efficiencies to be achieved. However this has yet to be embedded and currently the SP programme does not have efficiency or other value for money targets in place to drive improvement in this area. VFM is not monitored or reported at a programme wide level. This does not ensure there is a focus on achieving value for money.
- 187** Plans to reshape provision to best meet identified needs are robust and based on good needs information. There a shift away from accommodation based services towards floating support in line with the priorities within the five year strategy. The sector reviews will start to provide a clearer steer on the suitability of existing provision to meet identified needs and enable the reconfiguration or re-commissioning of services if required. The first sector review of young people's services identified that all but one of the services were strategically relevant and although improvements were required to many services there wasn't a need to massively re-shape services. The commissioning plan is starting to be implemented with the first services out to tender currently. Pilot services are being developed in the interim to address any service shortfalls and explore new ways of working. This approach will ensure that in the future services will be in place that meet locally identified needs.
- 188** A number of plans are already in place, and in some places delivery commenced, which address many of the areas for improvement highlighted during the inspection. For example:
- service user involvement strategy and action plan to address service users concerns from the annual survey;
 - a robust move on plan to address major barriers to people moving on when they are ready to do so. An action plan has been put in place to deal with the main barriers;
 - a rolling programme of sector wide reviews to determine strategic relevance following the comprehensive needs analysis and priorities identified within the five year plan;
 - new annual contract monitoring arrangements covering all current services;
 - three year commissioning plan to reshape provision and to address gaps in services for underrepresented groups;
 - adoption of the two supplementary QAF objectives on environmental living standard and service user involvement;
 - development of a pre-tenancy training programme for supporting service users who are ready to move on;
 - training of peer reviewers (service users) to participate in contract monitoring in February 2008;

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

- arrangements to improve future outcome measurement and reporting through adoption of the national outcome framework with reporting expected from quarter 3 2008/09; and
- a refreshed approach to value for money based on cost and quality and incorporating recently agreed benchmarks.

189 Leadership for the programme has been strengthened. The Accountable Officer has been in post for twelve months and is well placed to engage partners at a strategic level. A lead officer has been appointed with the relevant skills and experience and has brought a wealth of learning from working with other authorities on improving Supporting People programmes. Staff are positive about the changes that have been made to the leadership. They now feel there is more direction, co-ordination and clarity over what needs to be done and the programme has moved on at a rapid pace in the last twelve months. One of the reasons for this is that decisions are now being made and barriers removed to enable progress to be made. This will give the programme the drive, stability and leadership it requires to continue to improve.

190 There is a willingness to learn from other high performing authorities. The team have been in contact with Tameside and Bolton both three star SP ALAs. Tameside have acted as a critical friend in some areas. The Council now has the capacity and commitment to contribute to the cross authority groups and national groups to identify best practice. The lead officer now chairs the cross authority group and is well placed to develop joint approaches and influence the national agenda. The Council has been open to the support and advice of the CLG and Audit Commission since the last inspection and responded to this positively. This has resulted in improvements which will continue to impact on the delivery of the programme to the benefit of vulnerable people in Bradford.

Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

191 In the last inspection we found that there were some strengths in this area. There was enthusiasm and recognition by all parties of the need to rapidly progress the programme to ensure positive outcomes for users. There were five major activities under way: the review of governance; the development of the service user involvement strategy; the implementation of the retraction programme; the refinement of the housing needs analysis and the subsequent prioritisation process. The completion of these would have placed the Council in a stronger position to drive improvement.

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

- 192** In this inspection we found that this is an area of strength. There is clear corporate support for the programme. There is evidence of a change of direction and pace which gives confidence that improvements are likely to continue. Financial plans and funding are in place to deliver improvements through the commissioning plan. Funding has been retracted from ineligible services and is now available to spend on new developments, Support has been provided to strengthen the team and plans to ensure there is sufficient capacity and skills to deliver the programme are well advanced. The programme is well placed to benefit from a recent successful bid that will enhance access to housing and the evolving Local Strategic Partnership. Inward investments support service improvements and the approach to procurement has been streamlined and ensures diversity in the market is retained. However, there are weaknesses in the procurement strategy which limit its success currently, staff have not benefited from an annual appraisal in 2008 and there has not been sufficient focus to date on addressing diversity.
- 193** There is clear corporate commitment to the SP programme. This is demonstrated by the Council's commitment to ringfencing the SP grant post April 2009 and the provision of revenue funding of approximately £2 million to enable a speedy retraction of ineligible funding despite increasing financial pressures. It is also evidenced by the additional capacity and focus given to the programme from senior staff from other parts of the Council in areas such as performance, procurement and financial management. This helps to drive and sustain improvements to what was previously a failing area.
- 194** There has been a change of direction and pace that has helped to ensure improvements to the programme are delivered. Aspirations have been raised within the SP programme. There is now clarity, fairness and some equity introduced to the programme which is demonstrated by a skilled knowledgeable staff team that has been strengthened and is now well managed. Greater ownership of the programme is evident with clear corporate support and enhanced governance arrangements. There is a greater understanding of the benefits of involving service users in the design and delivery of the programme and improved working relationships with all stakeholders to ensure services are appropriate and of a good quality. This gives confidence that improvements will continue and be sustained.
- 195** Financial planning arrangements are appropriate. The five year medium term financial plan was agreed for April 2007 to 2012 which recognised the demands and needs within Adult Services, the SP improvements required and the implications of the retraction plan. For the first time contracted services amount to less than the value of the grant and retraction of ineligible funding means that money is now available to spend on new services and other developments. The commissioning plan identifies the funding required for the new developments up to 2011 and the Council have committed to ringfence SP funding until that date.

