

# Supporting People Programme 2005-2009

July 2009

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Improvements and successes at a national and local level</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>A framework underpinning improvement</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Future governance and regulation through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Progress since the October 2005 national report</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Future challenges</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Conclusion and recommendations</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Project Objectives and Methodology</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Older People and Sheltered Housing</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers</b>	<b>71</b>

# Introduction

- 1 Since 2003, the Audit Commission (AC) has carried out a programme of scheduled full inspections of all 150 Administering Local Authorities (ALA) which were responsible for the Supporting People grant and associated programme at that time. Inspections were carried out with the then Commission for Social Care (CSCI) and the HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). Each team included a service user inspector in order to ensure a major focus on the impact of the programme and its outcomes for service users. In October 2005, the Commission published a national report reviewing the then current state of the Supporting People programme in which the Commission made recommendations to both central and administering local authorities.
- 2 Until April 2009 Supporting People programme funding was ring fenced and subject to conditions covering governance and use of grant. From April 2009 the grant is no longer ring fenced but is identified as a separate line in the overall grant allocations to single tier and County Councils. From April 2010 the allocation will be included in the area based grant. Future performance will be reported through the national performance indicator framework introduced in April 2008 and the national Supporting People outcomes framework. It will be assessed as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA), a new joint regulatory approach for local services undertaken by the Commission in partnership with five other inspectorates, including the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the new inspectorate for health and social care that has incorporated CSCI, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Probation (HMIP).
- 3 The imminent conclusion of the Supporting People inspection programme, changes in the performance reporting framework and new funding arrangements makes this a good time to review the programme. The Commission agreed to prepare a report for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to cover:
  - the impact of the Supporting People programme;
  - a review of the government's response to the Commission's 2005 report;
  - an assessment of any ongoing or new challenges and the identification of barriers to improvement at a local and/or national level, and associated risks for the future; and
  - options for overcoming these barriers together with the development of opportunities for the future.
- 4 The project objectives and research methods are outlined in Appendix 1.
- 5 In response to the brief set by CLG the Commission has supplemented the findings of inspection reports with additional research, including an online survey of all Supporting People officers. Interviews and focus groups were held in the latter part of 2008 with a wide range of stakeholders. The analysis was carried out in January and February 2009 and confirmed the inspection findings that there is evidence of continuing progress in key areas in most administering local authorities, but also ongoing and new areas of concern. The work also identified options for addressing some of these.

# Summary

## Background to the programme

6 The Supporting People programme was introduced in 2003. The initial funding of £1.8 billion was to be used to support the delivery of housing related support to vulnerable people. These include, amongst others, the following:

- homeless people;
- older people;
- people with learning difficulties;
- offenders;
- people with mental health problems;
- young people leaving care;
- women experiencing domestic violence;
- vulnerable Gypsies and Travellers;
- teenage parents; and
- refugees.

The programme was designed to fund services that work with vulnerable individuals to help them gain the skills needed to live more independently, with ongoing support where this is needed, and to find and keep their own homes.

7 Under the programme the 150 principal local authorities were given a grant for the costs of existing housing related support services in their administrative area<sup>1</sup>. The grant came with conditions on eligibility, governance and quality. Authorities were expected to develop eligibility criteria and satisfy themselves that providers were delivering eligible services of an acceptable quality. Where necessary, authorities were expected to make arrangements to withdraw funding from ineligible services or to move the funding of such services to other appropriate budgets.

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<sup>1</sup> The costs were a combination of earlier funding streams such as the then Housing Corporation's Specials Needs Housing Allowance plus the cost of transitional housing benefit.

## Summary

8 The government's framework required local programme governance through a delivery structure led by a Commissioning Body. This body was expected to include social services and housing, as well as representatives of probation and the local primary care trusts. Commissioning Bodies were expected to review all existing services for costs, quality, and strategic relevance before issuing new contracts to providers. A formal Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was developed to give providers and authorities a framework to work to and assess against. Commissioning Bodies were expected to assess the need for housing related support in their area and develop a five year strategy for shifting funds and commissioning new or amended provision to better meet those needs. They were expected to work in partnership with providers and service users in the development of strategy and the commissioning of services.

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### The background to this report

9 Since 2003 the Audit Commission has carried out a programme of inspections of all authorities responsible for delivering the Supporting People grant and associated programme. Inspections were carried out with partner inspectorates CSCI and HMIP. Each team included a service user inspector.

10 In October 2005 the Commission published a national study ([Supporting People 2005](#)), reviewing the then state of the programme, and made a number of recommendations for the future. CLG responded to many of the issues identified by the Commission in their subsequent strategy published in 2007 ([Independence and Opportunities June 2007](#)). From November 2008 with research undertaken up to February 2009, the Commission carried out this second review, this time specifically for CLG, to look at overall impact and successes of the programme; the progress against the 2005 recommendations; on going and existing concerns and new challenges linked to developing policies and changes in the external environment. It also looked for options for overcoming identified barriers and promoting opportunities.

11 The research to support this review has included an assessment of recent policy and research documents and other available data sources. It included a survey of Supporting People lead officers, widespread consultation and interviews with stakeholders including providers, chairs of Commissioning Bodies including those from health and probation, Council officers, service users and inspectors. It draws on the findings from inspections carried out between 2005 and 2008.

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### The successes of the programme

12 Overall our findings are that the programme has brought improvements to:

- the balance of local provision of housing related support compared to identified local need;
- service quality, that has had a positive impact on users quality of life;
- value for money, with improvements in service quality often being achieved within fixed or reducing budgets;

- tailored support, through active service user involvement; and
- outcomes for service users.

13 The development and implementation of five year strategies has, in most areas, laid the foundations for an improvement in the balance of local provision so that it better meets local priority need. Within this the biggest change has been a significant increase in the amount of floating support to supplement or replace accommodation based services. This has increased flexibility and has made services more housing tenure neutral, with an increased number and percentage of owner occupiers and private rented tenants receiving help. The effect of this has been to supplement and in some cases, to replace accommodation based services.

14 Grades given under the Supporting People quality assessment framework (QAF) as well as comments from service users, providers and commissioners all show that service quality has improved. These improvements are also evidenced through many inspection reports. The major driver has been the development and implementation of the QAF. Improved commissioning and contract monitoring has also helped, with many of the poorest services being decommissioned, redesigned or replaced following review. The involvement of service users has been important, for example, as peer reviewers of existing services or as members of commissioning panels.

15 There is still identified unmet housing related support need in most areas. The increased awareness of community needs and the local profile of services have both played a part in this. Better co-ordinated move on arrangements would help meet this unmet need and it would free up places in supported housing and hostels for others. However, move on arrangements are improving with the development of more local agreements between local authorities, support providers and landlords. The use of rent deposit schemes and the provision of additional floating support mean that there is more opportunity to move people into suitable private rented accommodation.

16 Value for money has improved. The overall value of the grant has fallen since the start of the programme. In 2003/04, the total grant was £1.814 and in 2008/09, the total grant was £1.686 billion but the numbers of service users supported nationally slightly increased and quality has improved<sup>1</sup>. Benchmarking information from national data sources and regional detailed work has helped authorities decide on appropriate local cost ranges.

17 The ongoing involvement of service users in individual services is a key requirement of the QAF. Local authorities that have increasingly involved users and carers in strategic and commissioning decisions have also developed a greater insight into the effectiveness of different approaches and programmes of support.

18 This improved engagement, together with the introduction of individual support plans and the Supporting People outcomes framework has helped make services more focused on individual user needs. They have increased the emphasis on proactive support which seeks where feasible to help service users become more independent.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: University of St Andrews Supporting People outcomes framework data

## Summary

- 19 Inspection reports show that in most areas there has been a sustained focus on service users. The improvement in quality, the adoption of a more personalised approach and the increase in user involvement has led to improved outcomes. Such improvement can be tracked against the outcome data collected nationally. The data is drawn from information about the impact of support services on the lives of different groups of vulnerable people and the opportunities made available to them, for example, access to training and employment. The use of this data should encourage further improvement by showing which needs have been best met by which services, and which ones need further attention.
- 20 A major success of the programme has been the buy-in and involvement at a local level of many providers and service users as well as public service partners. The existence of dedicated council staff, provider and user forums and named lead officers has given providers and users the ability to engage with and influence local councils and their partners. It has allowed targeted training and tailored support programmes. It has promoted cross provider and cross area learning and innovation.

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## Weaknesses in a minority of authorities and partnerships

- 21 Unfortunately, in a minority of authorities the programme has been poorly implemented. Fourteen inspection reports published between October 2005 and 2008 judged authorities as poor (zero star) performers. In these areas the benefits of housing related support were not widely understood or supported within the administering local authority. In some, Supporting People is not well embedded in local practice across the partnership.
- 22 The value for money and other benefits of housing related support are not yet well understood across all relevant sectors. The view of many Commissioning Body chairs and local officers reflect the evidence from inspection reports that those involved in health and children's services are less involved in the programme and do not always integrate Supporting People services with their own provision. While probation is generally fully engaged, links are still weak with some crime and disorder reduction partnerships.
- 23 There are still some vulnerable groups whose housing related support needs are not always fully identified and frequently not being met. These include mentally disordered offenders, Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and older people with severe mental health problems.

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## New and ongoing challenges

- 24 Policies and external environmental changes developed since our last report in 2005 have introduced new challenges for all areas. These include:
  - the move to make services better meet the needs and aspirations of users through expanding choice and the personalisation of services, including individual budgets;
  - an increased understanding of and profile for safeguarding issues for adults and children;

- changes to the regulatory framework, with the development of Local and Multi Area Agreements, the introduction of a new national performance indicator set and the advent of Comprehensive Area Assessment; and
- changes from April 2009, with Supporting People funding included as a separate line in the local authority financial settlement. From April 2010 the funding will be included in the Area Based Grant. The removal of the ring fence from the grant has led to some uncertainty and lack of confidence in future service development for providers and security of provision for service users.
- the current economic climate that is bringing new challenges to all public services.

**25** Ongoing challenges include:

- keeping needs data up to date and linking this in to the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment arrangements;
- sustaining and improving partnerships and cross agency working, especially with health and children's services, without the underpinning of grant required governance arrangements; and
- effective procurement and commissioning in a market that is still not fully mature and which is dependent on public sector funding and policy.

**26** Individual budgets (IBs) currently apply to a minority of Supporting People clients.

Some authorities intend to offer Individual Budgets to all Client groups. Many involved in the IB pilot have shown commitment but have yet to offer this service widely and other authorities have not started to consider how IBs can assist in the promotion of choice. Additionally, the adoption of IBs in some areas will require a rethinking of some service models, for example, accommodation based housing related support services are often designed with an expectation that there will be housing support funding as well as rental income for every resident. If individuals can choose to spend support money elsewhere the funding of the collective services may be undermined.

**27** Arrangements for safeguarding have improved, but inspections have identified particular areas of concern, for example where young people are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. Evidence from inspections identified concerns over a lack of formal safeguarding protocols between some housing related support providers and some local authorities. There is also a lack of clear and accessible information for some service users on the standard of service they should expect to receive and how to access advice and assistance if they are concerned about the conduct of the support providers and/ or other service users.

**28** Ninety seven of the then one hundred and fifty Local Strategic Partnerships have, through their Local Area Agreements, selected one or both of the two National Indicators for Supporting People. There is no statistical link between adoption of these indicators and performance as represented by inspection scores. Some recent poor performers did not adopt either indicator, and so progress in these areas cannot be measured by the NI set alone. Housing related support also contributes to a range of other indicators around reducing social exclusion, supporting preventative services and move on. It is not clear what the impact of monitoring via these indicators will be.

## Summary

- 29 Nationally a third of Supporting People contracts are up for renewal during 2009 with a further third in 2010. In some administering local authorities new contract negotiations have not yet started and in others contracts have been delayed. This is a challenge to the maintenance of a stable and secure provider market.
- 30 The ending of grant conditions means that Councils can, if they wish, dismantle their governance arrangements. Previously excellent Local Authorities who had achieved a 4 star Comprehensive Performance Assessment from the Audit Commission were able to amend their governance arrangements for Supporting People, but chose not to take up this option. Most local authorities currently support the continuance of existing partnership based arrangements. Commissioning Bodies may not work as effectively if in future they lose ongoing responsibility for an identified housing related support budget. Although there have been improvements in commissioning, provider markets and commissioning skills are not mature enough in all areas and sectors to be secure without any supporting framework.

Supporting People services are not statutory and without the protection of a ring fenced grant may be at risk as public funding becomes constrained. The recession brings further pressures. History suggests that more individuals may become vulnerable and need support because of the pressures of economic recession. There may be an increase in depression and other mental health problems, and more individuals turning to alcohol or drugs. Academic research<sup>1</sup> has shown that compulsory redundancies are linked to increases in domestic violence.

## Issues for further consideration

- 31 The benefits of Supporting People have been hard won. Mistakes have been made, particularly in some early service reviews, contract tendering and commissioning arrangements. However, overall the ring fenced grant, associated conditions and supporting guidance has created a framework which has underpinned change for better outcomes for service users. Together with the national inspection programme, it has given rise to a balance of support and challenge and provided a national framework within which local partners could act and make local decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Research on the impact of major job losses shows higher levels of alcohol abuse amongst workers made redundant (Dee, 2001); higher levels of conflict and stress within households, including domestic violence; psychological distress, (Keefe et al, 2002); and increased propensity for family break-up (Fallick, 1996). Keefe, V. et al, 'Serious health events following involuntary job loss in New Zealand meat processing workers', International Journal of Epidemiology 31: 1155-61, 2002 Dee, T, 'Alcohol abuse and economic conditions: Evidence from repeated cross sections of individual-level data.' Health Economics, 10: 257-70, 2001 Fallick, B., 'A review of the recent empirical literature on displaced workers.' Industrial and Labour Relations Review 50(1): 5-12, 1996

- 32 The framework brought discipline and focus to services which in many places were previously disparate and sometimes relatively isolated because they sought to meet the needs of diverse groups of vulnerable customers. The programme has created a community of officers, providers, users and carers and volunteers involved in Supporting People who now share common language and understanding. They can and have shared ideas, innovation and good practice. This development of a community of practice with informal and formal support networks has been particularly important because of the small numbers of some groups of service users and, in some services, of providers. It has encouraged sharing of ideas, innovation and good practice.
- 33 The governance approach imposed through joint Commissioning Bodies supported a cross cutting approach and helped link Supporting People provision into wider strategies for relevant vulnerable groups. We have found that better Commissioning Bodies are able to work with a range of partners to make difficult decisions which may have been delayed by individual agencies. Clearer eligibility rules and financial arrangements have driven change. Efficiency reductions in grant meant that change had to be made. At the same time needs based strategies, the benchmarking data collected on provider performance, the service review process and the QAF provided Commissioning Bodies with the information to make decisions.
- 34 The existence of the ring fence and permission to roll forward under spent budgets provided incentive for those involved, including providers, to identify savings and make efficiency gains. All parties acknowledge that, once grant reductions were met, savings would be re-invested into improvements or new developments in housing related support.
- 35 The government has put in place a transition package to help local areas through the change. The package has subsequently been amended to take account of the additional pressures on demand for services and funding triggered by the current economic recession. Given these new pressures, the evidence of ongoing weaknesses in some authorities and the extent of local concerns it is inevitable that commissioners and providers will be faced with difficult decisions in the coming months. This will require ongoing monitoring to assess the impact of the recession on housing related support supply and demand and further action may be needed if the hard won gains of the past six years are not to be lost.
- 36 The challenge for local service commissioners and providers is to find ways of preserving and sustaining good practice in the light of potentially far-reaching changes to funding and governance arrangements. Maintaining service funding without a ring fence will be harder. This challenge may be made more difficult by the recession that will increase local demand for many services while reducing available resources.
- 37 The benefits of good housing related support services and their preventative value remains important in a tighter financial climate. As with all services, the benefits need to be understood, evidenced and clearly articulated to those who are responsible for making difficult resourcing decisions in difficult times.

## Summary

- 38 The challenge for the inspectorates, now that the full inspection programme is complete, is to ensure that through CAA they effectively identify weaknesses, and ensure that these are addressed, so that vulnerable people receive the support they need to remain in their homes. The ending of the grant conditions means an alternative arrangement against which to assess performance is required.
- 39 There is important learning about service reviews and quality improvement, value for money, partnerships, commissioning, service user involvement and outcome frameworks and recording that has come out of the programme over the past six years could be considered by other services. Spreading this learning is an issue for all involved, including national government and the joint inspectorates.

# Improvements and successes at a national and local level

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Overall the programme has delivered improvements to the balance of local provision, service quality and individual outcomes for vulnerable people. This has been supported by an increasing focus on individual needs and greater involvement of service users and their carers and providers in strategy and service development. There have been improvements in value for money. However, weaker performance in some ALAs remains and there are concerns from some stakeholders about aspects of the programme.

- 40 Research agreed for this report involved interviews and focus groups with service users, providers, local authority officers and partners who work with these users and those involved in inspecting Supporting People services from the Audit Commission and inspection partners CSCI (now part of the Care Quality Commission) and HMIP. All considered that there had been improvements since 2005. Surveys were carried out with all administering local authorities and their partners. The detailed results of these can be found in Appendix 3.
- 41 Inspection findings indicate that the planning, delivery and quality of housing related support services have improved over the past five years. These views were broadly shared by Commissioning Body chairs interviewed for this report and by Lead Officers surveyed.<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1). Overall providers are also positive, particularly those who support the most excluded groups and those working in services that have seen particular expansion such as Home Improvement Agencies.
- 42 In 2006 Homeless Link, the National Housing Federation and SITRA together submitted documents at the time of the Comprehensive Spending Review which called the programme:

...a story of success...that is changing the lives of over a million people each year<sup>2</sup>

....one of the government's greatest successes<sup>3</sup>

- 43 Some providers are more circumspect, particularly those providing lower levels of support. This group, which includes some sheltered housing providers, think the administrative cost per individual user is unnecessarily high. Providers also have concerns about commissioning and about the tensions between localism and national standards discussed later.

..from a procurement perspective an administrative nightmare

*Providers at Regional National Housing Federation meeting*

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<sup>1</sup> A survey of all officers in November 2008 summarised in Appendix 3 highlights their views.<sup>1</sup>

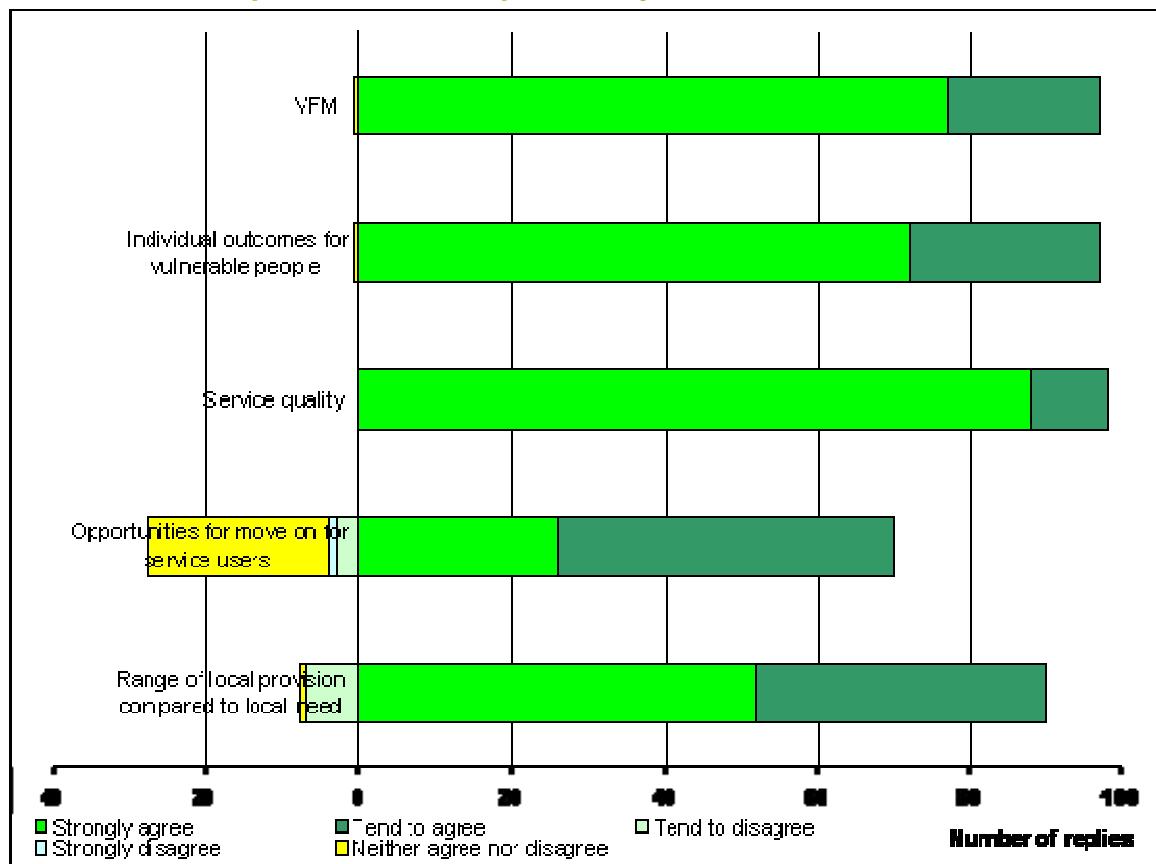
<sup>2</sup> Reference: Supporting People - a story of success; Homeless Link July 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The National Federation, SITRA and Homeless Link Joint Submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

44 Improvement is most noticeable in service quality, user involvement and value for money. A relative weakness is the slow development of opportunities for appropriate move on from Supporting People services. In counties in particular, officers are less certain that there have been significant improvements here, while move on audits show ongoing challenges. (Figure 1)

### The planning, delivery and quality of housing related support services have improved over the past five years



Source: Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3. (Bars may not all add up to 101 responses as “don’t know” responses are excluded from this graph.)

45 The most frequently mentioned driver of better quality is the QAF, with service reviews and contract standards and associated monitoring also seen as important by Commissioning body chairs and lead officers. Providers on SITRA policy committee said that the QAF is the biggest gain which benefits clients. Participants in interviews, focus groups and surveys also commented positively on the impact of Supporting People inspections and the associated key lines of enquiry, in driving up standards: further details are available in paragraphs 108 to 117.

46 Most also report significant improvement in local value for money (see later section). Nationally the grant has fallen year on year since 2003, but the number of places has stayed broadly the same while their quality and relevance has improved. Cap Gemini estimated a net benefit of £2.77 billion from Supporting People for an investment of £1.55 billion<sup>1</sup>.

47 Examples of demonstrable local improvements include efficiency savings leading to reinvestment in additional places or in new high priority services using the savings made; remodelling services to better fit local need at no overall cost; and higher quality services with lower unit costs. Authorities are especially proud of maintaining good links with many providers through the reviews and new contractual arrangements that accompanied these major changes.

48 There was little if any recording of either support activities or the outcomes for users prior to the introduction of the Supporting People programme. Previously much housing related support, including that provided to older people in sheltered housing, could be very standardised and not always user focused or needs driven.

49 Outcomes for vulnerable service users have improved. Inspection reports and provider comments suggest that greater user involvement, choice and control are important here. The development of individual Support Plans has helped to tailor services to individual needs and focus on outcomes. Some providers said this approach gives service users more confidence. The new outcomes framework and the requirement to measure and record has also helped to shift the focus, as the majority view expressed here and in consultation events was that 'what gets measured gets done'. The framework makes all involved think in a more service user centred and developmental way. Contract and service specifications which include expected outcomes have helped to underpin this shift in approach.

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### Improvements to the balance of service provision

50 Housing related support provision in 2003 was not strategically planned at a national or local area level and did not reflect relative needs. At a national level the Supporting People distribution formula used the best available data sources to calculate relative weightings of funding for different groups; this suggests that young people lost out on funding compared to other groups.

51 The national data collected quarterly from all authorities shows a change in the balance of provision since 2003/04. (Figure 2). A major increase in floating support is a notable change in services accessed. An increase in the proportion of female clients from 47 to 49 per cent was the biggest change in terms of service user profile<sup>2</sup>.

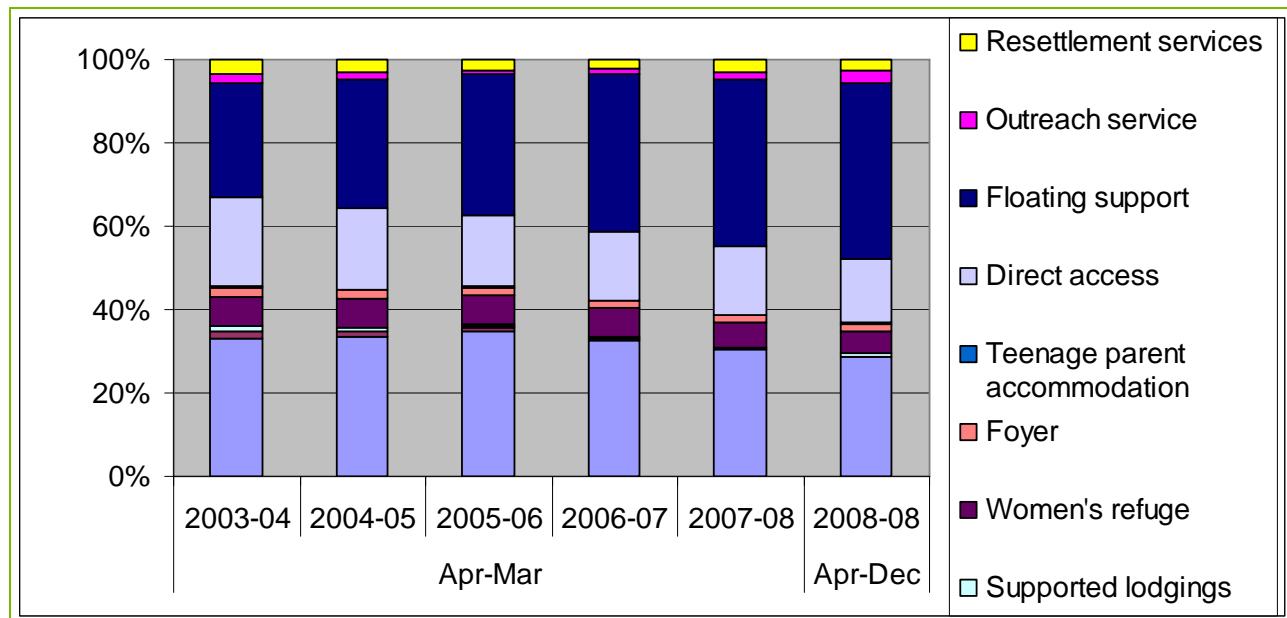
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<sup>1</sup> [Cap Gemini Cost Benefit of Supporting People services, 2008](#).

<sup>2</sup> Client Records data. This data is collected from providers. It gives information on service users. It is analysed by St Andrews University and is publicly available at [www.spclientrecord.org.uk](http://www.spclientrecord.org.uk). This data does not include information on individuals in sheltered housing or users of Home Improvement Agencies.

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

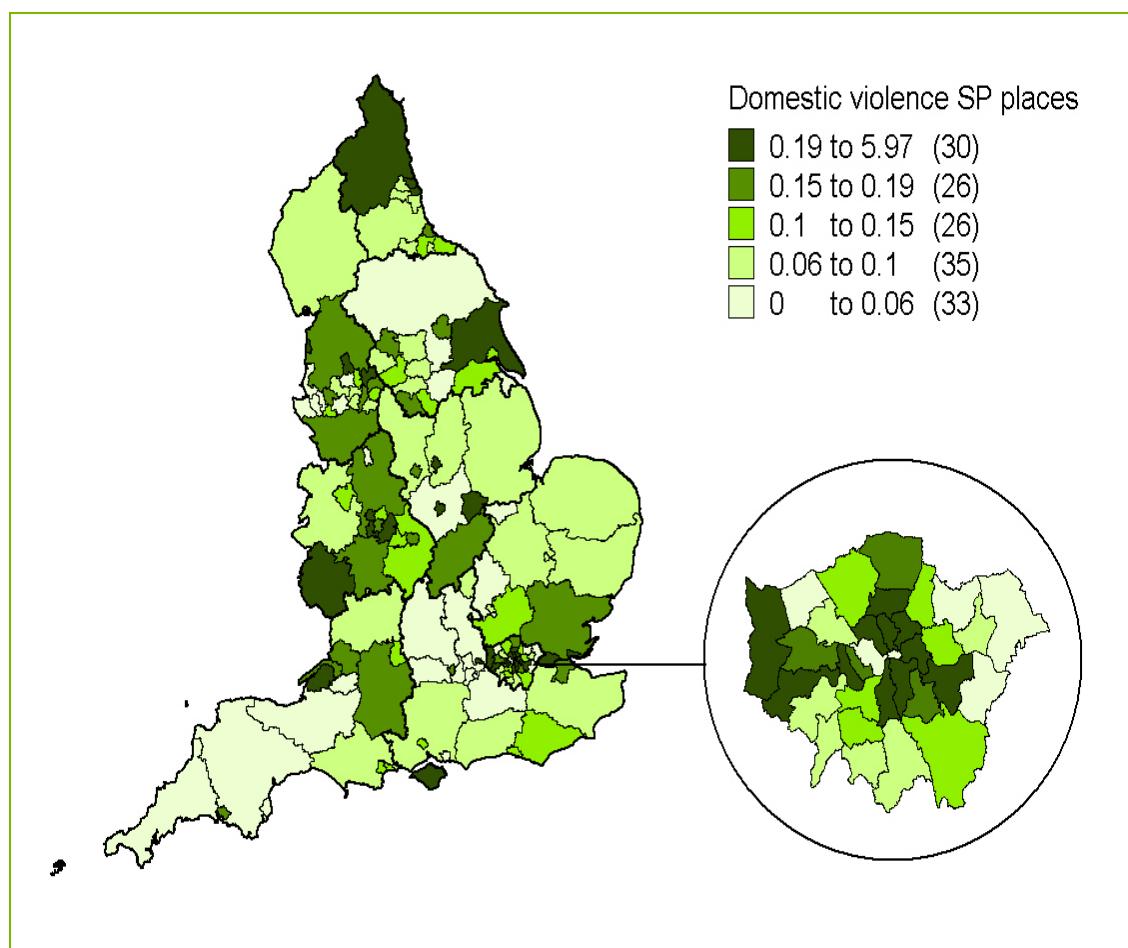
### Changes to the balance of provision type at a national level, 2003 to 2008



Source: CLG client records data

52 Whilst improving, the local balance of provision is variable even for needs which are common to all areas. For example, Map 1 shows the variations in the provision of Supporting People funded places for victims of domestic violence.

**Map 1: Places for victims of domestic violence funded by Supporting People, per 1,000 population**



Source: Client record data

- 53 Providers and commissioning body chairs interviewed all consider that five year strategies have laid the foundations for a better local balance of services. The range of local provision compared to local need is seen as improved. Most frequently mentioned is the shift in provision to more need based services, linked to strategic priorities. The major increase in floating support balances previous accommodation dominated arrangements.
- 54 Opportunities for move on are gradually improving although progress in some areas has been slow. Local protocols are being agreed across social housing providers but some lead officers still report difficulties in securing permanent housing for some vulnerable groups including young people with multiple needs and offenders. Lead Officers report an increase in dedicated move on properties, floating support and rent deposit schemes have allowed move on from supported social housing or hostels to standard social and private rented tenancies.

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

55 The increased availability of floating support and greater geographical spread of Housing Improvement Agencies (HIAs)<sup>1</sup> have made support services more flexible and tenure neutral. Lead officers particularly note their increasing ability to give support to individuals in the private rented and owner occupied sectors. This is reflected in the nationally collected client data that shows an increased number of clients in these tenures.

56 Analysis carried out to inform five year strategies has improved local understanding of need. It has been steered locally and in the best performing authorities has involved providers and service users. Analysis and joint procurement between and across authorities has meant the development of specialist provision for some vulnerable minority groups who previously had few services, for example older people with dementia or those with dual diagnosis issues regarding mental health, drugs and alcohol.

57 Services now exist for non statutory vulnerable groups where previously there was no provision. Probation inspectors consider that ex offenders and those at risk of offending have particularly benefited from a wider range of support options.

58 Some Commissioning Body chairs said that the programme had changed the approach of their councils. Groups previously not recognised as being in need such as ex-offenders and women at risk of domestic violence were now seen as vulnerable and as part of the council's wider responsibilities.

59 Where regional or sub regional working is particularly well established, for example in the Eastern region, future new building related developments are planned against area wide needs and priorities, and so balance has the potential to improve further.

### Case Study 1: Regional planning for new developments

The Supporting People East Regional Group (SPER) has developed a regional prioritisation matrix to inform their Single Contracting Framework. This has:

- enabled the region to agree priorities in conjunction with each other and adult social care;
- prevented ALAs bidding against each other for Housing Corporation Capital funding (From 1st December 2008, bids are managed by the Homes and Communities Agency);
- linked capital funding from the Housing Corporation (now the Homes and Communities Agency) with revenue streams;
- resulted in more funding for housing related support in the region; and
- increased confidence of providers who appreciate the availability of increased funding and are better able to plan for the long-term<sup>2</sup>.

Source: SPER

<sup>1</sup> The Foundations' website ([www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com)) gives up to date information on all HIAs and the new HIA outcomes framework.

<sup>2</sup> Details available in the annex to the web version of this report

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### Improvements to access, service quality and individual outcomes for vulnerable people and greater involvement of users, and their carers and providers in strategy and service development

60 Improvements to access include the development of single access points or gateways and clearer referral routes agreed between providers and assessors. The development of more localised services has made access easier for many, reducing travelling time/cost and keeping people within their communities. CLG guidance on removing local connection policies has changed the approach of some councils, especially districts, who are now adopting a less parochial attitude.

61 There is widespread agreement that the QAF has been the major driver of improved quality. This was an area in particular need of attention as housing related support was previously an area without required or generally accepted quality standards. Supporting People officers are especially proud of the involvement of service users or peer arrangements in quality checking. These include involving users in selecting contractors.

**The QAF has been hugely influential in influencing the development of policy and best practice. Services previously either looked to inappropriate residential/home care standards or worked without any clear standards. Use of a single tool has helped providers to recognise common interests and objectives.**

#### Supporting People Lead Officer

62 For example, in West London there is a user involvement project across all authorities in the Regional Implementation Group, with a cross regional training programme and pool of users to carry out peer consultancy<sup>1</sup>. In Oxfordshire, service users have so far taken part in evaluating prospective providers of hostels and stage 2 accommodation for homeless people; services for women at risk of domestic violence based in Oxfordshire's women's refuges and supported housing for people with drug problems.<sup>2</sup>

63 The information and support given to providers has enabled them to provide better services and position themselves to tender for new services. Providers have shared information with each other on performance and how they have improved. They have also used the QAF effectively to drive up performance.