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

- 196** There is a commitment to ensure there is a well resourced team in place who are able to deliver the programme. The team is being restructured to be more outward looking and stable. The number of administration and finance posts are being streamlined and made permanent. Jobs are being refocused on to commissioning and contract management responsibilities with fixed term appointments to two new posts developing user involvement and partnership working. The restructure is being informed by comparisons of team structures in a number of other high performing Councils.
- 197** There has been a sustained focus on ensuring the team have the capacity to deliver improvements. Considerable effort boosted via support from the CLG¹⁹, has ensured there is a focus on strengthening the team with team building events taking place regularly. Staff feel supported by their managers and are clear about their priorities. They all have regular supervision where they are able to discuss workload issues and personal development needs in terms of training required. As a result of the improved focus and support for the team there has been a significant reduction in staff sickness levels from an average of 10.6 days lost per team member in 2007/08 to 1.95 days lost in the current year to September 2008.
- 198** Staff have received training even in the absence of annual appraisals or a training plan. The training has been appropriate and has covered such things as support planning, outcomes training and safeguarding training. Adult Services has a comprehensive training programme for staff which the SP team have access to. This is a positive move from previous arrangements where no workforce development unit was in place. Adult Services has a dedicated training manager who has worked with the team to ensure their development needs are incorporated into the training needs analysis exercise currently underway to inform the 2009/10 training programme. This helps to ensure staff gain and retain relevant skills to carry out their roles effectively.
- 199** Staff have not had an annual appraisal completed for 2008 as this is done at the end of the financial year and is planned for early 2009 using the new corporate appraisal 'Success At Work Scheme' (SAWS). Although some staff were able to illustrate their contribution to wider plans. Appraisals are an opportunity to set clear and measurable objectives for the future, assess the success of what has been achieved to date, analyse competencies and ensure future development needs are flagged up at the earliest stage and captured in a resourced training plan.
- 200** Needs information is being centralised to ensure it is accessible and provides a consistent approach to informing strategies within the district. The Bradford Observatory is being developed with the PCT. It is a database identifying demographics, health, and social needs as well as data on crime and disorder and information from the recently completed Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA), which did reference SP. It will be able to provide detailed information at neighbourhood levels and across specific communities. All partners in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will have access to one source of information that can be updated and refreshed more easily. It will therefore become a useful tool to ensure up to date needs information is informing the planning and delivery of services.

¹⁹

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

- 201** The Council has ensured that partners are fully engaged and that SP is well placed to benefit from the developing LSP. The partnership is already much improved in relation to a clearer and more streamlined approach to delivery and decision-making including a streamlined partnership board. There is better engagement of all key stakeholders including a strong presence from the third sector. The themes of the partnership are clearly linked to the community strategy, 'The Big Plan'. A direct link is made from the LSP to the CB via a designated link officer which has yet to be replicated across other partnerships. SP performance is tracked by the LSP and the partnership board received notification about the forthcoming SP inspection. The CB chair is represented both on the health and well being partnership but also on the delivery team. This ensures that the housing related support services funded through SP are effectively championed at this level.
- 202** Funding has been secured to support service improvements. A number of supported accommodation schemes have been delivered in Bradford in the last five years. SP and Housing are currently working together effectively to ensure capital funding is supported by revenue funding for accommodation based services where a priority need exists. Services delivered to date include two extra care schemes and a women's refuge. On site currently is a 20 unit homeless hostel and further funding has been secured for an additional extra care scheme in 2008/09. Bids are being prepared for two supported accommodation schemes in 2008/09 for single people and people suffering from substance misuse. This demonstrates that supported housing development is a priority for the Council and they are successful in securing funding in order to deliver necessary accommodation with support.
- 203** Service users have been effectively engaged in the programme. They are involved in governance arrangements and there are a number of examples where they have helped to shape the programme. Service users play a significant part in the selection of new service providers. This ensures there is a continued focus on improvements that will benefit service users.
- 204** The Council has been successful in securing funding to improve access to housing and housing related support. Plans are in place to radically reshape access to housing and homelessness services. The Council has been successful in securing an enhanced housing options trailblazer bid with the CLG which attracted £250,000 additional funding into the area. This has been drafted into a joint project to also tackle worklessness and an additional £250,000 has been secured from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF). A project implementation plan has been drafted and the first project board meeting took place in January 2009. The current access to housing and homelessness service is currently out to tender. This provides an opportunity to procure a service that is able to meet the proposals included in the enhanced housing options bid. This is an opportunity to ensure comprehensive housing and support options are considered with all service users at their first point of contact. This will help to improve access and choice for service users.

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

- 205** The approach to procurement has been streamlined and ensures diversity in the market is retained. The Supporting People programme is committed to maintaining a mixed market of service provision. An approved provider list has been established to streamline the process and drive up quality. All providers who wish to re-contract or bid for new services are required to demonstrate their ability to operate services at level B of the QAF. This recently developed approach to procurement allows for speedier turnaround of bids for new services. It also provides some stability to the market particularly for smaller providers who do not need to access additional capacity or enhanced procurement skills to be considered for the approved list.
- 206** There are however some weaker areas. The procurement strategy for Supporting People does not have clear targets to show how success is measured or how it contributes to corporate procurement targets for example involving sustainability, local supply or following given procurement procedures. The Council does not have an action plan to show what contribution SP will make other than through the commissioning plan. The Council does not therefore ensure there is a focus on quality, efficiency or VFM improvements.
- 207** The approach to IT has been strengthened. There has been considerable work carried out to improve data quality which has resulted in almost all of the previous concerns raised by internal audit being addressed. Systems have all been updated with the latest releases to ensure they have all the necessary functionality. This means that systems are now able to adequately support the delivery of the programme.
- 208** There has not been sufficient focus on ensuring any potential barriers to services for diverse groups are addressed. The approach to equality and diversity is yet to be embedded throughout the Council. Staff have not received training on equality and diversity and it is not considered an essential requirement for all staff and councillors within the Council. There is not a full programme of equality impact assessments in place yet to address all aspects of SP. Services have yet to be tested to ensure they are culturally sensitive and able to meet the needs of diverse groups. This does not ensure that the programme is able to fully meet the needs of diverse groups.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Demographic information

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

Measure	Bradford	England
Population (mid-2007) ²⁰	497,400	51,092,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2007)	13.65	15.97
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British) ²¹	21.7	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ²²	3.4	2.3
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ²³	32	-

²⁰ Source: midyear population estimates (2007)