64 Individual support plans and improved service user involvement have also helped to focus more on user needs and improve quality as a result. Some social care and probation commissioners are impressed by the rigor and clarity of the Supporting People quality and commissioning framework. They already are or intend to use aspects of this for improving wider health and social care commissioning. For example, one provider in the North East is using Supporting People support plans in its residential homes. This has led to positive outcomes for some residents who have achieved their wish to return to more independent living. In Kent, learning from Supporting People influenced monitoring and review of Kent Adult Social Services and peer reviews with Probation and Drug and Alcohol Action teams.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional detail is available in an annex to the web version of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Source; Oxfordshire Supporting People Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group submission.

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

- 65 An increasingly outcome driven approach is now underpinned by the Supporting People outcomes framework, based on the five outcomes used for Every Child Matters. These are: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well being. Outcome data from providers is collated by St Andrews University on behalf of CLG.<sup>1</sup>
- 66 It will take some time before the data on long term outcomes allows longitudinal research. However, in the medium term the evidence base built up has the potential for important research on what works best and on the areas of greatest weakness. This should help focus future service reconfiguration and innovation.
- 67 The short term outcome data already allows assumptions to be checked and can aid service development. For example, an analysis of data available for young people at risk<sup>2</sup> links previous housing circumstances with outcomes, suggesting that this should perhaps be taken into account when determining what form and level of support to offer. Outcome data can identify groups for whom particular desired outcomes are met less often; this information is the first stage of finding better ways to address specific needs with that group. Data submitted by providers shows that the three groups where it is most difficult to maximise impact are travellers, mentally disordered offenders and those with drug problems; the two easiest are refugees and teenage parents.

### Case Study 2: Early use of outcome data at a local level

Some authorities are developing local tools to interrogate this new data and feedback into local strategies. Rochdale CLG outcome reports are produced for each service and are discussed during visits to highlight positive outcomes and poor performance. Shared outcomes with partners are agreed where possible; for example, Primary Care Trust managers have worked with the Supporting People team to define shared outcomes from newly commissioned services for people with drug or alcohol dependency. Outcomes are reported to the Supporting People Development Group and Strategic Commissioning Board and are shared with providers through the spkweb. A log of positive service user outcomes has been set up to enable the sharing of good practice between providers.<sup>3</sup>

Source: Rochdale Supporting People Inspection report, 2009

- 68 The Supporting People culture of inclusiveness, partnership working and consultation has helped move many providers from a more paternalistic approach to one where service users are able to influence services. There are many examples of the positive impact of service user involvement. In Bolton, some ex-service users have become support workers as a result of involvement and are now acting as peer reviewers. In Kent, two service user involvement workers are ex service users. One has just joined the Supporting People team.
- 69 Officers suggest that involving users in tendering and service reviews is a major driver of improvement in outcomes and value for money. In Gateshead 60 per cent of questions came from service users during a recent procurement exercise.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.spclientrecord.org.uk>

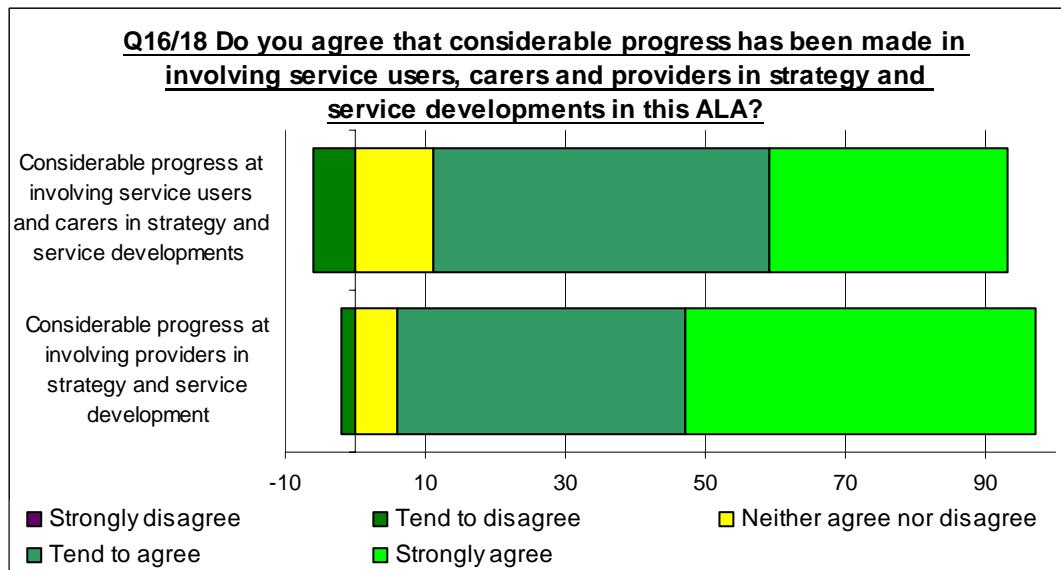
<sup>2</sup> Client data updates, Young People at risk; Supporting People Client Record Office (JCSHR), University of St. Andrews; available at <http://www.spclientrecord.org.uk>

<sup>3</sup> Rochdale Supporting People inspection report 2009 (still in draft as of May 09).

70 Better user involvement is a distinguishing feature of authorities who received higher inspection scores. The improvement in service user involvement and the move to more individualised services linked to individual support plans fit with the wider drive for more personalisation and choice in services. The outcomes based approach demonstrates the preventative nature of many of the services.

71 Eighty two per cent of Supporting People officers consider there has been progress in user and carer involvement. (Figure 2).

## Progress on involving service users



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

72 Ongoing weaknesses in involvement in some areas include confusion of roles between landlords and Supporting People teams. This is particularly noticeable in sheltered housing (see Appendix 3). Confusion over rent, service charges and support charges occurs in a number of supported housing schemes. If landlords have long standing effective communication with tenants it is easier to build on this and effectively involve tenants in further service development. It is hard for Supporting People teams to act without landlord support.

### Better Value for Money

73 Research by Capgemini for the CLG in January 2008<sup>1</sup> looked at cost benefit and value for money from housing related support services. It suggests that investment in packages of housing related support services avoids higher costs elsewhere, and so produces a net financial benefit. The research demonstrates how investing in early preventative support reduces the need for more intensive care and support. Older people are the largest user group so the greatest net benefit comes from supporting this group, but in terms of net benefit per individual there is particular value for money from services for people with learning difficulties, those with mental health concerns, those with drug problems and for those fleeing domestic violence. (Table 1). This research is being updated at a national level and a local model is being developed to assist local authorities in demonstrating the financial benefits of housing related support at a local level.

74 The Capgemini research compares the unit costs of Supporting People services with the costs of the most appropriate positive alternatives for meeting the group's needs (ie the approach which would, in the absence of Supporting People, provide the highest degree of independent living). This analysis suggests the removal of Supporting People services would lead to increased costs in the areas of health service, homelessness, tenancy failure, crime and (in particular) residential care packages. In reality for some clients, particularly those who do not qualify for statutory support, the actual alternative might be no support, with costs falling on the individual, their families and society as a whole rather than always on public service budgets.

<sup>1</sup> [Cap Gemini Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People Programme, 2008.](#)

**Table 1 Costs and estimated net benefits per annum per 1,000 units of Supporting People services by client group**

Client group	Cost per 1,000 units of support (£m)	Net financial benefit per 1,000 units of support (£m)	Total Cost (£m)	National net financial benefit (£m)
Women at risk of domestic violence	(10.1)	14.6	(59.5)	85.7
People with drug problems	(6.6)	26.1	(24.3)	96.3
Homeless families in settled accommodation	(3.0)	0.1	(28.7)	1.2
Homeless families in temporary accommodation	(3.7)	7.5	(25.0)	50.2
Homeless single in settled accommodation	(5.2)	0.3	(147.8)	9.1
Homeless single in temporary accommodation	(8.1)	4.9	(127.2)	77.2
People with learning difficulties	(12.5)	20.5	(405.6)	664.2
People with mental health problems	(6.7)	13.0	(252.5)	487.0
Offenders and those at risk of offending	(7.3)	3.9	(46.7)	24.9
Older people – sheltered and other	(0.3)	1.4	(258.7)	1,090.9
Older people – very sheltered	(1.2)	5.1	(31.4)	138.7
Older people – floating support	(0.7)	0.5	(37.8)	25.9
Young people at risk in settled accommodation	(7.0)	0.5	(72.6)	5.6
Young people at risk in temporary accommodation	(8.5)	3.0	(29.1)	10.4
<b>TOTALS</b>			(1,546.8)	2,767.3

Source: [Cap Gemini Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People Programme, 2008](#)

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

75 Supporting People has provided a unique opportunity to ensure housing related support services meet standards and deliver value for money. Value for money has continued to improve since 2005 through better commissioning and procurement of services. Robust analyses of costs and the quality of existing services have secured efficiencies. This has been achieved despite reducing service costs in the context of a steadily reducing programme grant. In 2005/06 the national grant was £1.8 billion; by 2008/09 it had fallen to £1.54 billion. Taking account of inflation over the period this represents a fall of £406 million.<sup>1</sup> However, because some grant was moved out of ineligible services locally the reduction in funding directed to eligible local services was not so great.<sup>2</sup>

76 Feedback from providers and lead officers highlighted the following as important in improving value for money.

- Ring fencing of the Supporting People grant enabled the programme to 'punch above its weight' and deliver significant outcomes. The ring fence made it easy to use savings to pilot new services and approaches, particularly for groups at risk of social exclusion. It gave those involved an incentive to identify savings, because they knew these could be reinvested.
- The introduction of eligibility criteria to separate care from housing related support encouraged providers and commissioners to focus on what Supporting People funding should and should not be paying for and helped redistribute funding.
- Supporting People guidance, grant conditions and ongoing support from CLG through the Value Improvement Programme, helped authorities identify efficiencies.
- The requirement for providers to put systems in place to measure outcomes, quality and service user inclusion has been a key driver in improving value for money for both providers and commissioners of Supporting People funded services.
- National and regional seminars and practice guidance helped commissioners and providers to assess and measure value for money. Experience has significantly improved the standard of local commissioning and procurement.
- Required data returns have made comparative benchmarking data widely available. This has been used by commissioners to identify local services where greater value for money could be achieved.

<sup>1</sup> Calculation uses HM treasury GDP deflator for the period.

<sup>2</sup> The reduction in the national Supporting People grant did not always mean that a similar reduction would occur in the money available in the ALA area for housing related support services. The grant conditions required ALAs to move funding out of ineligible services following service reviews. If the ineligible services concerned were still required funding had to be found from alternative budgets, most commonly adult care or in some cases health. The Supporting People grant released was then available for housing related support. There are no national figures for the extent of such local financial shifts, but in some authorities it would have compensated in theory for much of the fall in value of the grant. A recent inspection showed that around 15 per cent of the local grant had been directed to ineligible services.

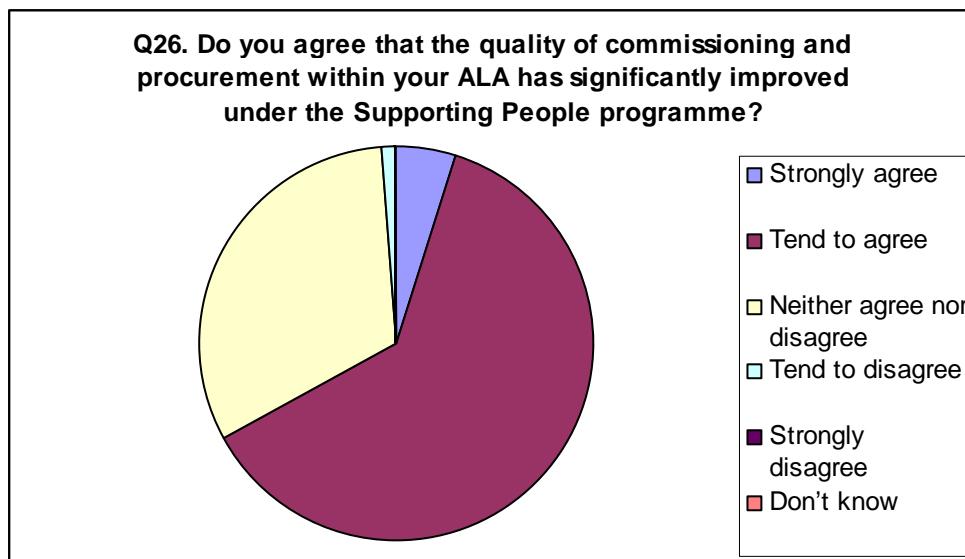
77 Most interviewed and surveyed during this research feel that the QAF contributes to value for money. It introduced a more outcome focused approach to contract monitoring and its focus on client engagement has delivered tangible improvements. It had a positive impact on overall awareness and good practice in terms of adult safeguarding.

**The QAF has made a big difference. Supporting People commissioners can now have confidence in what they are commissioning and know what sort of service they can expect to be delivered.**

### SP Lead Officer

78 Better commissioning and procurement has been important. Two-thirds of lead officers in 2008 felt the quality of commissioning and procurement had improved. (Figure 3 )

#### Lead officers feel the quality of commissioning and procurement has improved



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

79 Commissioners have developed a better understanding of their local markets in terms of the range, cost and quality of local provision. They are gaining better understanding of what Supporting People funded services should cost, aided in some cases by the CLG funded cost modelling tool for Administering Local Authorities (ALAs), which enables authorities to better understand key local cost drivers, such as labour costs.

80 The introduction of a single performance framework for all supported housing providers has introduced consistency and enabled better benchmarking of service cost and quality. Providers submit cost information electronically through their ALAs.

## Improvements and successes at a national and local level

- 81 A growing number of administering authorities have used the benchmarks and the cost modelling tool and have worked with providers to agree local parameters for acceptable hourly costs and number of hours per week for local Supporting People funded services, usually broken down by service type. The cost modelling tool, built by Capgemini for CLG, is designed to calculate an approximate estimate, for each client group, of the financial benefits of Supporting People (SP) funded services. It does this by considering two alternative scenarios; a baseline scenario where clients in the group are supported with packages that involve Supporting People funding – and a counterfactual scenario, where clients are supported with packages that do not involve Supporting People funding. Because, typically, not using Supporting People services results either in the use of more expensive support packages or support packages that expose clients to risks (such as the risk of prolonged hospitalisation) that carry costs, the cost of support under the baseline scenario is typically lower than that under the counterfactual scenario. The difference is the 'net benefit' of the Supporting People services; and this is the benefit that the model identifies.
- 82 Some benchmarking work has been undertaken by ALAs across authorities, regions and sub-regions to help improve value for money. The Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Implementation Group (RIG) has benchmarking data covering all service types; extensive cost benchmarking work was carried out by the Supporting People Core Cities Group in 2006 and QAF levels can be benchmarked.
- 83 Some regions or sub-regions have agreed an overall benchmark for hourly rates. Strong partnership working at RIGS has led to significant benefits, such as user involvement at a strategic level and in commissioning and service monitoring, together with joint frameworks for quality monitoring and other initiatives.
- 84 Joint working between providers and commissioners improves the overall value for money of services. Close partnership working between provider NACRO and commissioner Tameside reduced costs and delivered a very successful service for drug users. Thirty per cent of users go on to full time employment.
- 85 Nearly half of authorities responding to our survey (43 per cent) had carried out some joint commissioning. The most common partner(s) were neighbouring authorities with services for drug and alcohol problems or offenders.

### Case Study 3: Joint working at regional level in London

In East London, the RIG introduced joint procurement for a floating support service for priority offenders in the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

The North London RIG has agreed an upper regional benchmark of £25 per hour. The group is now looking at benchmarking performance frameworks and identifying the differences between providers across the sub-region.

The West London framework for quality monitoring has joint policies on Value for Money and accreditation. It provides one standard format for all seven boroughs. Authorities have peer reviewed each other to ensure consistent assessment. They have amended the framework following user and provider feedback. One framework is simpler for providers.

86 In 2005 CLG introduced Value Improvement Pilots (VIPS) as a tool to help tackle some of the practical problems facing ALAs in delivering best value for money in Supporting People services.

### Case Study 4: Southampton VIP

The Supporting People National Value Improvement Programme (VIP) built on the work of the 11 pilots.<sup>1</sup> One of these was Southampton. At the start of the pilot, the city had four hostels, supporting 162 individuals at any one time. Following the VIP, this is reducing to one emergency, short-stay service. The complete hostel package at the outset of the VIP was £872,000 for 55 support places. The price of the emergency hostel following rationalisation and tendering was £660,000 for 55 support places. Efficiency savings (cashable) for 2006/07 were £206,000, a 24 per cent reduction. Efficiencies over five years (assuming inflation at GDP deflator rates) will be £1,119,000. The remodelled service brought other efficiencies in:

- use of external resources (for example health, mental health, housing services);
- staff time within the service and in second stage services; and
- allowing better use of the city's Street Homeless Prevention Team.

87 A measure of the impact of value for money in the Supporting People quality and commissioning framework is its increasing recognition by other services. The London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest are developing joint framework agreements across Supporting People and social care services for Learning Disability, using the Supporting People monitoring framework. The North East has developed regional centres of excellence, using the Supporting People contract management approach. This is influencing the approach of social care contracting.