²¹ Source: census 2001

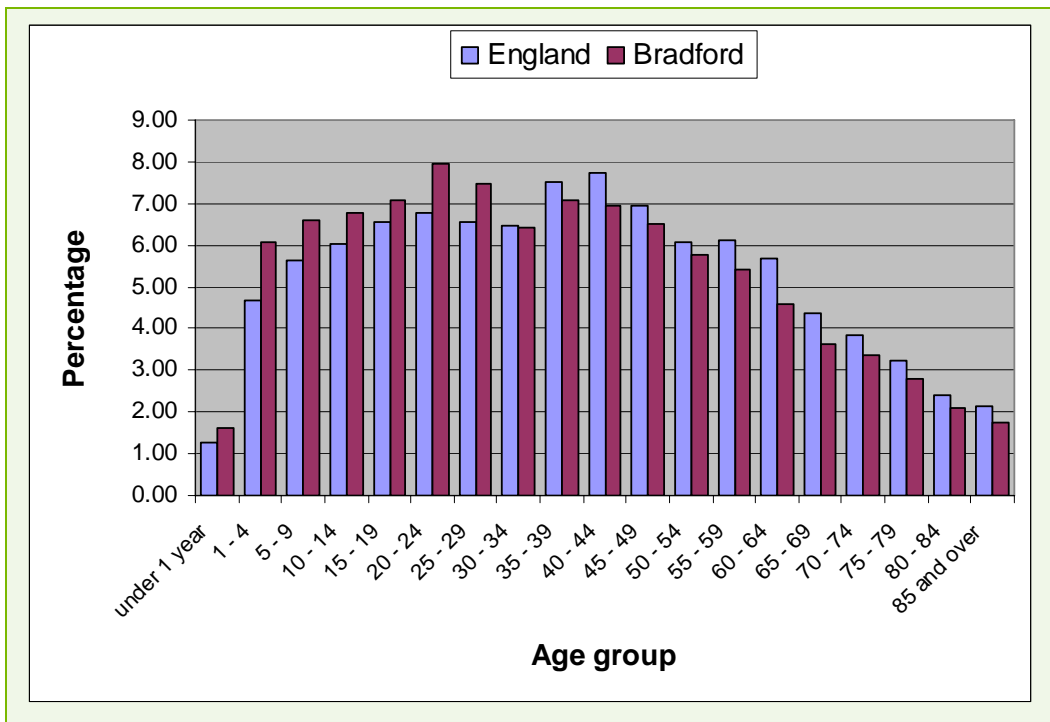
²² Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (November 2007)

²³ Source: deprivation Index 2007, average ward score for the authority.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Figure 2

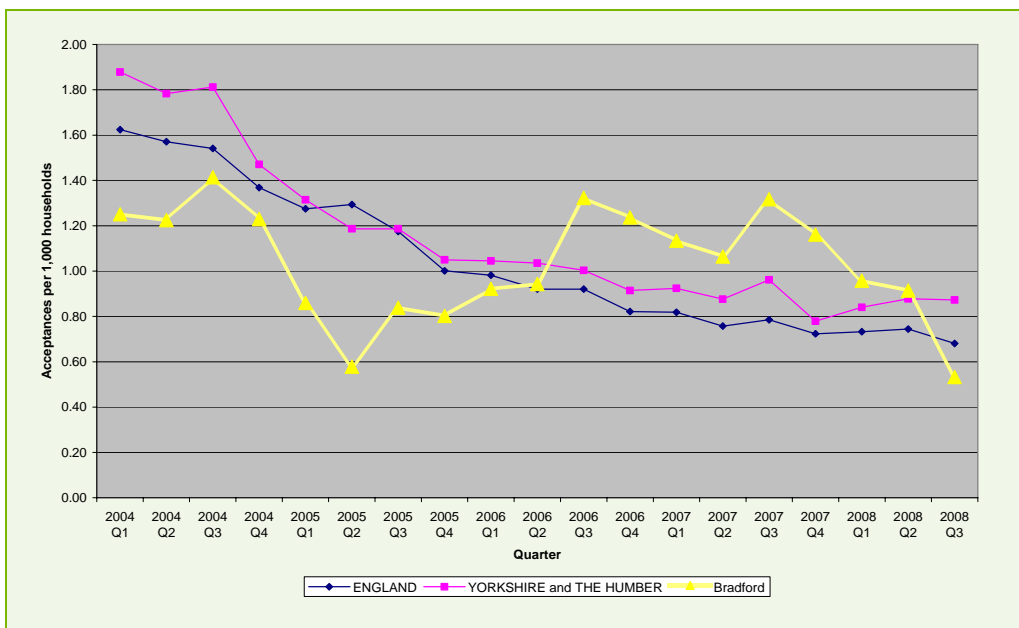
Percentage of the population in each age group compared with England



Source: midyear population estimates

Figure 3

Households accepted as homeless between 2004 and 2008 compared with the region and England (acceptances per 1,000 households)



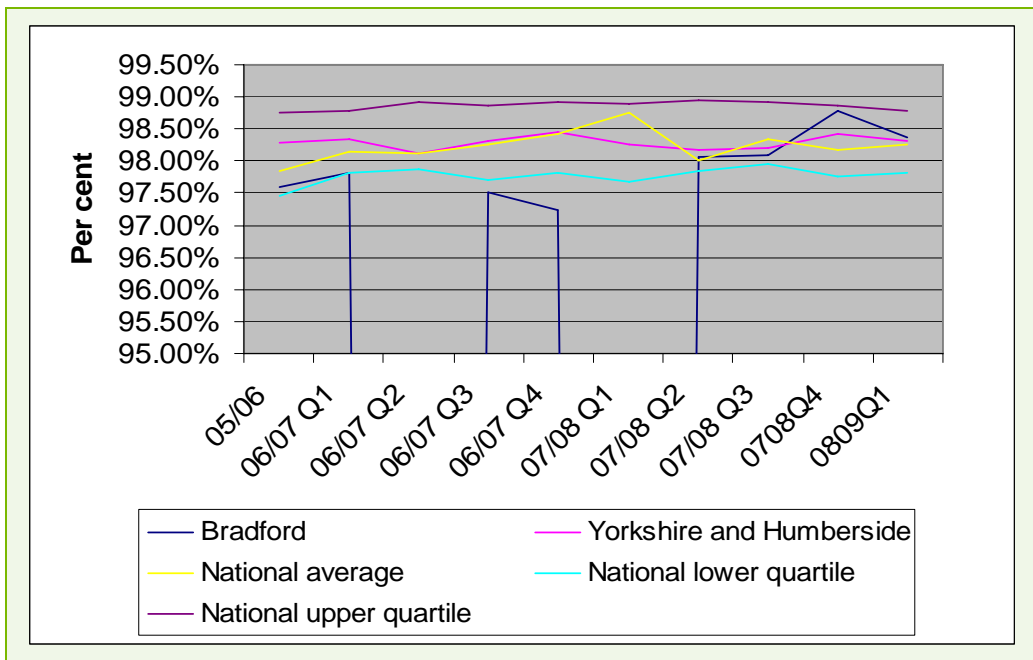
Performance information

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.
- Relevant best value performance indicators.