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### Underpinning Improvements

88 These improvements to the balance of local provision, service user involvement, outcomes for users and value for money have been underpinned by a framework including robust local governance arrangements, regional improvement groups, national guidance and support and a performance management framework including the challenge of inspection. These are discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> The outcomes from the initial VIP pilots can be found on the Supporting People K-web. [www.spkweb.gov.uk](http://www.spkweb.gov.uk) [Value Improvement pilots](#)

# A framework underpinning improvement

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**The programme has developed a strong identity underpinned by a governance and performance management framework that has both required and supported change and development. There remain some authorities where governance and performance is still poor.**

**Supporting People was previously a messy area and has been brought together in terms of a Local Authority's responsibility for the delivery of services. (We) shouldn't underestimate the benefits of that approach....**

## **Supporting People service provider**

- 89 Leadership and commitment from CLG and from key individuals at a local level have developed a new identity for previously disparate housing related support services and created an associated community of practitioners and supporters. This has itself generated additional commitment and helped the drive for rapid and effective change. In the best performing areas, this identity and commitment is shared across involved service users, providers, commissioners from all partners and involved elected members, as well as by accountable officers and Supporting People teams.
- 90 There is agreement on the important aspects of the framework.
  - The governance arrangements required at local and regional level, have ensured cross-agency partnerships and a structured framework to involve both service users and providers.
  - The development of a quality framework embraced by providers and commissioners and a performance monitoring system, including national data collection which allows consistent benchmarking.
  - The ring fenced grant that explicitly encouraged the reinvestment of savings to housing related support.
  - The use of Inspection to question and challenge the local administration of the programme including value for money, with follow up support for poor performers through CLG and follow up inspections of poor performers to maintain the challenge.
- 91 The quality framework for providers was discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter looks at the governance arrangements and performance framework for authorities.

## Local governance arrangements

92 Grant conditions required authorities to set up Commissioning Bodies on which key local public sector partners were represented to oversee the programme. Service user and provider involvement was built in from the start. The result is that partnership governance arrangements are now well embedded in many areas. There is a greater understanding of the contribution of housing related support in meeting the needs of vulnerable people as part of a co-ordinated response to needs. The structures in place to administer the programme, Commissioning Bodies and Core Strategy Groups, have matured and some are now being used to drive the delivery of relevant Local Area Agreement priorities. There is evidence of effective leadership in strategy, delivery, performance management and risk management.

**The Commissioning Body has been the precursor to partnership working and has demonstrated the ability to have a genuine partnership and to influence the way other forums have operated in the county and districts. It has impacted beneficially in other boards and the strategic approach to supported housing .... value added impact.**

### Commissioning Body Chair

93 The two tier structure in a county means that responsibilities for housing and social care are split between district and county councils. This had hampered joint working. Inspections suggest that the partnership arrangement required by Supporting People has greatly helped in overcoming this barrier and it has sometimes been the catalyst that enabled counties to improve joint working with district councils in their area. It will be important for effective county wide governance partnerships to continue.

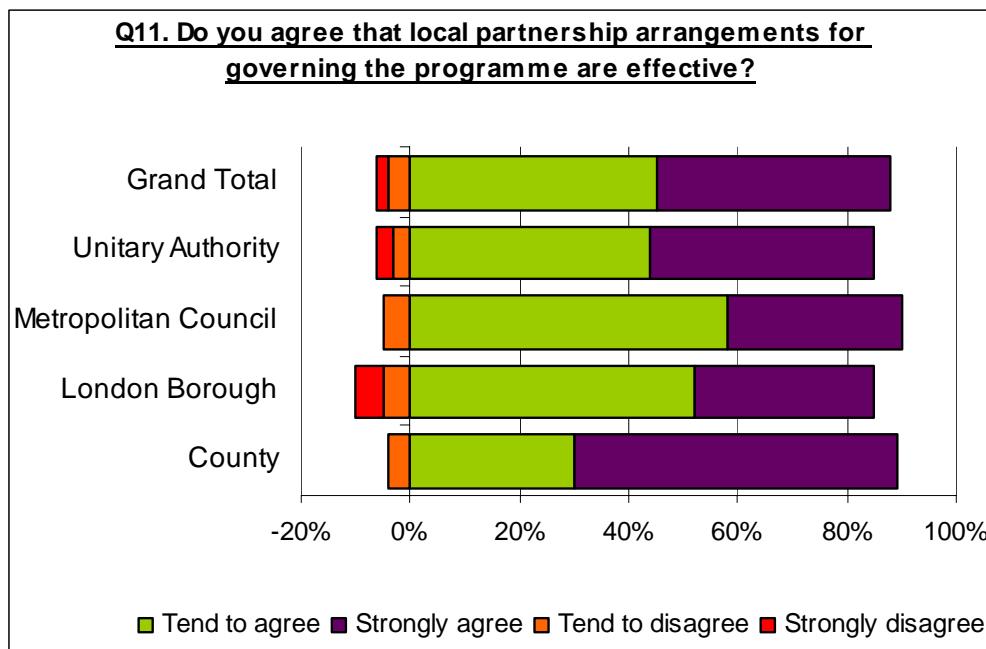
**The county and districts work in partnership - for example, the Commissioning Body has undertaken a strategic review of floating support and recommended a reduction in the capacity in the west of the county and an increase in the east to improve the balance as evidenced by the needs analysis. This is testimony to the work of the Commissioning Body .....making difficult decisions politically for districts and boroughs in partnership.**

### PCT Chair of Commissioning Body

94 Commissioning Body chairs and Supporting People officers are generally positive about governance arrangements and those interviewed expected their existing partnerships to continue. Those from counties are noticeably more positive about their partnerships (Figure 4), and this was also reflected in submissions to our research.

## A framework underpinning improvement

Partnerships have been most important in county areas.



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

95 The joint submission from Oxfordshire Commissioning Body, Provider Forum, Core Strategy Group and Inclusive Forum felt their arrangements had been very effective:

**The potential benefits of bringing together health, housing, social services and probation are enormous when dealing with individuals who often have overlapping vulnerabilities such as substance misuse, offending behaviour, mental health problems and homelessness.**

**The present arrangements have provided a focus on working together to meet the varied needs of service users which would probably be lost if an attempt were made to cut up the programme into different bits: valuable links would be lost and barriers created to joint working to meet needs.**

**Oxfordshire Supporting People partners**

96 Housing partners are the most involved in partnerships while health partners are overall the least engaged (Table 12, Appendix 2). Weaknesses in health involvement are most reported by lead officers in county areas. Some interviewed suggested that staff in children's services who were not explicitly included on commissioning bodies, had little involvement in or understanding of Supporting People. This is a problem where provision covers teenagers or where issues impact on younger children, for example the children of women fleeing domestic violence or children in homeless families.

**Health is quite engaged but their representative constantly changes and consequently the level of knowledge of Supporting People is variable.**

#### Accountable officer

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97 The engagement of probation in local partnerships has become more consistent over the past six years in most authorities. The Supporting People inspection programme has been carried out in partnership with HMIP and assessments have been made on probation contributions to local partnerships. This joint inspection approach has ensured that the needs of victims and offenders are addressed, including children and young people subject to Youth Offending Team (YOT) supervision. HMIP inspectors have checked that appropriate support services and accommodation are made available and that the promotion of social inclusion, managing and assessing offenders' risk of harm (to themselves and others) and community safety remain paramount.

**Probation have been particularly useful partners – challenging, supportive and good at governance**

#### Commissioning body chair

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98 Probation inspectors and local officers suggest that Supporting People has helped to change attitudes locally, with Commissioning Bodies and the councils concerned increasingly accepting that the client group of offenders and ex offenders are their responsibility.

**Where Supporting People has worked well for offenders, it has opened the door to 'mainstream' provision, for example for excluded groups generally such as substance misusers. Basically, offenders can move outside the label of 'offender' and access services based on particular need. ... (There is now ) a greater tendency on the part of some local councillors and housing officers to own offenders within the community and an incrementally increasing willingness to develop associated protocols and challenge malpractice on the part of housing associations..**

#### HMIP inspector

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## A framework underpinning improvement

99 Resources mean that often one individual from probation has to cover a number of different authorities, so joint regional work is particularly beneficial for probation services. In North London a sub regional MAPPA1 service is now operating across all six boroughs, with all referrals coming through one central point.

100 While there remains room for improvement the governance arrangements have helped increase health involvement. Additional partnership strengths in some authorities include involving children's services and elected councillors.

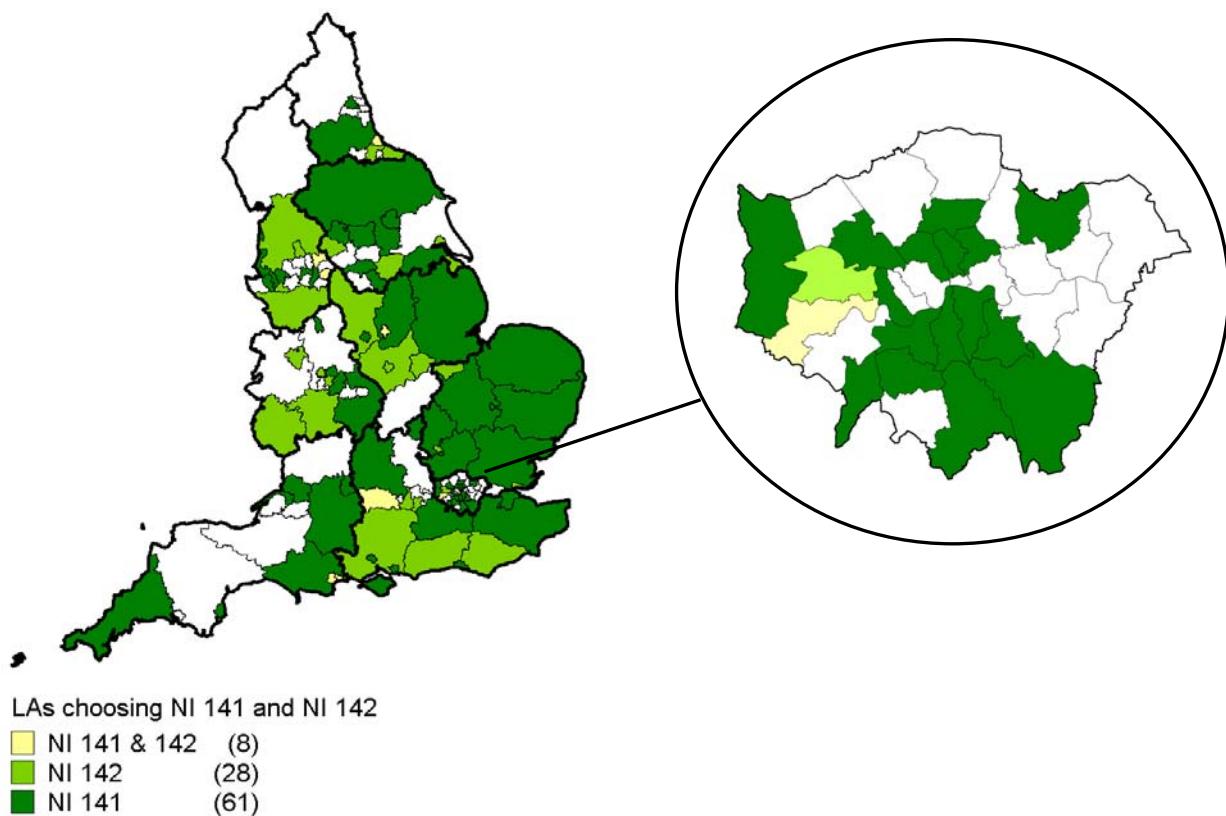
101 The success of many Commissioning Bodies in embedding housing related support in their local area is underlined by the fact that ninety seven authorities included at least one of the national Supporting People indicators in the thirty five selected locally in Local Area Agreements LAAs (Map 2). Indicator 141 is the percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living, and indicator 142 is the percentage supported to maintain independent living. Many have also selected other indicators that complement Supporting People services (Table 2) and ensured these links are locally understood.

102 Authorities who received excellent grades at CPA at the time the programme began were never subject to grant conditions. They could have selected a very different approach to programme governance. Equally authorities who became excellent could have amended their arrangements. Some authorities have looked at minor changes to the governing structures, particularly to further involve users and providers or to link more directly into local Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) arrangements. However these changes are limited and could be carried out within grant conditions. This suggests that the Commissioning Body and support group arrangements have been a good blueprint for this cross cutting programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Multi Areas Public Protection Arrangements, known as MAAPA, are the statutory arrangements for managing sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA is not a statutory body in itself but is a mechanism through which agencies can better discharge their statutory responsibilities and protect the public.

Map 2 Regional selection of national indicators 141 and 142



Source: IDeA LAA Tracker at [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

Table 2 Other indicators to which Supporting People services particularly contribute

Client group	Indicators	Number of Authorities choosing at least 1 NI in this 'bundle'
Domestic Violence	32 (Domestic violence) 34 (Domestic violence – murder)	75
Socially excluded	18 (Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision) 30 (Re-offending rate of prolific and other priority offenders) 40 (Number of drug users recorded as being in effective treatment) 143 (Offenders under probationary supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence)	121

## A framework underpinning improvement

Client group	Indicators	Number of Authorities choosing at least 1 NI in this 'bundle'
Care with support	141 (% vulnerable people achieving independent living) 142 (% vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living) 145 (Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation) 149 (Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation)	106
Young people	19 (Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders) 46 (Young offenders access to accommodation) 147 (Care leavers in suitable accommodation)	49
Older people	138 (Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood) 139 (The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home)	27

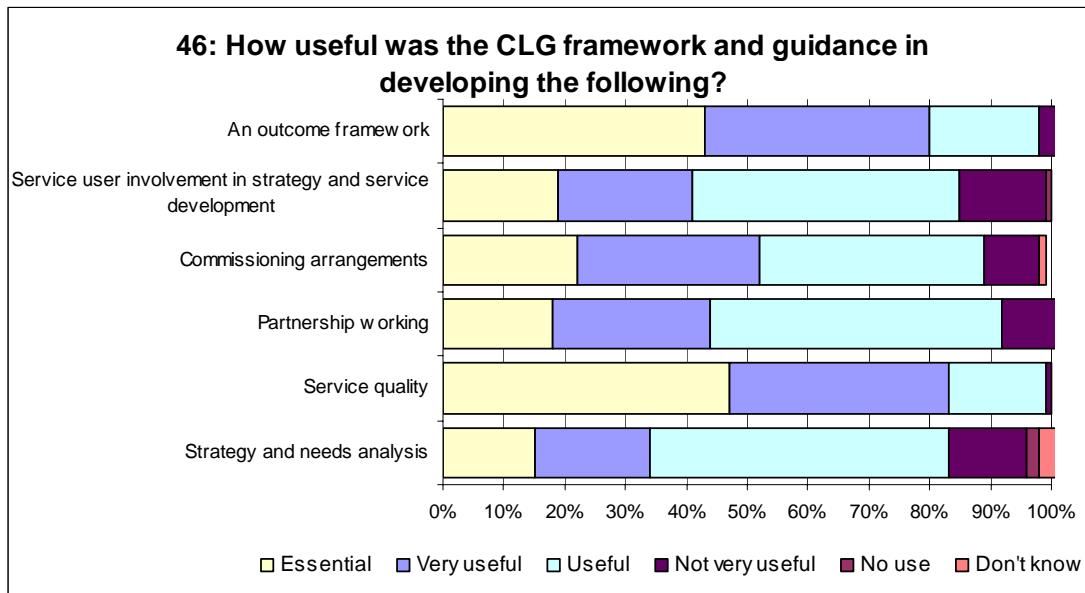
**103** Partnerships have had discussions about how best to mitigate against future risks to the overall programme linked to ring fence removal. Most common direct actions are building links to National Indicators to embed the programme in the local LAA framework; and extending all or some provider contracts in the short term to ensure no sudden financial shocks.

### Other aspects of the national framework

**104** Regional groups of officers have developed to further support the programme. These Regional Improvement Groups (RIGs) have provided an important means for authorities to share intelligence and good practice, to benchmark cost and quality and to develop a range of joint approaches including joint procurement of minority or specialist services, joint prioritising of capital for new developments and joint quality standards. A number of examples are set out in Appendix 4.

**105** The government has provided clear and timely written guidance for authorities, supported by nationally funded training. Lead officers felt that the CLG guidance and framework had been most useful to help with service quality, closely followed by the outcomes framework. The Quality Assessment Framework was particularly praised. The least useful support was that given on needs and strategy, but even here over 80 per cent had found the support useful. (Figure 5). Local authorities have trained and supported service providers. CLG has supported pilots in major areas such as the Value Improvement Pilots in 2005 and recent pilots for ring fence removal in 2008. Pilots have encouraged the dissemination of positive practice and the involvement of practitioners from local authorities and providers in their development. Support has been available for providers as well as authorities through funding to relevant organisations like SITRA and the Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT).

## Supporting People Lead Officers views on the national framework



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

## The performance framework

**106** From the start the framework included challenge as well as support and guidance. Inspections by the Audit Commission, in partnership with CSCI and HMIP, have been completed in all 150 administering local authorities. Inspection has provided clear standards for authorities through the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE), which have been updated three times between 2004 and 2008.

**107** Commissioning Body chairs report that inspections brought focus to the programme. Inspections have helped drive up standards and raise the profile of the programme within authorities and wider partnerships. The Audit Commission Supporting People KLOE was referred to by lead officers (Figure 6) as being of particular help in standard setting.

**The Supporting People inspection made the council up its game and particularly focus on governance and reporting arrangements. ... You can get a bit lax...**

**Useful to reinforce that what was being done locally was effective.....identified more areas to improve and provided a springboard to work from.**

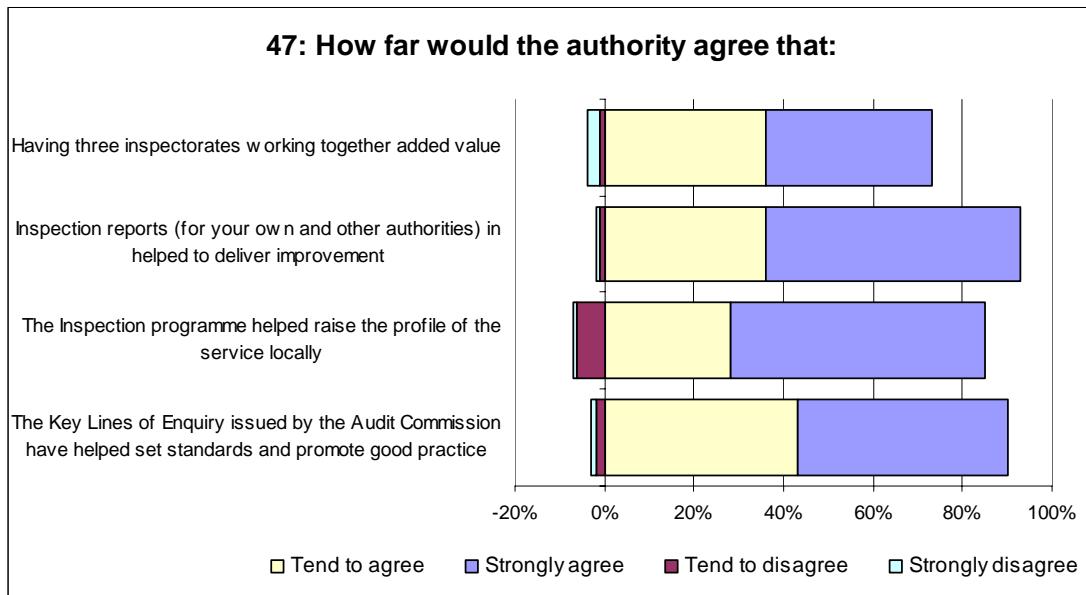
**Big impact locally - coordinated activity in a focused way and helps self assess what programme is doing.**

**Concentrates the minds of senior managers and members – actions for improvements highlighted.**

Commissioning Body Chairs

## A framework underpinning improvement

### Supporting People Lead Officers views on inspections



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

**108** Where authorities have received poor inspection grades CLG and the Audit Commission offered additional support prior to a required re-inspection. Most authorities have managed to improve and received a better grade in a subsequent inspection. Three of the original 150 local authorities were judged to be delivering a poor Supporting People programme when the inspection regime finished in March 2009. These authorities will continue to be monitored through Comprehensive Area Assessment, co-ordinated by the Audit Commission.

**109** While overall the performance and governance arrangements have led to improvements, this varies between authorities. Inspections since 2005 show the same wide range of performance by authorities exhibited between 2003 and 2005. There is no particular link between authority type and performance. Since 2005 there have been eight inspections<sup>1</sup> where authorities were graded as performing poorly with uncertain prospects for improvement, with another nine only performing at a 'fair' level, with similarly uncertain prospects. (Figure 7).

**110** There is no evidence that the performance of individual authorities is related to levels of historic and current financing. Comparison of inspection scores with local funding and need, as expressed by the funding formula developed by the CLG, shows no consistent pattern.

<sup>1</sup>The graph shows inspections, not authorities. Authorities who were given a grading of poor had to be re-inspected, and so may appear on this graph more than once. The graph includes all inspections published by March 2009.

Inspection scores between September 2005 and March 2009

What are the prospects for improvement?	How good is the programme?			
	Poor (zero star)	Fair (1 star)	Good (two stars)	Excellent (three stars)
Excellent		3 Met Borough Councils	<b>12</b> 3 County Councils 1 Unitary Authority 1 Met Borough Council 7 London Boroughs	<b>7</b> 1 County Councils 3 Met Borough Council 3 London Boroughs
Promising	<b>4</b> 2 County Councils 1 Unitary Authority 1 Met Borough Council	<b>56</b> 16 County Councils 20 Unitary Authorities 13 Met Borough Councils 7 London Boroughs	<b>34</b> 7 County Councils 8 Unitary Authorities 10 Met Borough Councils 9 London Boroughs	
Uncertain	<b>5</b> 2 County Councils 1 Unitary Authority 2 Met Borough Councils	<b>26</b> 3 County Councils 15 Unitary Authorities 2 Met Borough Councils 6 London Boroughs	<b>2</b> 1 Unitary Authority 1 Met Borough Council	
Poor		<b>1</b> London Borough		

**111** A review of the reasons for poor performance helps to confirm the importance of governance arrangements and a local understanding of the programme. The most common concerns in poorer performers are a mixture of more measurable matters such as inadequate contract monitoring and less quantifiable issues such as a lack of leadership and understanding. The latter are the main reason why poor performance persists despite support for poorly performing areas.

**112** Concerns most reflected in inspection recommendations cover:

- inadequate leadership and governance structures;
- poor programme and performance management, including inadequate contract monitoring;
- poor service user involvement;
- inadequate access to services and information for users and other stakeholders;
- inadequate move on arrangements, reducing choice for existing and potential service users;
- lack of understanding of the role of housing related support in meeting wider corporate and partnership objectives;

## A framework underpinning improvement

- limited understanding of the diversity and needs of all vulnerable groups the programme was designed to address, particularly the most socially excluded groups; and
- low corporate priority for the programme and failure to ensure adequate staff skills and capacity to develop and deliver effective planning and implementation. Recently this has included poor partnership working with LSPs and weak involvement in the development of Local Area Agreements.

113 While performance in inspections is clearly related to corporate priority and understanding, it is not always related to the general corporate performance of an authority. This lack of linkage was clear in inspections before 2005 and has continued to be true since. Some Authorities with excellent CPA scores have had poor Supporting People inspection scores. Since 2005 nine administering local authorities received a poor inspection score with a further twenty seven receiving a fair score with uncertain or poor prospects for improvement.

114 There is more of a link between inspection performance in homelessness services and performance in Supporting People. This is not surprising, as the individuals most likely to require help from homelessness services are often vulnerable and may benefit from housing related support. Authorities who understand and prioritise homelessness issues are likely to have a similar understanding of the wider role of housing related support.

**I want other commissioners to understand what housing-related support can do and how it contributes without having to explain what it is all the time. ....'**

Delegate at Appreciative Inquiry event December 2008

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115 It is not yet clear how local governance arrangements, regional coordination and performance challenge will develop with the ending of the grant conditions and inspection programme. At the moment authorities say that they will maintain the current governance framework, but it is too early to say this will remain effective when the ring fenced finance in Commissioning Bodies control is removed.

# Future governance and regulation through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

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**The new regulation arrangements under CAA will continue to challenge partnerships about how effectively they use housing related support services to improve outcomes for local vulnerable people**

**116** Comprehensive Area Assessment is the new way of putting information in the hands of taxpayers, service users and citizens. For the first time, it will bring together the work of the six inspectorates to provide an overview of how successfully the local organisations are working together to improve what matters in each place. It will be linked to the streamlined assessment of these individual organisations to provide clear accountability. CAA came into effect on 1 April 2009 and the methodology can be found at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/caa](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/caa).

**117** CAA is based on three key overarching questions.

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well are the outcomes and improvements needed being delivered?
- What are the prospects for future improvement?

**118** The framework makes it clear that CAA will put a much stronger emphasis on the more forward looking question three ‘What are the prospects for future improvement?’, by using the first two questions to provide underlying evidence and understanding to support cross inspectorate judgements in the third question.

**119** The framework also provides additional detail on how the underpinning themes of CAA will be considered. These are sustainability; tackling inequality, disadvantage and discrimination; people whose circumstances make them vulnerable; and value for money. There will also be a stronger emphasis on engaging with, and listening to, local people.

**120** The three CAA questions provide a platform to report, assess and measure the impact of housing related support needs mapping, planning, delivery, commissioning, contracting, performance monitoring and reporting and outcomes for vulnerable people. Past experiences and outcomes from the Supporting People programme gathered through six years of inspection, central and local government monitoring and reporting provide a sound platform for assessing future prospects for improvement.

## Future governance and regulation through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CPA)

121 Six years of joint working with partner inspectorates, CSCI (now CQC) and HMIP, have created a shared understanding of the role of housing related support in improving the life chances and quality of life for vulnerable people. The research survey results and the views expressed during interviews confirm this. This work will be extended and reinforced in the joint inspectorate delivery of CAA.

122 The needs of offenders and those at risk of offending are more clearly understood after six years of housing related support planning and delivery and whilst more work is needed, many fears expressed that the needs of offenders' could be overlooked at the inception of the Supporting People programme have been allayed.

123 The partnership with CSCI helped to identify and promote successes in improved joint working with local adult social care commissioners and, for 16 and 17 year olds in receipt of Supporting People funded services, with Children's Services. More work is required through CAA to assess how authorities identify opportunities for better joint working to identify needs through the JSNA1 process (see next chapter), improved joint commissioning, more robust service quality monitoring and reporting, and joint assessment of outcomes for service users.

124 One of the enduring successes of the Supporting People programme for customers is the establishment, delivery and development of improved safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable service users. Many users of housing related support services were not previously considered in policies and practices for adult and child protection prior to the introduction of Supporting People. Service users, particularly those from socially excluded groups, were not in receipt of a statutory service and fell below the radar of established good practice.

125 The research and consultations that have informed this research identified a high degree of anxiety about the future accountability of local authorities in meeting the housing related support needs of vulnerable people in an area, particularly those groups for whom there is no statutory duty to provide support and/or care. These groups are most prevalent amongst the most socially excluded including homeless people and their families; women suffering domestic and sexual violence; people with substance abuse problems; vulnerable Gypsies & Travellers; refugees and vulnerable people with HIV/Aids.

126 The CAA methodology makes clear that the assessment will pay particular attention to how well an area meets the needs of people made vulnerable by their circumstances, including those who need additional assistance to ensure equity of access to high quality services. This will be an important safeguard for those who are not in receipt of statutory services.

127 The established network of vulnerable service user involvement and consultation forums, developed over the six years of the programme, provides an excellent sounding board for CAA engagement with vulnerable people at the local level and can be used to ensure that the most marginalised groups have the opportunity to influence the process and make recommendations to secure future improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires PCTs and local authorities to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the health and wellbeing of their local community

**128** The locally commissioned and contracted housing related support services continue to be of relevance in the delivery of CAA and their impact will be evidenced as part of the housing assessment process. Current performance and future prospects for improvement will be evaluated using a range of evidence including:

- inspection findings of housing support providers and local authorities and assessment of progress against report recommendations;
- analysis of data from the outcomes framework (see below);
- progress against NIs 141 & 142 and other allied NIs; and
- area based intelligence from a range of partners including government offices and vulnerable service users.

**129** The Audit Commission is currently working with CLG to refine the current outputs from the outcomes framework. The intention is for local authorities, partner agencies and service users to understand the data and use it to inform future planning, commissioning and investment decisions to evaluate the effectiveness and value for money achieved locally. This work will be completed to inform the first round of CAA in 2009.

# Progress since the October 2005 national report

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**The successes identified in the Audit Commission October 2005 report have been consolidated over the past three and a half years. Whilst some previously identified weaknesses are being addressed, they have not all been resolved. Developments in the financial and policy environment also mean some issues need revisiting, while new issues have emerged.**

**130** Many of the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in 2005 were addressed in the CLG strategy for Supporting People, published in June 2007 and associated follow up activity<sup>1</sup>. One of the priorities identified was a user focus, and there has been on going improvement in service user involvement. This will be further consolidated in the new QAF. Another recommendation was to work with the third sector providers and many authorities are developing a mature approach to working with providers, gaining from their skills and expertise in identifying needs and developing local services.

**131** However a number of the issues are long standing and need on going attention.

- Housing related support is often a cross cutting issue. Cross sector understanding and partnership is needed to maximise opportunity. While this understanding is growing, it is not yet embedded enough in mainstream thinking and planning in all authorities.
- The market for housing related support services is not yet fully mature. There are examples of providers leaving the market due to the perceived or actual complexities in securing contracts and difficulties for small providers in bidding for contracts. Contract security can still be too limited to encourage longer term investment by providers.

**132** Developments in the financial and policy environment mean some issues require revisiting, while new issues have emerged. For example, a new National Offender Management Services (NOMS)<sup>2</sup> strategy to reduce Re-offending may mean revisiting some previous arrangements for offenders; the development of personalisation and individual budgets bring potentially major changes for housing related support services alongside other care and support providers and the recession will have a major impact on the numbers of vulnerable people and potentially on the finance available to support them.

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<sup>1</sup> Independence and Opportunity; Our Strategy for Supporting People, June 2007 CLG

<sup>2</sup> This is the joint prison and probation service

133 Four major recommendations from 2005 which require review are discussed below; the need for a refreshed national vision and strategy, a financial framework to underpin planning, protection for those who cross boundaries for services and support for a vibrant provider market.

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### On going issues that need revisiting or further work: the need for refreshed vision and strategy

134 In 2005 the Audit Commission recommended a refreshed national vision and strategy, more closely linked to the work of other government departments. This strategy was provided in *Independence and Opportunity*<sup>1</sup> which placed the programme within the government's wider preventative agenda and emphasised the importance of user involvement. Links with health and social care policies, whilst improved, remain a particular issue in the Department of Health at national as well as local level in 2009.

135 There has been improved national linkage. Supporting People was included in pilots for Individual Budgets. The Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) has promoted housing related support within the health community<sup>2</sup>. Supporting People has complemented a number of other national policies such as Valuing People, Decent Homes and affordable warmth, and effective authorities have been able to align local work. For example, Sheffield City Council is addressing access and mobility issues for older people alongside affordable warmth initiatives.

136 There are widespread concerns that the opportunities that Supporting People afforded through local, sub regional and regional partnership working has not resulted in high levels of joint commissioning of care and support services for vulnerable people. The efficiencies and value for money that this approach can achieve for commissioners and service users have not been realised in many parts of the country. The Department of Health, through CSIP<sup>3</sup>, reported in 2008, five years into the programme, that Joint Commissioning is under developed<sup>4</sup>. Many providers and local authority officers agree.

**The alignment of strategies, commissioning programmes, outcomes and funds would be hugely beneficial and cost effective yet its practice is negligible. One provider who has achieved this across the PCT, Social Services and SP programme took three years of persistent lobbying to finalise such an agreement.**

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Submission by a network of providers

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<sup>1</sup> [Independence and Opportunities June 2007](#)

<sup>2</sup> For example, *Commissioning Housing Support for Health and Wellbeing* July 2008 CSIP

<sup>3</sup> CSIP: Care and Support Improvement Partnership

<sup>4</sup> Housing Support for Health and Wellbeing

## Progress since the October 2005 national report

137 Supporting People needs information did not feature in the first guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs). These are the shared information bases expected to underpin future social care commissioning decisions, and should include relevant local information on housing related support needs to ensure they are also considered in commissioning plans. Another example of limited linkage with Health is the lack of reference to Supporting People in the new consultation on a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for Adults<sup>1</sup>. The adults subjected to the CAF include many likely to be receiving Supporting People funded services, especially some of those with learning disabilities and mental health needs. The CAF consultation recognises housing as important in some assessments, the role of the housing service and possible involvement of the voluntary and third sector; but there is no mention of Supporting People or housing related support.

138 Such examples suggest that while the Capgemini work on cost benefit evidences the cross service value for money from the programme, on going work is required to promote those benefits within health and social care at national and local level. There is also a role for regional government offices, the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Audit Commission, through both housing inspection and CAA to promote the cost benefits.

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### On going issues that need revisiting or further work: cross service links and a long term financial framework

139 In 2005 the Commission recommended a long term financial framework to underpin planning and investment locally. CLG secured a three year Comprehensive Spending Review settlement and the intention to move the funds into area based grant was clearly signalled. This has provided stability for the period of the review but understandably anxiety is beginning to increase as to what the position will be in 2011 and beyond.

140 Our research shows new concerns about the funding framework associated with the ending of the ring fence and uncertainty about the next spending review. Supporting People is the largest contributor to Area Based Grant. Any local decision to top slice that grant is likely to affect local Supporting People programmes. Expected future reductions in local authority funding because of the impact of the recession on the public finance and the non statutory nature of Supporting People services puts them at risk.

- Many respondents to the lead officer survey thought that some funding might be transferred to underpin acute social care rather than a preventative agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for Adults: a consultation on proposals to improve information sharing around multi-disciplinary assessment and care planning. DOH 2009.

- Despite agreeing local eligibility criteria some social care commissioners have not transferred ineligible funding six years into the programme, with the services still receiving Supporting People funds most commonly services for people with learning disabilities. There is evidence from recent inspections that some may never do so. Plans for transfer can be very long term and uncertain. For example, one inspection found that funds discovered to be ineligibly used in a service review in 2004 were expected to still be paying for the ineligible services concerned until 2011, with no firm plans for transfer.
- A quarter of contracts end in 2009 and a further quarter in 2010, while 14 per cent are still interim. In some areas all the contracts require renewal in 2009. There are fears among providers that the timing is deliberately linked in with the end of the ring fence.
- Some authorities have acknowledged major gaps in services and unspent grant which has been rolled forward unspent for several years rather than being used for filling known service gaps. This unallocated funding is at risk of redirection once there are no grant conditions to ring fence its use.

**141** It is too early to assess whether these fears are justifiable. The removal of the ring fence will not necessarily lead to funding shifts. The removal of the ring fence was piloted by CLG<sup>1</sup> in some areas, albeit for a short and closely monitored 12 month period, without funding being transferred out of housing related support. Excellent CPA authorities have not been subject to full grant conditions but continue to commission services to meet needs and have not redirected funding.

**142** Local authority interviewees suggest that in most areas the value of the programme is recognised enough to protect local funding. A number of Commissioning Bodies have taken specific action to help maintain services during transition, in particular by extending contracts, agreeing 'virtual' local ring fences and ensuring that the contribution of the services to LAA targets is clearly set out locally.

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### On going issues that need revisiting or further work: Cross boundary movement and intelligent contracting

**143** In 2005 the Audit Commission raised concerns about 'cross boundary' service users who move between authorities and who often self-refer. These individuals are often particularly vulnerable and/or excluded groups including those fleeing domestic violence or young people who have left difficult home situations.