Supporting People data

Figure 4
Key Performance Indicator 1 and 2



Source: CLG 2008

Figure 5

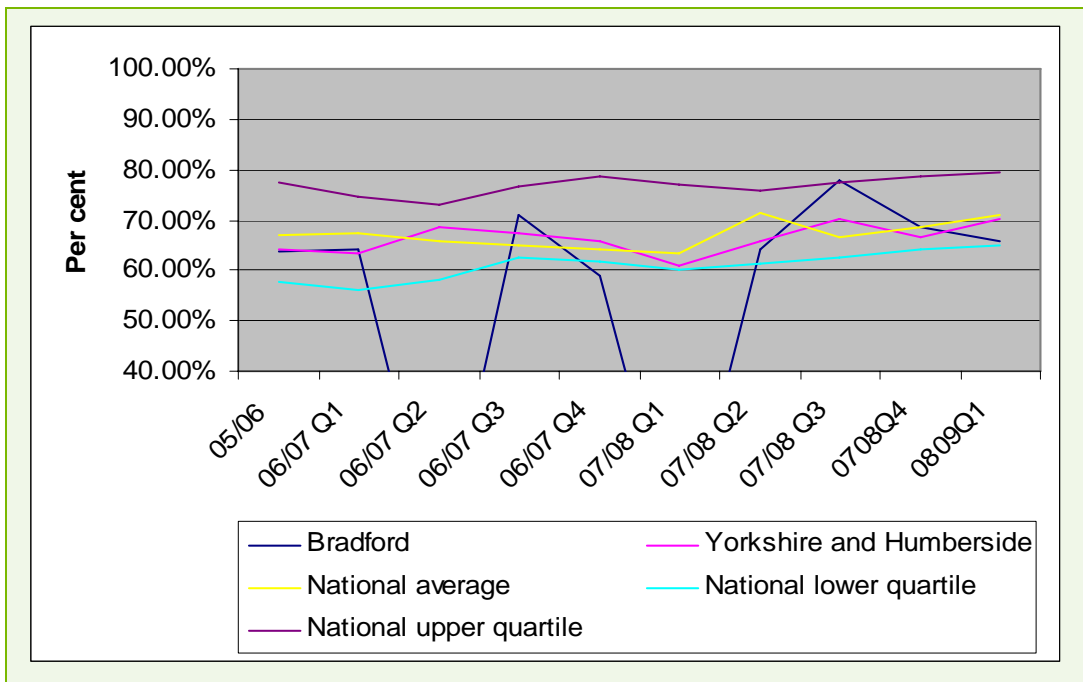
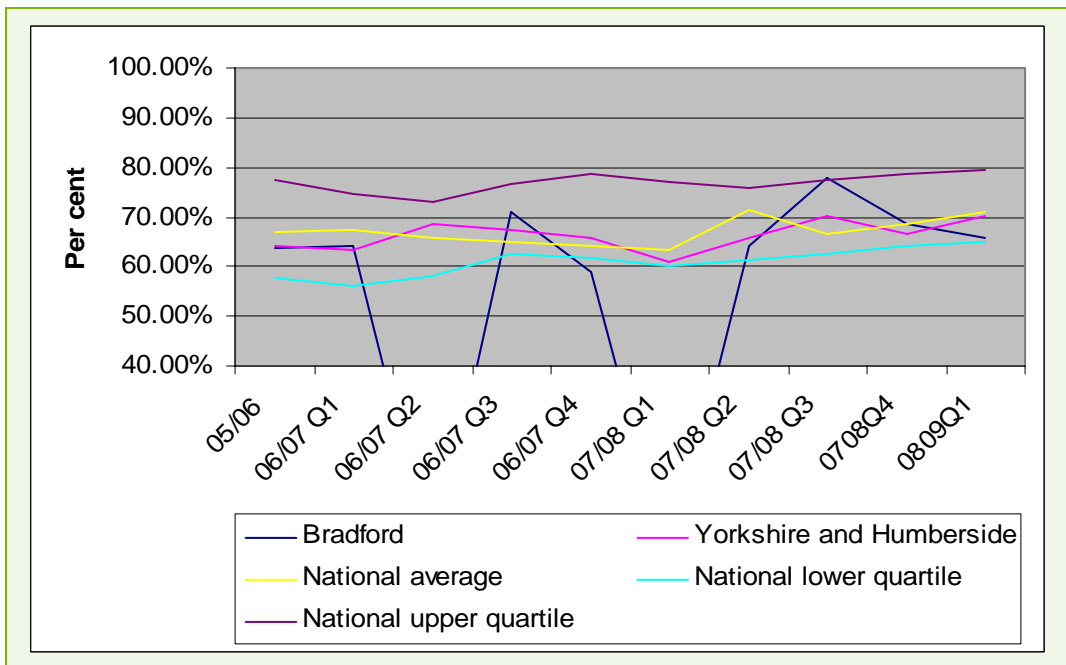