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<sup>1</sup> [Learning and experiences from the Individual Budget Pilot sites](#)

## Progress since the October 2005 national report

**144** This concern remains. Two groups, those fleeing domestic violence and single homeless people, make up 62 per cent of cross boundary clients. The numbers concerned make it possible to see clear trends for these two groups. Women fleeing domestic violence continue to access cross boundary services at the same level as in 2005, although Womens' Aid have concerns that the standard of provision is changing and may be less effective. There has been a continuing fall among other groups who prior to receiving a service lived in another authority (known as 'non host referrals'). This group has fallen from 17 to 11 per cent of new users<sup>1</sup>. Most of these individuals are single homeless people.

**145** It may be that cross authority referrals are less necessary because of a better local service balance. Supporting People grant conditions stressed the need to offer open access. However it is possible that the fall is linked to individual authorities being less willing to support and fund services offering open access. A reason for the reduction might be an increase in the application of local connection rules. Other evidence such as Homeless Link's survey of those using cold weather shelters suggests that in some authorities, local connection policies are used to prevent or minimise cross boundary access.<sup>2</sup> The Commission has found evidence of such policies in recent inspections.

**146** In 2005 the Commission recommended the promotion of a healthy provider market. This recommendation remains valid. Many providers are smaller voluntary organisations sometimes need help to respond to rapid change. All providers need enough security to plan for longer term investment.

**147** Research on contracting in the South West<sup>3</sup> and a project by the Housing Association Charitable Trust shows there are still problems for many small providers. It is not easy to form consortia to bid for contracts and such developments require time, which is not always factored into authority contract specifications and tender periods.

**148** Supporting voluntary providers has wider links to the Government's third sector strategy. Supporting People is financially the largest single area of local authority funding for this sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Client Records annual reports

<sup>2</sup> [Homeless Link Cold Weather Survey](#)

<sup>3</sup> SITRA report: [The Significance and Impact of Small Providers in the South West and to HACT sponsored work](#)

**149** A new concern for some providers in terms of local balance is what they see as a shift to the lowest cost provision disregarding quality or service user fit. Because of their relative cost and potential for flexibility, large scale generic floating support contracts can be seen as the best solution. These have already grown faster than any other provision. For some groups designated buildings are important. There are concerns that further expansion of floating support may be at the expense of specialist or building based services.

**The trend towards non accommodation based services is gathering momentum. This may make sense for some services. It should not however, be seen as a panacea for all services. Intensive housing support cannot be easily split between landlord services and support without risks to the levels of support required to achieve sustainable outcomes for individuals.**

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Provider network submission to review

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**150** A focus on large scale procurement disadvantages smaller providers, who can be important to retain<sup>1</sup>. Small accommodation and support providers can have particular roles in terms of diversity, flexibility and (particularly in rural areas) community links and localism<sup>2</sup>.

**151** Despite concerns inspections have so far found no evidence of the balance between flexible floating support and buildings based accommodation becoming less locally appropriate or of small scale providers all being squeezed out of the market. However, there is some evidence that floating support is being preferred unilaterally regardless of the local need, without good consultation and discussion with service users. This was one of the major concerns raised about some local approaches to sheltered housing by Age Concern in their recent report, [Housing Choices in Retirement, 2008](#).

**152** Some providers are concerned that future commissioning may move into generic commissioning teams and away from people who understand supported housing. The removal of the ring fence and a greater role for Local Strategic Partnerships increases this risk. Supporting People teams and Commissioning Bodies may get sidelined or absorbed, lifting budgets and power to Boards without detailed knowledge.

**153** Womens' Aid is one of the specialists with particular concerns. In a series of nationally held workshops in early 2009 the commonly expressed view from participants was that larger, non specialist providers, with resultant lower unit costs, are winning contracts for support. These providers expect to support both sexes within one service. Womens' Aid is concerned that support models, including their own, which combine safe, women only provision with specialist support and advocacy for women, is being discarded because of cost. They feel outcomes and quality are not being considered and that service users have not been fully involved in changes.

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<sup>1</sup> SITRA report: [The Significance and Impact of Small Providers in the South West and to HACT sponsored work](#)

### Developing issues: Safeguarding

**154** The increased national awareness about the significance of safeguarding has had an impact on the Supporting People programme, which supports vulnerable people. Many authorities inspected established effective safeguarding arrangements through strategic links with safeguarding bodies such as the statutory Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Board and multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) which apply to some probation service users.

**155** Joint working and constructive engagement of Supporting People teams with adult social care has had a number of benefits including a much greater understanding of the safeguarding needs of all the vulnerable groups in receipt of services. Adult social care commissioners have developed a greater understanding of the safeguarding needs of a number of socially excluded groups who are often engaged with housing providers but not in receipt of statutory services. Housing authorities and social housing providers are now more involved in safeguarding. Increasingly they send staff for training and have representatives on, or more regular access to, safeguarding boards.

**156** Safeguarding awareness and practice has been improved by 'Safeguarding is Everybody's Business'<sup>1</sup>, the 'Think Family' work<sup>2</sup> and the Department of Health 'No Secrets' guidance<sup>3</sup>. The message from these developments has had a positive impact on policies and practice through service specifications, contract management, and training of service providers. Supporting People teams are more informed about effective arrangements and responses to allegations or complaints about issues of protection. Inspections found positive examples of prompt action being taken in response to individual complaints or concerns from staff and service users.

**157** Since the 2005 report there has been a significant growth in awareness that safeguarding in Supporting People funded services must also encompass the safeguarding of children of adult service users and young people in receipt of services. Whilst Supporting People funding predominantly supports adult service users it also funds services where children are known to live, may live or visit and where children neither live nor visit but where service users may have access to or contact with children. However, a small minority of providers consider young people between the ages of 16-18 to be young adults and subject to adult procedures; this is not considered appropriate and the revised QAF addresses this.

**158** Providers of Supporting People funded services have improved their safeguarding of service users. Most providers now implement safe staff recruitment policies and ensure their staff have Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) or Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) checks. There are safe arrangements for ensuring staff permitted to begin work before their CRB check is through are properly risk assessed and supervised.

<sup>1</sup> ['Making Safeguarding Everyone's Business'](#) - The Government's response to the second Chief Inspector's Report July 2007 can we say which dept produced this

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Task Force published '[Reaching Out: Think Family](#)' in June 2007

<sup>3</sup> ['No Secrets': Guidance on Developing Multi-Agency Policies and Procedures to Protect Vulnerable Adults from Abuse](#) Department of Health March 2000

**159** However, safeguarding requires ongoing attention. Training and risk management around safeguarding are less well established among some housing related support providers than in adult social care, and there is no direct inspectorate as with care homes. Some authorities have made safeguarding training a contractual commitment to help establish its importance. Inspectors from CSCI (now part of CQC) suggest that there is still an underdeveloped approach to managing acceptable risks for people with learning disabilities. Probation inspectors have particular concerns around young adults who can be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, where there is no safeguard check of landlords or other residents.

**Table 3 The most common six areas where authorities are working to improve on local safeguarding**

<b>Safeguarding Solutions</b>	<b>LAs following this approach</b>
Improve provider training and used reviews to raise improvements	19
Improve coordination	16
Developed strong links with local safeguarding panels/arrangements and other key services like adult care	12
Putting aspects of safeguarding in contracts	9
Developing strategies for children/minors in general and via specific issues/schemes	6
Awareness raising/info for service users/customers	6

Source: Audit Commission survey of all SP lead officers. See also Appendix 3 table 45

### **Developing issues: Individual Budgets & Personalisation**

**160** There are concerns about ensuring that Individual Budgets do not increase risk if service users opt out of monitored and accountable service provision.

**161** There has been a growing emphasis on principles of personalisation and choice since our last report was published. The concept of Individual Budgets was first proposed in the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit Report 2005, Improving the life choices of Disabled People. The Green Paper on adult social care Independence, Wellbeing and Choice (Department of Health 2005) called for piloting of Individual Budgets to enable older and disabled people to have more choice and control over how their support needs were met.

## Progress since the October 2005 national report

162 As a result thirteen local authorities took part in a pilot exercise to test the impact of Individual Budgets. The Individual Budget Pilot Programme began in December 2005 and ended on 31 December 2007. The Department of Health had lead responsibility for the pilots but worked in partnership with Communities and Local Government, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Office for Disability Issues.

163 The Individual Budget pilot focussed on individuals with high care needs. The model has not been widely tested in respect of other Supporting People client groups, particularly 'socially excluded' groups. Most local teams and Commissioning Bodies have started to consider the local implications (Figure 7) although 15 per cent have not. Some are going further.

### Case study 5: Norfolk County Council

Following their involvement in the Individual Budget (IB) pilot exercise, Norfolk County Council has developed an approach to personalisation which links element of IBs (choice) with some protection for providers from market pressures on condition that services are demonstrably good quality or with evidence of continual improvement. They are working with their provider panel on a training package to drive up quality standards.

They are producing a toolkit for users and providers to assist with implementation of personalised services. This is not yet complete.

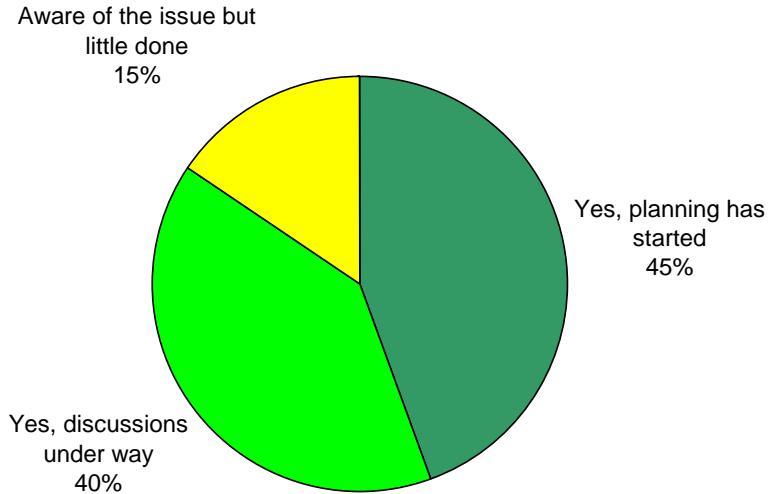
Norfolk aim to support their community and voluntary sector organisations in transforming their services. The aim is to provide 'Self Directed Support' (SDS) and 'Person Centred Services' (PCS) for all.

SDS is individually tailored support packages and personal budgets for everyone eligible for public funding

PCS put the individual in charge of planning and treats them as a user with strengths, talents and aspirations and needs. It emphasises positive identities and non-discriminatory practices.

The two underpin a shift in social policy to one where people have greater choice in the shape of the services purchased.

**Whether local authorities have considered the impact of personalisation**



Source: Supporting People Lead Officer survey. For details see Appendix 3.

**164** Although most interviewees during this research agreed that Individual Budgets have a key role to play, and could make a real difference to the lives of some vulnerable people, they felt these budgets should not be the only option for personalising housing related support services and increasing choice.

**165** Personal and Individual budgets have been used to date by people with high and enduring needs, such as those with learning disabilities and mental health problems. There is no information to date about how appropriate and workable Individual Budgets for more socially excluded groups who do not meet Fair Access to Care Services (FACs) criteria, including drug and alcohol users and homeless people. However CLG have now developed a working group to look at how housing related support can deliver the personalisation agenda.

**166** Individualised budgets for Housing Related Support services could potentially affect both accommodation based and floating support services, in different ways.

- Many respondents were concerned the introduction of Individual Budgets could gradually de-stabilise accommodation based services to the extent that they are no longer financially viable. These services have less flexibility than floating support in terms of client numbers, and need to maintain minimum occupancy levels. Where a provider runs both landlord and support services, current funding arrangements assume residents will use and pay for the provider's services, not replace these with another.

## Progress since the October 2005 national report

- Some authorities are requiring providers to sign contracts which include the proviso that some of the funds within the contracts 'might be transferred to Individual Budgets in the future. This hampers longer-term business planning with some providers deciding not to pursue such contracts in future, as the financial risk is perceived to be too high.
- One of the pilot sites expressed concern that widespread introduction of Individual Budgets could affect the ability of their providers to sustain mainstream services. They were not convinced this approach suits all service user groups. This authority is considering a range of solutions, including direct payments with a menu of options.
- Floating support services may be affected. The findings from the pilots indicate the introduction of Individual Budgets has a considerable impact on the provider market. There are many domiciliary care providers ready to deliver housing related support in addition to social care services. With the introduction of Individual Budgets it is possible for individuals to purchase housing related support services at a much lower hourly rate. There are concerns about driving down hourly rates for housing related support and the resulting potential loss of expertise, quality and capacity in the market. For example, expertise in areas such as the recovery based approach for people with drug and alcohol problems and an understanding of complex housing legislation may no longer be available if these services are not commissioned

**167** In general, respondents felt that more work is needed to better understand how Individual Budgets can work together with commissioned services to deliver seamless and effective services.

**'Individual budgets are not a solution for all service users and could affect service provision and choice if funding is uncertain'**

*RIG Focus group participant*

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**168** The recently published CLG report [Learning and experiences from the Individual Budget Pilot sites](#) March 2009, echo these findings.

- The consensus from the pilot sites suggests that Individual Budgets should form part of a portfolio of service provision, with an overall emphasis on personalisation and choice.
- Future provision could consist of a range of services, some still commissioned directly, some delivered within an Individual Budget framework, and others through a direct budget consisting of Supporting People funding only.
- The need for clarity about what housing support is and what it can achieve. (The aim is to add value to a care package to enable an individual to address their housing circumstances, whilst recognising that the focus is on prevention and lower level intervention which could be time limited).

- 169** The use of Individual Budgets means that individuals can purchase housing related support services from personal assistants, including family and friends. Providers that have met high housing related support standards (for example through the QAF) may find it hard to compete in terms of cost if individuals are able to spend their funding on services that are not quality marked.
- 170** The Supporting People programme introduced new and effective ways of monitoring quality, risk and performance and as a result standards have improved steadily across the provider market. Housing related support services are better placed to address the choice agenda than in 2003. Individual support plans, better consultation with individuals, an individually focussed outcome framework and better systems for identifying individual costs all mean the sector is in a good position to continue to personalise services.
- 171** There is collective agreement that it is right to change the relationship between the local authority and provider and service users and to empower people to make informed choices. However, to help providers with the major changes to financial arrangements and to track and address risk, there is a need for ongoing national and local oversight and guidance.

# Future challenges

**The key challenge for the future is to ensure investments and improvements made over the past six years are maintained and developed in a new financial and less nationally prescriptive environment. This will involve maintaining a community of users, practitioners and commissioners who understand the issues and can give a voice to diverse and sometimes small and socially excluded user groups; developing a new framework that fits the new environment; ensuring quality and user involvement is maintained and improved while managing local change; balancing common national approaches with local choices; and working with partners to strategically link local to maximise benefits.**

## Maintaining a community of users, practitioners and commissioners

172 The Supporting People programme has created a committed community of users, practitioners and commissioners. Supporting People now has a strong brand, is clearly understood and has an identity that helps hold together people who work with a disparate range of individuals, for a large number of very different providers and in a variety of settings. This identity has been hard won and requires future support. Its success is due to the effort, commitment and skills of the key drivers and partners including service users.

173 The identity of Supporting People has clear advantages. It helped to establish the importance of housing related support, a concept that is still not as mainstreamed as it could be in a minority of authorities and with some partners. The programme's identity provides opportunities to network and learn for staff, providers, carers and users who were isolated, and has helped to make many of the jobs more professional in status and career.

174 This learning along with joint training programmes has helped providers raise standards in order to achieve higher grades in the Quality Assessment Framework and helped authorities attain a high score on the Supporting People inspection programme.

175 The success of service user engagement and participation in the programme needs to be fostered and sustained.

- Many service users have chaotic life styles and their sustained involvement requires a high level of enabling and support. The purpose of many services is to establish users in independent homes with a gradual withdrawal of support. As these users pass through the services, involved users need to be replaced by other active participants willing to become involved in service development, delivery and monitoring. So engagement requires ongoing enabling and support systems.

- Some of the user groups are small, socially excluded and/or not locally based or peripatetic. They cannot consistently represent their own needs and be heard where it matters. They include groups that do not have widespread popular support, for example offenders and ex offenders. The Supporting People concept gives these groups a chance to be heard and to have champions.

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### Developing a new framework for delivery

176 There is a desire among stakeholders to maintain the identity and name recognition given by the umbrella of Supporting People, irrespective of future funding arrangements. This identity may survive in some localities but without a reduced national framework this will become increasingly less common.

177 The components of the Supporting People programme are inter-connected and mutually supporting. The outcomes framework provides information to inform service development and the commissioning of new services; governance arrangements ensure user and provider group forums can then inform commissioning and strategy.

178 The overall framework has included:

- an established Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) and associated passporting arrangements;
- the linked quality agreements for HIAs;
- data collection, collation and feedback arrangements for costs, places and client outcomes that informs strategy, supports benchmarking; helps independent and academic monitoring of providers and provision; and underpins a published directory of services;
- the spkweb as an easily followed hub for policy documents, information, conference and training publicity and employment opportunities;
- grant conditions setting out a governance framework and eligibility statements;
- the national programme of inspections;
- the funding model and three year settlements;
- regular guidance documents covering, for example, needs assessment, strategy, eligibility criteria and other development; and
- the establishment of the Regional Implementation Groups.

179 Overall this framework has widespread acceptance by commissioners, providers, front line staff, service users and carers. The main concerns are about inconsistent application, particularly of the QAF. Larger providers do not like having to provide sometimes different information to different authorities where they work, but recognise that removing a basic national approach is unlikely to help here.

180 Some aspects of the framework, particularly the client outcomes database, have the potential for further development. Associated outcome based commissioning could provide a model for other social care and health programmes.

## Future challenges

181 The framework is more supported now than in 2005. Technical problems behind the IT management system and data uploads have been resolved, as have teething problems associated with introducing new concepts such as individual support planning and outcome recording. The associated complaints made when we first reviewed the programme have in the main stopped – helped also by the development of the QAF lite<sup>1</sup> and the fact that some providers with low individual support costs have left the programme altogether.

182 These groups, for example, individual Abbeyfield societies and some sheltered housing providers were most likely to consider any additional bureaucracy per household a burden that was not worth the financial benefit of the funding. The ending of eligibility criteria with the removal of the ring fence means that authorities can now choose to support individual clients supported by such groups, even if the providers are not part of the accredited provider programme.

183 While authorities have indicated that they will maintain aspects of the framework including the QAF there is a likelihood that there will be a drop off with time over participation in some elements. This will in turn make them less useful. For example, the data gathering exercises from providers underpins ongoing benchmarking of costs and outcomes for research and quality control. Should authorities cease the requirement for data submissions, it is not clear how comparative outcomes and quality will be effectively measured. Agreed arrangements for updating continuing aspects of the framework are needed.

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## Maintaining and improving quality and outcomes for users and managing local change

184 While the QAF has been very successful overall there are quality concerns relating to the self assessment nature of this work.

185 Authorities do not all require the same standard of evidence before an assessment grade is given. There is no requirement for moderation. Inspection evidence and providers tell us, that authorities are not equally rigorous in their approach. This results in less effective services for users and carers. Some agreed standards for moderation or external quality control could improve outcomes.

186 A major concern after nearly six years are a relatively small number of Supporting People funded services which do not meet minimum QAF standards. Whilst these services are, in most cases, being actively managed by the relevant local authorities the impact on vulnerable service users is significant. The reasons given for the slow progress achieved in addressing poorer services is in most cases either a lack of alternative local services to make decommissioning a feasible option or the inability of the provider to meet one element of the QAF.

187 Emerging concerns have been voiced in authorities planning to introduce joint quality monitoring in the future. Whilst joint working in this area is welcomed, there is a risk that quality levels could be reduced to the lowest common denominator to maintain partnerships and avoid conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> The QAF lite is a less onerous quality check designed for smaller providers.

## Balancing common national approaches with local concerns

**188** Concerns remain about poorly managed changes to local service balance, particularly regarding some local sheltered housing but also regarding movement to larger generic floating support contracts. In some instances formal arrangements around staff transfer between providers were inadequately managed. This can distress service users as well as staff involved.

**189** The particular concerns of some sheltered housing tenants are about the removal of on site wardens<sup>1</sup>, which in some cases is linked to local decisions on Supporting People funding and is seen by service users as reducing the quality of service they receive.<sup>2</sup>

**190** Nobody's Listening, a recent report by Age Concern<sup>3</sup>, highlights the extent of recent changes to sheltered housing schemes, particularly the replacement of on site wardens with alternative arrangements. It raises a number of questions about how decisions on change are being made and on the adequacy of consultation with residents. Individuals and organisations campaigning for the retention of on site wardens also contacted the Commission during our review to express their concerns.

**191** The Age Concern report "Nobody's Business" suggests that Supporting People has not consistently succeeded in delivering agreed local strategies for the future of sheltered housing developed with and supported by existing users and providers. The reasons for this are wider than the Supporting People programme. Some local authorities have been slow to address the need for the modernisation and reconfiguration of sheltered housing schemes. Empty flats and unpopular bed-sit accommodation has blighted some schemes and the roles and responsibilities of scheme managers (wardens) have lacked clarity. In some areas the Supporting People programme has been a catalyst for change but this has not always been well managed and has resulted in stress and anxiety for service users.

**192** Managing change is difficult and agreement among all involved will not always be possible. Recent Audit Commission inspection reports suggest that high performing authorities:

- make changes to sheltered housing as part of a wider housing strategy for older people and if possible a wider service strategy for this group;
- see housing related support to older people as a key part of the preventative agenda;
- have a cross tenure approach wherever possible;
- understand the diversity of need within older people;
- work jointly with partners, especially care and health services;

<sup>1</sup> The Commission received a number of individual representations on this.

<sup>2</sup> A number of major sheltered providers also decided at an early stage to pull out of the national programme, further limiting alignment between local Supporting people strategies and overall developments in sheltered housing.

<sup>3</sup> Nobody's Listening – the impact of floating support on older people living in sheltered housing, Age Concern, January 2009.

## Future challenges

- have a planned approach to consultation and communication with older people in general and sheltered residents in particular, which recognises the potential for confusion between landlord and Supporting People services and charges; and
- make sure that there are clear channels for complaint that again recognise this potential for confusion.

193 Additional detail relating to sheltered housing is in Appendix 2.

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## Balancing national approaches and expectations with local decisions

194 Individual providers and authorities expressed concerns about the outcomes framework. The outcomes framework is not mandatory but it provides a valuable source of data to measure the impact of services on improving the life chances and quality of life of vulnerable groups at local, regional and national levels. There are issues raised by current good performers who wish to have a more individualised person centred framework and feel constrained by the national approach. These are currently balanced by the need for a national framework at this stage which can develop into a potentially powerful tool for driving improvement and accepting that this should be maintained.

195 Some interviewees felt that Supporting People has been more about process than quality, with a lack of tangible outcomes. This is particularly so in the minority of areas where the programme has not lead to any significant reshaping of provision to meet local priorities and many excluded groups are still not receiving any service. Some on going external challenge is still needed in these areas and the national outcomes framework provides information to enable further investigation of performance to be action.

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## Working with partners to ensure services are strategically linked at a local level

196 A planned and strategic approach is needed for groups of service users. Many authorities are developing relevant plans with partners. For example, Bolton is one of a number of authorities that has carried out a strategic review of services for older people. Lambeth has developed a strategy for social inclusion covering outreach for rough sleepers, assistance with teenage parents and support for those affected by domestic violence.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Additional information is provided in the web Appendix to this report.

## Case study 6: Bolton Council

### Bolton's Strategy for older people

This strategic review of services for older people, including sections analysing quality, performance, outcomes and the difference the programme has achieved to date for older people, together with future plans. Services covered include:

Sheltered and warden controlled services;

Community alarm services;

Extra care services;

Telecare services;

Floating support services; and

Home Improvement Agencies.

## Case Study 7: London Borough of Lambeth

### Lambeth's Social Inclusion strategy

This service was commissioned and funded to tackle social exclusion, where many of the individuals have more than one need. Research has shown that people with multiple needs can have twenty or more different services working with them, but that a lack of truly joined-up work often makes this investment of time and money both inefficient and ineffective. Services have been shown to be much more effective when they take a holistic approach, not only to the needs of the individual but to those other members of the household who may be affected by or contributing to those needs (for instance the children or partners or problematic substance misusers).

The new strategy for social inclusion will show how the Supporting People programme links directly and indirectly to a wide range of priority outcomes and performance indicators for the borough, and include proposals for sharpening this focus in key areas of performance.

The development of the strategy provides an opportunity for strategic leads, commissioners and providers to think out of the box, share information and experience across sectors and disciplines, identify common ground and shared interests and think creatively.

**197** The requirement for five year strategies has helped improve strategic work. It has been helped by the development of expertise and interest in housing related support that the programme has encouraged.

**198** Effective strategic developments require good partnership. The change agenda in health had dominated the six years of the programme with major restructuring of PCTs. This has hindered the consistent engagement of health partners and more local work is needed here.

## Future challenges

**199** The overwhelming majority of health services are in acute rather than preventative services. Commissioners and partner agencies report concern at a lack of direction from central government to incentivise health partners to engage and commit to joint working and commissioning for housing related support. While many PCT members acknowledge the role of housing related support in preventing the need for costly health intervention this is often not translated into joint planning and commissioning of local services.

**200** There is a need to translate the outcomes framework data into health gains that can be used to inform future commissioning and procurement decisions. Joint guidance linked to targets from CLG and the Department of Health would encourage and support joint planning, commissioning and procurement.

# Conclusion and recommendations

**201** The Supporting People programme has been successful. It has led to a co-ordinated, structured and quality controlled system of administration that governs the planning, commissioning and procurement of £1.6 billion (2009-10) of housing related support expenditure to over a million vulnerable people with diverse needs, to help them to live as independently as possible. The programme is meeting identified needs and is planned and delivered with the participation of service users.

**202** Housing related support service providers have responded well to the Supporting People framework which replaced the multitude of funding regimes that preceded it with one funding source. The quality of the services delivered continues to improve. Supporting People funded services are the largest single investment by local authorities to voluntary sector service providers. The amount invested in the sector exceeds £1 billion each year.

**203** The QAF, that measures the quality of services, is cited by commissioners, partner agencies, providers and service users as one of the keys to the success of Supporting People. It is now accepted practice that service users are fully involved in the monitoring of contracts and some highly innovative training and mentoring is in place to support this. The benefits of the approach have been clearly evidenced and the methodology has been transferred to other care and support services in some areas.

**204** Service user involvement and participation is a particularly notable feature of the programme. Many Supporting People service users are from the most socially excluded groups in communities; they have often had negative experiences of authorities, agencies and providers in the past; their lives are frequently chaotic and they are often only briefly involved in the services they receive. It is in this context that some excellent work has taken place that is resulting in tangible improvements in services, giving users an opportunity to influence the planning and delivery of the services they receive.

**205** The value for money being achieved has resulted in significant savings and efficiencies. Service providers have responded well to calls for improved service quality. Costs reflect increasingly local, regional and national benchmarks and the requirement to report on the outcomes for users of the services provided. The outcomes framework for Supporting People is providing information on a quarterly basis that enables those planning, commissioning, delivering and receiving housing related support services to assess the success and value of different types of service provision for each group of vulnerable people.

## Conclusion and recommendations

**206** Weaknesses remain in some authorities. These are found in leadership, partnership working, mapping and meeting needs, commissioning and procurement, access and customer care; and value for money. These can and are being addressed and there is an abundance of good practice that can be disseminated and shared. Audit Commission re-inspections of some previously poor (zero star) authorities demonstrate the rapid progress that can be made when strong leadership harnesses effective partnership working, to achieve defined improvements, with a focus on improving outcomes for service users within 12-18 months. High performing local authorities and providers have been generous in sharing their skills and expertise with others.

**207** The removal of the ring fence grant for Supporting People presents an opportunity to introduce further innovation and facilitate joint commissioning to create wrap around services for and with vulnerable people that expand the choices available to them. Fears have been expressed from providers; commissioning staff and service users that this budget could be redirected into other service areas where there is a statutory requirement in adult social care services. This is perceived to be highly probable, especially in a recession, in the context of pressures to reduce public spending and an increased demand as more people become vulnerable due to the impact of the economic downturn.

**208** There are risks to the future of housing related support. The Audit Commission recommends that the following are considered as a way of mitigating these risks

**209** Local authorities should consider:

- preparing an assessment of progress including the outcomes for service users from the investment made to date (available through the CLG outcomes data); the value for money achieved over the past 6 years; the impact of service user involvement and a summary of the benefits achieved for all partners. The assessment should include reference to safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children and efficiencies in other service areas. This should be submitted to the LSP for discussion and agreement on a future approach for maintaining preventative services;
- continuing to promote the planning, procurement and commissioning of services under the banner Supporting People in order to sustain the identity for service users, providers and all commissioners;
- clarifying future local joint commissioning arrangements for providers and, where necessary, renew or determine outstanding contracts to give more certainty to providers and users and to assist providers to decide their own future development;
- agreeing to the regular reporting to LSPs of the outcomes for service users, cost benefit analysis, updated needs mapping and continuing gaps in service provision for vulnerable groups;
- preparing and agreeing plans with neighbouring local authorities for the maintenance of regional, sub regional and local groups that support the planning, commissioning and delivery of housing related support services including regional implementation groups (RIGs);

- demonstrating commitment to the continuation of the collation and reporting of information under the QAF and the CLG national outcomes framework;
- identifying opportunities to expand choice for service users through joint working to achieve the personalisation of housing related support planning and delivery packages which include the use of individual budgets;
- identifying opportunities to ensure that safeguarding issues are raised in the procurement, commissioning and contract monitoring of services including representation on adult and child protection panels when appropriate;
- consulting regularly with service users and providers and agree future arrangements for their full engagement and participation in the future planning, commissioning, monitoring and delivery of housing related support for vulnerable people; and
- engaging with relevant professional bodies, advocacy groups and other agencies that are in a position to inform and influence their members and partners and assist in the collection and dissemination of positive practice and in monitoring outcomes for investors and service users.

**210** In order to support local authorities central government should consider:

- monitoring the future commissioning and delivery of housing related support, undertake and commission research and provide information to authorities to support evidence based reporting of the cost benefits annually of investment in housing related support;
- working across central government departments to review and revise guidance on policy and practice that is allied to housing related support planning and delivery; and strengthen the recognition of the role of housing related support within associated guidance. This should include joint strategic needs assessments (JSNAs); safeguarding of adults and children; tackling social exclusion and worklessness; crime reduction and the rehabilitation of offenders;
- monitoring the provision of housing related support and its benefits annually to ensure the continued success of the programme, sharing innovation and good practice; and
- providing information from the outcomes framework analysis undertaken by St Andrew University in a format that matches the national indicators, and relates to Public Service Agreements (PSAs), to enable authorities to share and benchmark performance data with Local Strategic Partnerships to allow them to maximise the housing related support benefits through local area agreements (LAAs) and multi area agreements (MAAs).

**211** The Audit Commission Supporting People inspections have been recognised as a key driver in the success of the programme. The inspection programme ended on 31 March 2009 after six years of operation and was carried out with CSCI (from April 2009, now part of the Care Quality Commission) and HMIP.

## Conclusion and recommendations

**212** Assessments of the planning, procurement, commissioning and outcomes of housing related support for vulnerable people will continue under Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAAs) from April 2009. The CAA process places particular emphasis on how well a local area is meeting the needs of the vulnerable people in its communities. An assessment of the planning and provision of housing related support will be included in CAA reporting.

# Appendix 1 – Project Objectives and Methodology

- 1 To review the evidence and produce a report on the Supporting People programme that comments on:
  - progress against the recommendations set out in the Commission's 2005 study; and impact;
  - successes in improving outcomes for diverse groups of vulnerable people, both in terms of the Supporting People outcome framework and wider improvements, including greater service choice and improved service quality,
  - success at providing a framework for effective governance, including partnership working, user focussed commissioning, procurement and performance monitoring,
  - improvements in value for money;
  - levels of user and carer involvement in existing services and in future service and strategy development;
  - links between inspection findings and authorities' adoption of relevant national indicators under the new performance framework; and
  - how housing related support services fit with wider policy priorities across local and national government, such as individual budgets and personalised services.
- 2 To identify ongoing challenges and barriers to improvement at a local and/or national level and associated risks for the future and to:
  - comment on reasons for these and where possible evidence what has been successfully achieved in authorities to overcome challenges;
  - suggest actions for authorities and their partners to consider in the near future, given the changes in delivery and financial arrangements from April 2009; and
  - suggest other recommendations for local or national action, as appropriate.
- 3 To comment on relevant learning for other partnerships and joint inspection programmes, including Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 4 The report is based on:
  - a review of recent inspection reports and recent research in the area;
  - a review of recent relevant government publications including guidance;
  - a review of relevant data including client records and outcome data; inspection scores and National Indicator selection;
  - sixty interviews or focus groups with experienced inspectors from all involved inspectorates, Commissioning Body chairs, Providers, Regional Implementation Groups and Service User Groups;

## **Appendix 1 – Project Objectives and Methodology**

- an on line questionnaire to all Supporting People Lead Officers; and
- an all day facilitated Appreciative Enquiry Event in December 2008 attended by service users, local authorities, providers, health and probation.

# Appendix 2 – Older People and Sheltered Housing

**This appendix includes more detailed information gathered during our research of sheltered housing and associated older peoples services and recent findings from Supporting People inspections. While the comments relate directly to this tenure and this group, similar issues may arise with other user groups.**

- 1 Supporting People is one of a number of pressures for change in sheltered housing, but because of the requirement to review funds and overall grant reductions it has been the catalyst for change. The impact locally can be major and there is a clear need to work in partnership and to take a strategic approach to the needs of existing or potential users. Consulting appropriately with the user group is important but not easy if landlords do not have a history of consulting. There is a need to recognise schemes and user needs will differ and a blanket policy cannot be imposed on all providers or schemes.
- 2 The trend towards change in sheltered schemes began before the Supporting People programme. A number of pressures have driven reviews and change. There are schemes where location, building and design standards or other issues mean it is difficult to let properties. There have been changes in the needs of scheme residents. Other pressures include the need to conform to the European working time directive which impacted on hours worked by on site wardens and the impact of the Ealing judgment<sup>1</sup> to de-pool rents and provide tenants with a clear identification of rent, management and support costs.
- 3 However, the decision to include Sheltered Housing within the ring fenced budget and the requirement to review Supporting People funded services increased the pace of local change. In some cases the programme has been used to ease the introduction of difficult, and in some cases unpopular, changes that were outstanding and this has been to the detriment of the programmes reputation.
- 4 Common changes include remodelling as extra care, using a group of staff based on one site to manage a number of sheltered schemes or replacing many or all on site wardens with visits from non site based support staff, with alarm systems used to cover the full 24 hours. In some areas the skills and expertise of sheltered housing wardens have been harnessed through floating support for the benefit of older people in the community including those in private housing. There is no best system; locally agreed strategies need to take account of local need and the relevance of existing services in meeting those.