Figure 6

Total service provision funded through Supporting People²⁴



Source: CLG 2005/06

²⁴ Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Figure 7

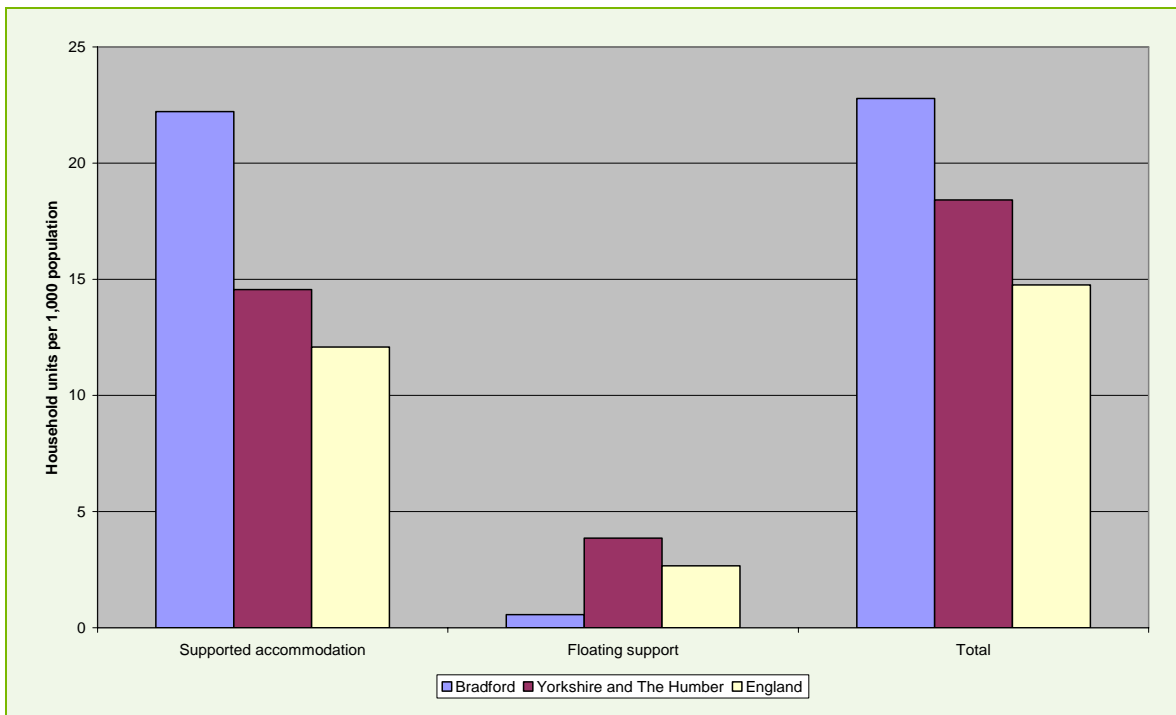
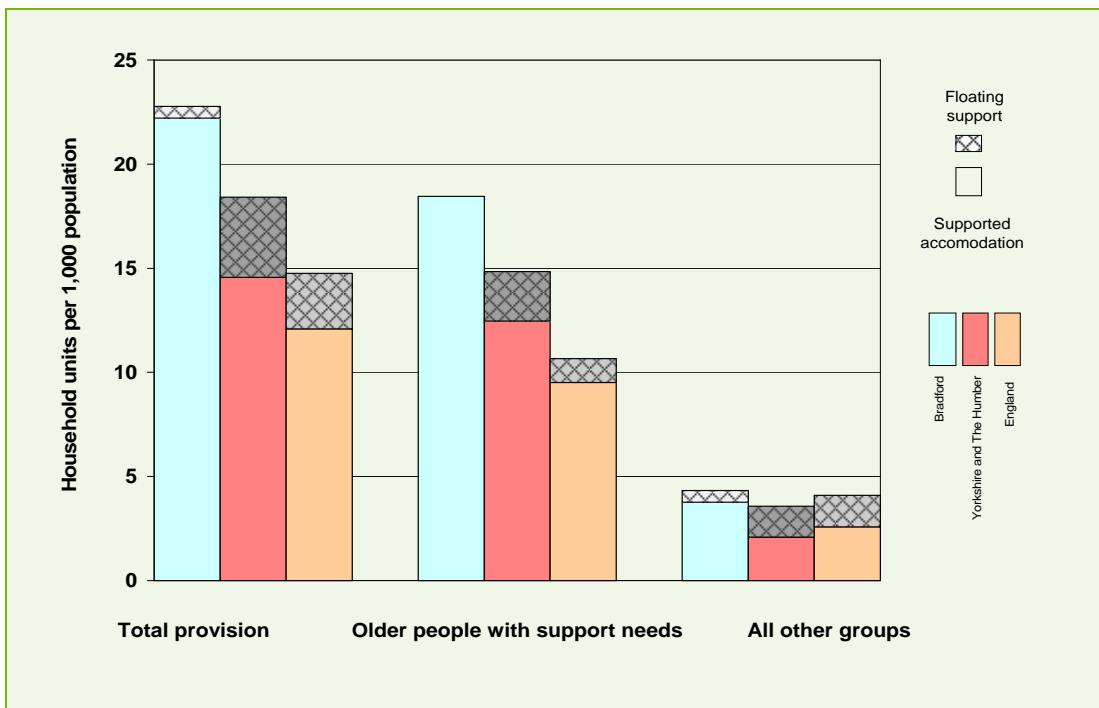


Figure 8

Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England²⁵



Source: CLG 2005/06

²⁵ Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Figure 9

Services for other groups compared with the region and England⁸

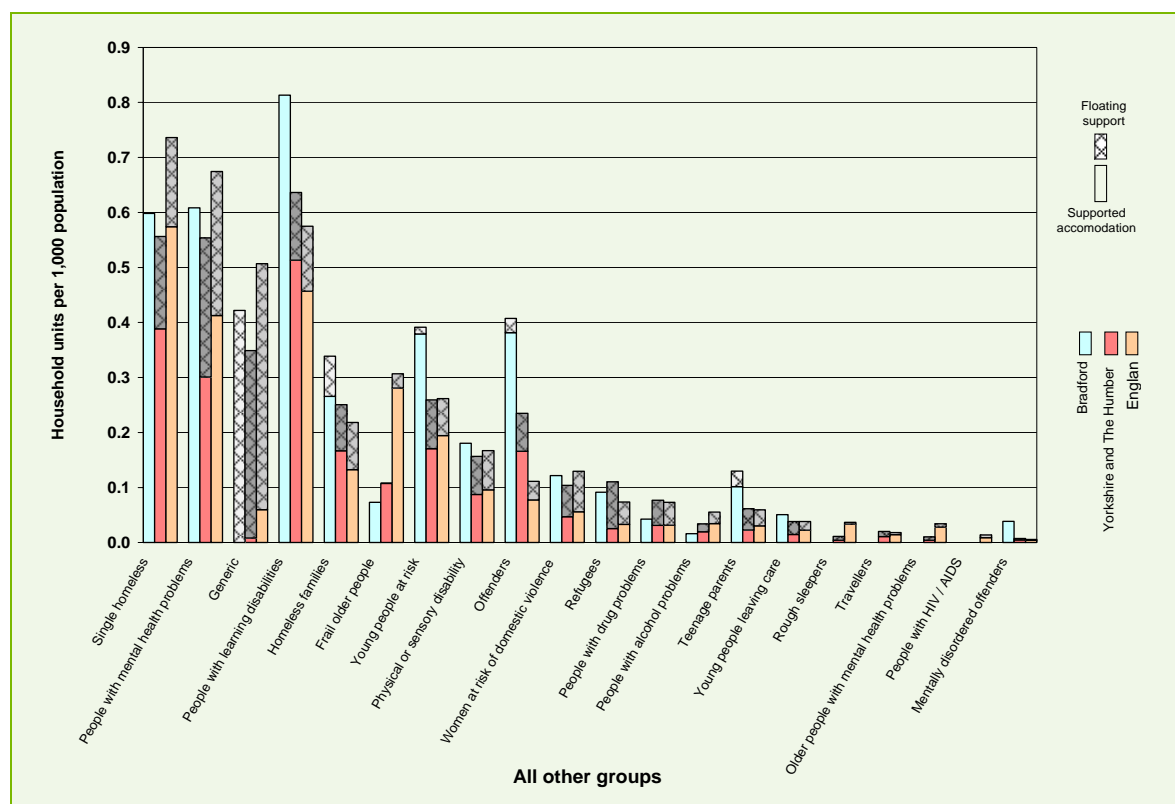


Table 2 Funding for Supporting People

Bradford	2005/06 (£)	2006/07 (£)	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)
SP Grant	19,478,884	19,142,049	19,219,872	19,219,872	19,219,872	19,219,872
Admin Grant	333,511	333,511	333,511	316,835	291,8222	250,133

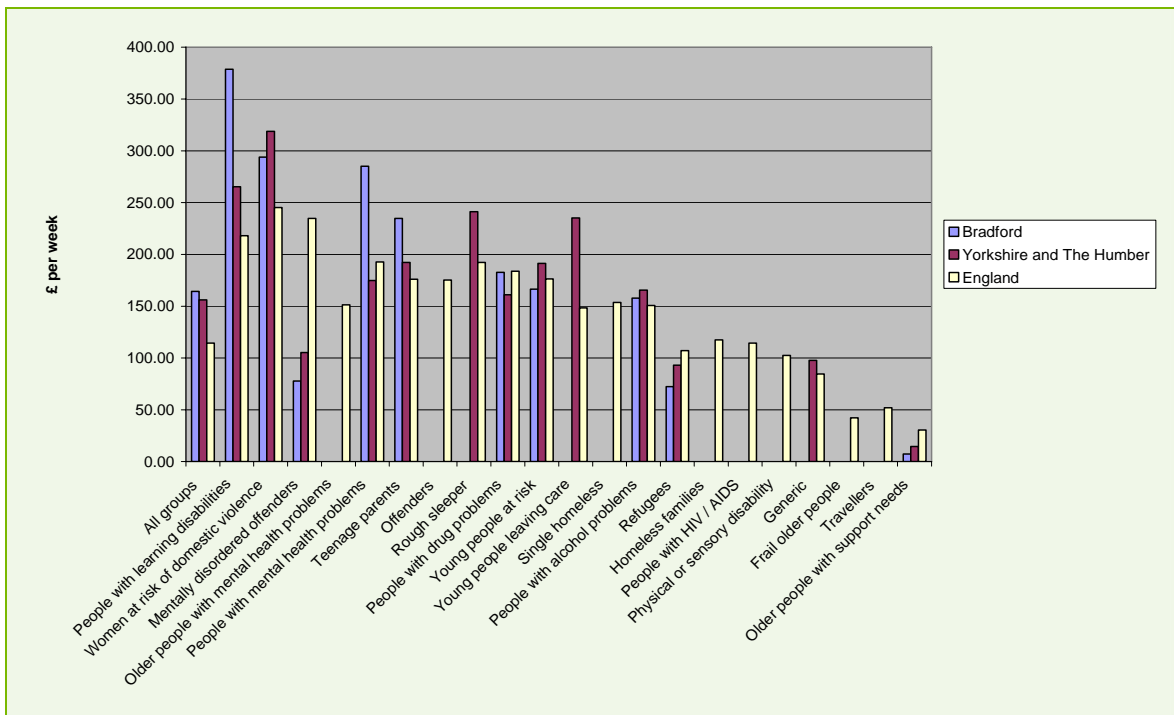
Source: Grant Allocations, CLG

Table 3 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2007/08 (£ per week)

	Per head of population ²⁶	Per household unit ²⁷
Bradford	£ 0.74	£ 32.08
Yorkshire and Humber	£ 0.65	£ 25.69
England	£ 0.64	£ 30.64

Figure 10

Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England



Source: CLG 2006/07

²⁶ Midyear population estimates (2007)

²⁷ Source: CLG

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Figure 11

Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England¹¹

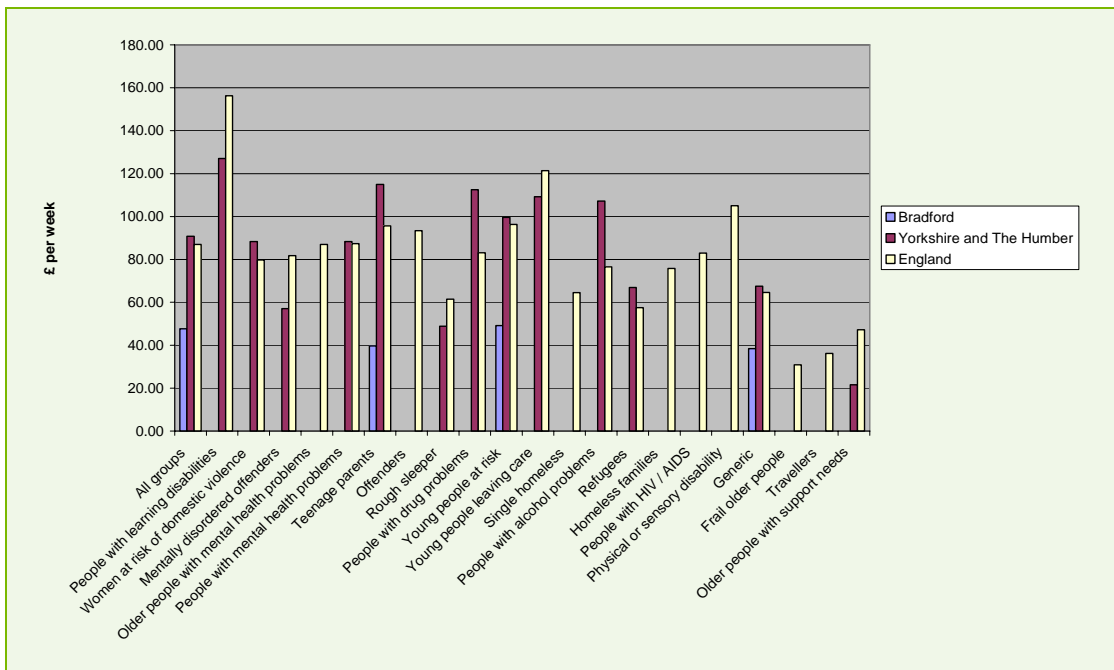
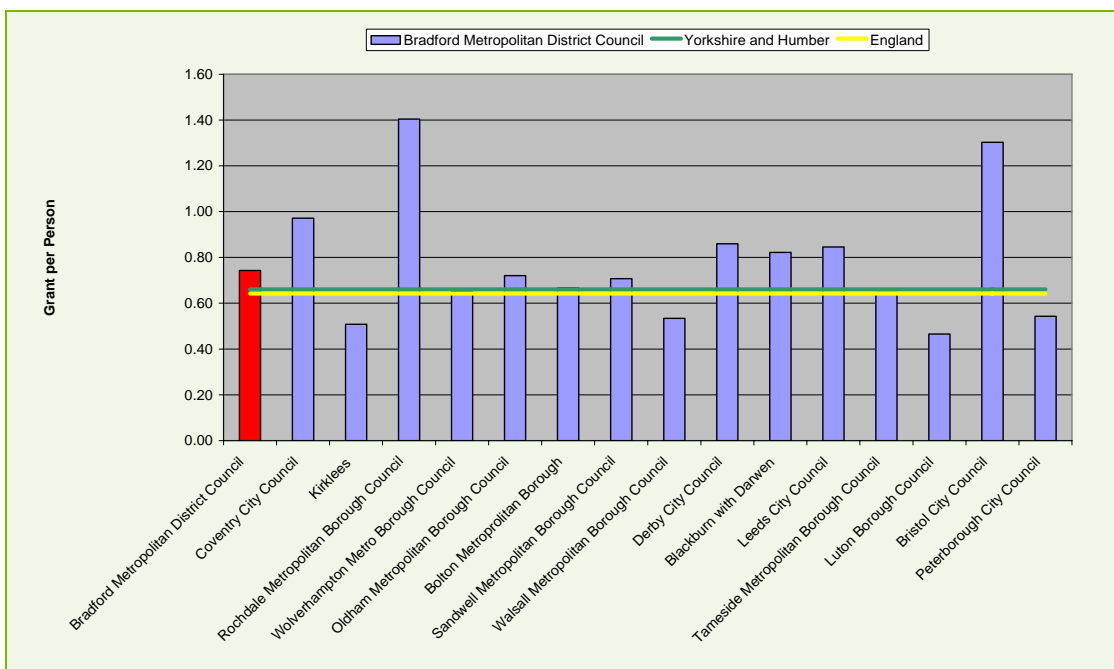


Figure 12

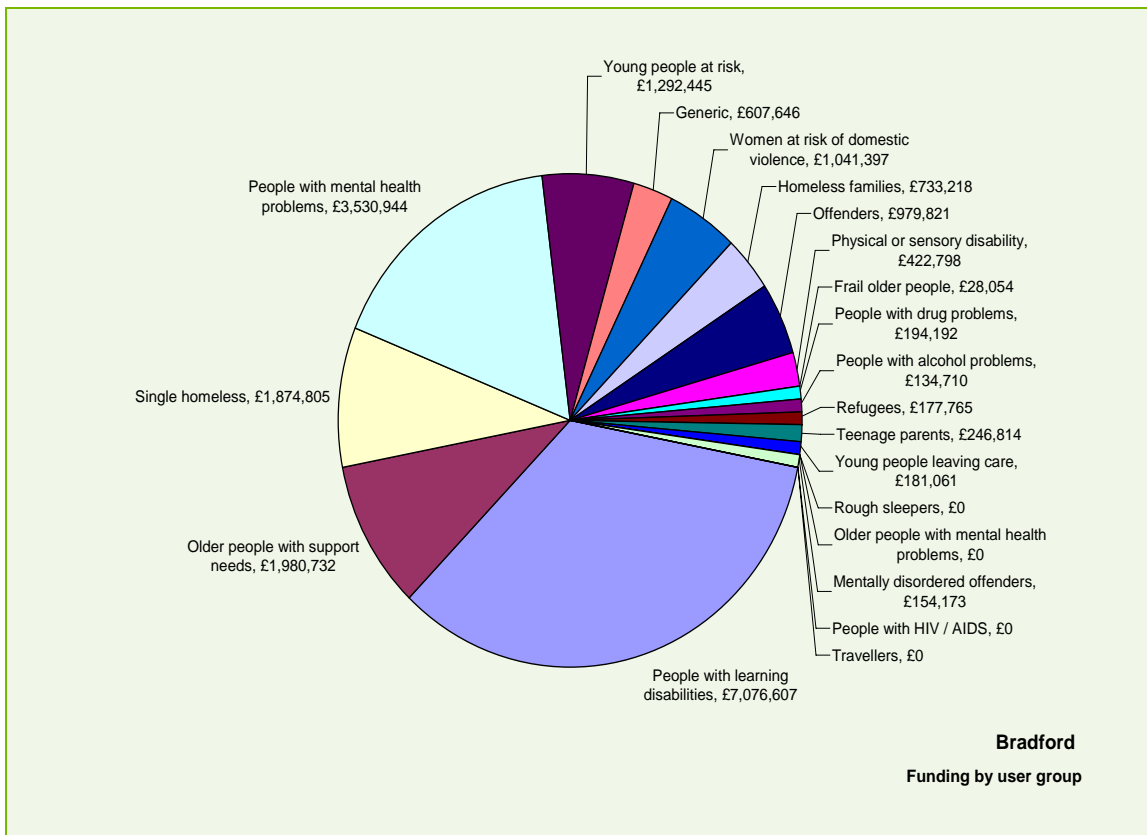
Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours²⁸ and all English councils (2007/08)



²⁸ A comparator group of similar councils.

Figure 13

Share of spending between user groups²⁹



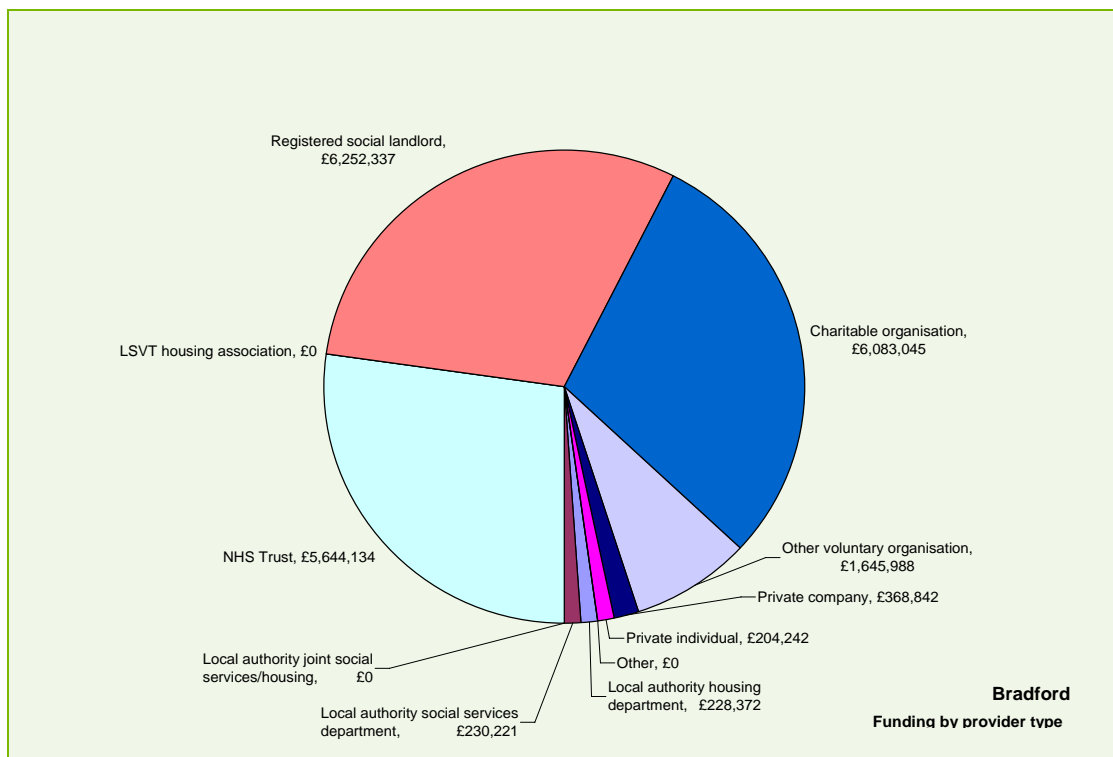
Source: CLG 2005/06

²⁹ Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Figure 14

Share of spending between types of provider³⁰



Source: CLG 2005/06

Table 4 Social Services star ratings 2008

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

	Delivery of outcome	Capacity to improve?	Performance rating (CPA equivalent)
Adults' Services	Good	Promising	★★★

³⁰ Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Social services performance indicators

Table 5 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2007/08

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

Bradford	
Significantly above average (•••••)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31) Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30) Delayed transfers of care (D41) Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 working days (D54)
Above average (••••)	Older people helped to live at home (C32) Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39) Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40) Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29)
Average (•••)	Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31st March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51)
Below average (••)	
Significantly below average (•)	

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Best value performance indicators

Table 6 Performance on relevant indicators in 2007/08 compared with Metropolitan Borough councils

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

Bradford	
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a)
Average	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV225)
Within the worst 25 per cent	

Not yet available

Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)
--

Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken

- 1 When we went on-site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on-site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. Our reality checks included:
 - a questionnaire survey which was sent to all providers of housing related support services;
 - focus groups with members of the Providers Forum;
 - visited to supported housing schemes, to talk to service users, scheme managers and front line staff;
 - file checks of service reviews;
 - mystery shopping exercises to test how easy it is to access services;
 - review of leaflets and the Council's and care trust websites;
 - interviews with members of the Supporting People Team;
 - interviews with members of the Commissioning Body and the Accountable Officer;
 - observation of the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group meeting; and
 - interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Chief Executive of the Council and Care Trust, the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder and other Councillors. Managers from the Adult Social Services, the Care Trust and the Probation Service.

Appendix 3 – Progress against previous Recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
<p>R1 The authority should in the first instance revisit and update the recommendations from the previous inspection which gave a clear indication of the work needed to progress the programme in important areas. In conjunction with the following recommendations they should form a targeted project plan with clear and monitored outcomes and timescales.</p>	Completed.
<p>R2 Expand and implement the current review of governance, corporate management and ownership of the programme ensuring that it addresses issues of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broadening membership to include key partners from broader interest groups; • roles and responsibilities of both the Commissioning Body and Strategic Core Group ensuring that the Commissioning Body's focus is on strategic issues, and that the relationship between the two is clear, and that they provide strategic leadership to the programme; • introducing a strong and clearly understood management structure providing leadership and direction; • identifying and introducing performance planning management and monitoring requirements and structures; and • ensuring that providers and service users are represented effectively. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Completed.</p>

Appendix 3 – Progress against previous Recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
<p>R3 Deliver tangible outputs from improved service user involvement across the Supporting People programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing the desired outcomes; • devising and implementing a project plan to meet those outcomes, with details of responsibilities timescales and quantitative methods of assessment of achievements; • establishing involvement and engagement channels for all client groups including and particularly those who are hard-to-reach; • providing regular feedback to service users to ensure service users are told what changes result from their involvement; • achieving a structured approach to involving service users in the strategic development of the programme; and • establishing robust systems to monitor and challenge the progress of the plan. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Partially Complete</p>
<p>R4 Improve the delivery and monitoring of services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting a robust long-term plan for the use of unlocked funding and future investment; • ranking the priorities for new service development; • developing the detail in the existing commissioning or procurement strategy; • introducing steady state contracts; • agreeing plans with social services and health to move funding to the correct budgets while protecting the interests of service users; and • ensuring the value for money assessments and other contract monitoring arrangements are transparent to all parties. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Partially Complete</p>

Appendix 3 – Progress against previous Recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
<p>R5 Improve the availability of information about the Supporting People programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing additional information about specific services that users would recognise as relating to them; • ensuring leaflets are widely distributed and displayed across the area; • providing information about fairer charging for services; • proactively seeking opportunities to inform frontline staff and other interested parties about the Supporting People programme; • improving the directory of services to include information on all Supporting People services including availability and physical accessibility and the cultural sensitivity of service; and • making the Council website easier to navigate for service users and including information they would be seeking. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p>R6 Address the difficulties service users are having in moving on from supported accommodation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and keeping current the level of need for move on accommodation; • identifying and implementing options for improving the availability of accommodation by working closely with providers of permanent housing; • extending the availability of floating support to promote tenancy sustainment; • challenging inappropriate exclusion policies or practices; • developing systems that ensure support for individuals is linked to preparing to move on ahead of their exit from the scheme; • setting and monitoring targets; and • delivering a move on accommodation strategy. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Partially Complete</p>

Appendix 3 – Progress against previous Recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
<p>R7 To agree, implement and utilise a performance management framework for monitoring progress, identifying slippage, and driving improvements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing quarterly performance reports which contain analysis of performance, and action taken to address issues; • developing and tracking local performance indicators that will measure the outcomes and benefits for service so that delivery of the programme can be monitored and as well as the contribution towards the achievement of the Council's priorities and to those shared with health and probation; • measuring and challenging progress against the five-year strategy and annual plans; • establishing targets and measures for efficiency and value for money improvements; • reporting progress against targets at least six-monthly to the Commissioning Body and at least quarterly to the Core Strategic Group; and • linking individual work plans and targets to annual plans and strategic objectives.. 	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Not Complete</p> <p>Partially Complete</p> <p>Not Complete</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Partially Complete</p>

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)

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