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<sup>1</sup> Ealing judgement, April 1992, determined that the additional services provided by the wardens of sheltered accommodation did not come within the Housing Revenue description of management of houses and other properties and should not therefore be funded from rental income.

## Appendix 2 – Older People and Sheltered Housing

- 5 Nobody's Listening, a recent report by Age Concern<sup>1</sup>, highlights the extent of recent change to sheltered housing schemes, particularly the replacement of on site wardens with alternative arrangements. It raises a number of questions about how decisions on change are being made and on the adequacy of consultation with residents. Individuals and organisations campaigning for the retention of on site wardens also contacted the Commission during our review to express their concerns.
- 6 Recent Audit Commission inspection reports<sup>2</sup> suggest that higher performing authorities:
  - make changes to sheltered housing as part of a wider housing strategy for older people and if possible a wider service strategy for this group;
  - see housing related support to older people as a key part of the preventative agenda;
  - have a cross tenure approach wherever possible;
  - understand the diversity of need within older people;
  - work jointly with partners, especially care and health services;
  - have a planned approach to consultation and communication with older people in general and sheltered residents in particular, which recognises the potential for confusion between landlord and Supporting People services and charges; and
  - make sure that there are clear channels for complaint that recognise this potential for confusion.

### Planning change strategically and in partnership

- 7 CSCI (Now part of CSQ) inspectors experienced in Supporting People inspections say that the programme has been a key driver in shaping new models of support for older people and reducing dependence on traditional social care services. The expansion of Telecare, home improvement agencies and handyperson services have made many more individuals feel safe and given them greater independence and control over their daily lives.
- 8 Change in the higher performing authorities follows effective consultation, user involvement and communication and are linked to an overall strategy for older peoples' housing and support services, often developed with health and social services. In Solihull the Supporting People team was involved in the joint council and PCT strategy for older people, 'All our tomorrows'. Additional extra care housing was identified as a corporate priority with capital as well as revenue funding allocated.

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<sup>1</sup> Nobody's Listening – the impact of floating support on older people living in sheltered housing' Age Concern January 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The individual authority reports mentioned in this appendix are all available on the Audit Commission website under housing reports.

- 9 All administering authorities have some services for older people, but demography means that often older people are also the group where there is the highest number of individuals with unmet needs. This is particularly true of older owner occupiers. For example, Leeds City Council know that 67 per cent of older people in their area are homeowners; yet in 2007 only 6.3 per cent of older people receiving support through Supporting People funds in 2007 were homeowners. This knowledge fed into plans for commissioning floating support that was tenure neutral.
- 10 Older owner occupiers have benefited from the national increase in support through Housing Improvement Agencies (HIAs). In Redcar and Cleveland, handyperson services, community alarm services and floating support for older people are now all cross tenure. Unfortunately cross tenure services are not yet the norm.
- 11 Preventative support through HIAs has sometimes been joint funding by health and social services as well as Supporting People, and improved outcomes can be locally demonstrated. In March 2007 Norfolk County Council were able to report fewer people going into residential care and more receiving support in their own homes.

### Joint schemes for remodelling sheltered housing

- 12 There are many joint initiatives. Common initiatives enable people to be discharged from hospital in a safe and timely manner, help prevent falls and promote mental and physical well being. There are many examples of joint service commissioning, particularly around remodelling sheltered schemes.
  - Leicester City Council developed a joint specification and tender for their new Extra Care services.
  - An existing sheltered housing scheme in Bournemouth was redeveloped with joint capital funding from the PCT. This included the use of smart technology to assist people to live more independently in their own home.
  - Housing, Social Care and the Supporting People team in Milton Keynes jointly commissioned a Home Improvement Agency. The Council developed a multi tenure retirement village and levered in funding from health and social care.
  - Suffolk sheltered schemes have been re-modelled and four schemes now have sheltered and very sheltered housing on the same site, allowing residents to access higher levels of support when needed. Supporting People, Adult Care Services and the Health Service are working together on pilot projects to extend services out to the community from bases in sheltered schemes.

## Appendix 2 – Older People and Sheltered Housing

### Inadequate strategies in some authorities

13 Not all authorities have a clear strategy for older persons housing in general or for the future of sheltered housing within that. In 2007 and 2008 inspections reported inadequate strategies and delays in reviewing or implementing strategies. Delays in reconfiguring sheltered housing can mean that funds remain tied up in services that are less needs related, delaying the realignment of resources to ensure wider support for other groups including other older people.

### Approaches need to recognise the diversity within this large grouping

14 Older people are not a homogenous group. Good authorities recognise the need for tailored services. Salford developed a service specifically for older people with learning difficulties. The Suffolk extra care schemes provide specific support for people with dementia.

15 There is a growing population of older people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities who traditionally have not taken up as many alarms or sheltered housing places as might be expected, given their number and needs. Wigan investigated possible barriers to access locally. Tameside and Solihull identified this as an issue in their strategies. Milton Keynes introduced BME targets for their community alarms installation service to ensure a focus on this groups needs.

16 While this work is beginning, overall there remains a need to identify and commission housing related support that more flexibly responds to the needs of older people from BME communities as well as older people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

### Involving older people in service reviews and strategies

17 Inspections have found an improvement in the extent to which councils and service providers actively involved people in the evaluation and review of their own supported housing services. However, this is not always the case at either an individual or a strategic level. This can be a particular issue in sheltered housing because of the number of individuals involved and because of confusion between the contribution and role of the landlords compared to the Supporting People team.

18 Older people are not always an easy group to consult with. Relying on meetings and on going consultation arrangements through established groups may involve relatively few individuals. Kensington and Chelsea have recognised this and have a specific Supporting People older persons' consultation strategy; they identified a local voluntary organisation that can facilitate such consultation.

19 Discussions in Barnet with service users in sheltered housing identified concerns about written questionnaires feeling impersonal, the risks of excluding less confident service users and the difficulties many had in distinguishing Supporting People support from housing services. Barnet used the specialist skills of the voluntary sector by commissioning a local voluntary organisation to carry out a specific piece of work with service users of sheltered housing.

### Confusion between landlord duties and housing related support

- 20 Confusion between landlord service charges or other planned change and Supporting People changes and charges is a particular problem in sheltered schemes. Landlords and Supporting People teams need to work on this jointly. Good landlords have ongoing ways of communicating and consulting with their tenants and are able to use these to explain Supporting People related issues.
- 21 The Centre for Housing and Support (CHS) includes appropriate consultation in its code of best practice. However, inspections have found instances where the landlords of sheltered housing schemes have not given residents good quality, relevant and well presented information about services or about changes to those services, including reductions in warden services.

### Reviewing schemes and need on individual merit and value for money

- 22 Authorities are not always open in their approach. In some instances they appear to have made unilateral decisions to fund only floating support rather than accommodation based warden services without carrying out appropriate scheme or provider reviews to clarify current user needs and service value for money. Such a blanket approach does not meet the principles of either value for money or effective user consultation.
- 23 The Audit Commission has recently produced separate research on the provision of services for older people. The report, [Don't Stop Me Now](#), is available for download under National reports on the Commission's website.

# Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

1 A questionnaire was sent to all 150 Supporting People (SP) lead officers in November 2008. The level of interest was high and the deadline for the return of completed questionnaires was extended, following repeated requests for additional time, from 19 December 2008 to 21 January 2009. Returns were received from 101 authorities giving an overall response rate of 67 per cent. Table numbers relate to questions.

**Tables 1 and 2: Responders by organisation type and government office region**

	Metropolitan council	London Borough	County	Unitary
Percentage of authority types who responded	53%	64%	79%	72%
Percentage of all responders	19%	21%	27%	34%

	East	East Mids	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Mids	Ys&H
Percentage of responders located in region	8%	7%	21%	7%	15%	13%	13%	7%	11%
Percentage of possible responders who responded	80%	78%	64%	58%	68%	68%	81%	50%	73%

## Section A: General views on the impact of the programme

**Table 3: Has the SP programme delivered significant local improvements to:**

Options	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	DK
The range of provision compared to local need	54%	38%	1%	7%	0%	0%
Opps for move on where appropriate for service users	27%	45%	24%	3%	1%	0%
Service quality	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Options	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	DK
Individual outcomes for vulnerable people	73%	26%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Value for money	77%	22%	1%	0%	0%	0%

The opportunities for move on where appropriate for service users – based on authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
County	7%	41%	44%	7%	0%
London Borough	33%	48%	19%	0%	0%
Metropolitan Council	37%	47%	16%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	32%	47%	15%	3%	3%
Grand Total	27%	46%	24%	3%	1%

**Table 4: Key differences in the local area compared to five years ago regarding:**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been summarised from the open answers given.

4a. The balance and range of local provision compared to local need	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
More flexible/floating support/more tenure neutral	11	4	3	10	28
More equitable (across geographic area, across tenure type)	4	0	0	1	5
More strategic and/or needs based	6	10	10	8	34
Better balance, fewer gaps	2	3	2	4	11
Specific increases for named groups	8	5	4	11	28
Reductions in high cost/care services/learning disability	2	0	0	4	6
Other specific reductions	1	0	0	4	5
Not much change	2	2	1	1	6
4b. The opportunities for move on where appropriate for service users	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Choice based lettings	2	0	1	1	4
Referral panels	1	2	1	3	7
Pathways /gateway approaches	1	0	0	1	2

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

4b. The opportunities for move on where appropriate for service users	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Protocols (including MOPP) and contracts; also use of relevant performance indicators	5	4	4	7	20
Access to and support for moves into private sector increased (e.g. rent deposit schemes, floating support)	7	8	6	8	29
Dedicated move on properties/schemes increased	7	8	6	8	29
More strategic and joined up: reshaping overall, coordination between those involved, strategies	4	4	3	4	15
Still weak in general	6	1	2	6	15
Uneven geographically/by client type	2	0	0	1	3
Hampered by lack of accommodation	1	5	1	5	12
Other	2	2	2	1	7
4c. Service quality	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
QAF	15	10	11	24	60
Service reviews	4	1	1	4	10
Structured support/support plans	2	0	1	1	4
Minimum standards/contract ending for poor quality	4	2	2	1	9
Contract management	3	0	0	3	6
Service user involvement	1	2	0	3	6
Other	1	1	4	2	8
4d. Individual outcomes for vulnerable people	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Support planning focus on individuals needs	1	1	3	5	10
Structured focus on outcomes	5	0	1	3	9
Greater user involvement, choice and control	3	2	1	10	16
Contracts /service specifications now have outcomes in them	3	2	3	3	11

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

4d. Individual outcomes for vulnerable people	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Better safeguarding now	0	0	1	0	1
Case studies show improved outcomes	3	1	2	0	6
Training has helped for providers, users etc	1	0	1	1	3
Now gets measured via outcomes data so gets done	11	7	7	12	37
Other	3	4	3	5	15
4e. Value for money	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Rationalised services and providers	2	0	1	0	3
Commissioning and procurement improvements	1	1	3	10	15
Benchmarking	6	3	4	7	20
Cost modelling	2	0	1	0	3
End of ineligible services	2	0	0	2	4
Reviews and challenging providers	0	2	3	4	9
Market testing	1	0	0	1	2
Strategic redistribution	0	0	2	0	2
Demonstrable improvements	6	12	9	6	33
Other	6	1	1	5	13

**Table 5: Achievements local authorities are proud of in terms of improving value for money**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been summarised from the open answers given.

Q5 What achievements are you particularly proud of in terms of improving value for money?	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Efficiency savings [leading to reinvestment with no loss of services or quality]	10	6	5	4	25
Successful remodelling at no cost/with savings	3	2	3	2	10
Provider links improved	3	2	2	3	10
Improved commissioning [now outcome based]	1	2	2	0	5
Joint tendering/procurement/commissioning (normally with health & social care, or probation)	4	3	2	9	18

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Q5 What achievements are you particularly proud of in terms of improving value for money?	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Procurement improved	1	2	1	1	5
Development of specific local vfm tools	2	2	0	4	8
Service user involvement	0	1	0	1	2
Establishing effective benchmarking to help vfm	5	0	1	4	10

### Section B: Organisational arrangements locally

**Table 6 and 7: Where the team is located now, where the team will move to if a change is planned and located in 2009.**

There are a total of 24 Supporting People teams which will move between sections in 2009. Six of these teams are unsure as to which section they will be located within and have been added to the second table as a separate group.

Location	Nov 2008	Expected during 2009
Adult Services	2	3
Adult Social Care	41	37
Community services	2	
Housing	23	19
Joint commissioning unit	7	9
Joint department	15	13
Unsure		6
Quality Assurance team	2	2
Other	7	10
Total	99	99

**Table 8: How authorities managed any local reduction in their grant last year**

	Standard grant reduction and/or no inflation grant passed on directly to all providers	Standard grant reduction passed on directly to most providers but in house services received inflation linked awards	Inflation increases given to many providers	Previous year under spend used to cover grant reduction	Savings found through targeted efficiencies or service changes within ring fenced budget	Additional gap funding provided from other budgets or reserves outside the ring fence
(%)	6	0	17	35	38	5

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 9: Whether or not local authorities Supporting People grant is still funding ineligible services**

Q9 If yes, please explain	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Learning disability funding issues still - but plans in place to run this down	5	0	4	1	10
Other specific groups mentioned - but plans in place	4	1	2	2	9
<i>Money still in LD - no plans apparently in place</i>	0	0	0	0	0
Funding 'ineligible' as a policy decision	1	2	0	1	4
Only really minor issues	1	2	2	4	9
Expect future change linked to user choice	0	0	0	1	1

**Table 10: Eligibility changes that had been/would be made and their purpose**

50% of authorities said they had or would change eligibility rules locally.

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Q10 If yes, please explain	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
JSNA based	1	0	1	1	3
Money is for lower level prevention	1	0	3	2	6
Looking to pool more with health and social care	2	1	0	0	3
Want outcome based funding not eligibility based funding	2	1	1	4	8
Link eligibility to LAA priorities / ABG arrangements	4	0	4	1	9
Introduce equity of access -( not tied to housing benefit )	0	5	1	3	9
Introduce greater flexibility	2	2	3	4	11
Further work will be carried out	0	2	0	3	5
Other	0	2	0	0	2

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

### Section C: Governance and partnerships

**Table 11: Whether or not authorities agree that local partnership arrangements for governing the programme are effective**

Options	Total
Strongly agree	43%
Tend to agree	45%
Neither agree nor disagree	7%
Tend to disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know	0%

Whether or not authorities agree that local partnership arrangements for governing the programme are effective <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
County	59%	30%	7%	4%	0%
London Borough	33%	52%	5%	5%	5%
Metropolitan Council	32%	58%	5%	5%	0%
Unitary Authority	41%	44%	9%	3%	3%
Grand Total	43%	45%	7%	4%	2%

Whether or not authorities agree that local partnership arrangements for governing the programme are effective	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
East	38%	63%	0%	0%	0%
East Midlands	57%	29%	14%	0%	0%
London	32%	58%	0%	5%	5%
North East	33%	50%	0%	17%	0%
North West	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
South East	60%	13%	20%	0%	7%
South West	69%	23%	8%	0%	0%
West Midlands	14%	57%	14%	14%	0%
Yorkshire & Humberside	36%	45%	9%	9%	0%
Grand Total	43%	45%	7%	4%	2%

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 12: The extent of involvement on responders commissioning body by different statutory partners**

Options	Health	Probation	Housing	Social services
Full	34%	50%	74%	68%
Regular involvement	29%	37%	18%	22%
Involved in most decisions	8%	11%	4%	5%
Involved in some decisions	14%	2%	0%	2%
Limited involvement	13%	0%	1%	1%
Almost no involvement	3%	0%	1%	1%

Breakdown of Health response by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Full	Regular involvement	Involved in most decisions	Involved in some decisions	Almost no involvement	Limited involvement
County	7%	37%	7%	26%	4%	19%
London Borough	52%	24%	0%	10%	5%	10%
Met Council	53%	11%	16%	16%	5%	0%
Unitary Authority	32%	35%	9%	6%	0%	18%

Breakdown of Probation by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Full	Regular involvement	Involved in most decisions	Involved in some decisions	Almost no involvement	Limited involvement
County	44%	44%	11%	0%	0%	0%
London Borough	40%	35%	20%	5%	0%	0%
Metropolitan Council	74%	21%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	47%	41%	9%	3%	0%	0%

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 13: Achievements which local authorities are particularly proud of within governance and partnerships**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Q13 What achievements are you particularly proud of in this area?	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Had joint commissioning/contracts/tendering	3	2	3	5	13
Stakeholder/provider links stronger (includes references to forums and CSG)	10	8	11	10	39
LAA links improved	3	2	1	2	8
Reached difficult decisions	5	2	2	0	9
Successful involvement of Members/.leader of council	3	2	4	5	14
Improved service user involvement	2	2	2	2	8
Deals with district councils	1	1	1	0	3
Involvement of Childrens services alongside traditional three (health/social care/probation)	3	9	3	12	27
Successful procurement	0	1	1	0	2
Getting a Commissioning Body up and running	0	0	0	1	1

**Table 15: Whether the local authority has started to consider how to mitigate any associated risks. If yes the authority gave brief details**

80 per cent of authorities had started to consider how to mitigate any associated risks.

*The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.*

If yes, please give brief details	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Contracts extended	4	1	4	2	11
LAA links/use of NIs	9	3	4	6	22
Education	0	0	2	3	5
Planning/discussion under way	6	6	6	6	24
Ring fence extended	1	1	0	0	2
Other	0	2	0	4	6

**Section D: Involving users, carers and providers**

**Table 16, 18 and 20 are combined. Whether the local authorities agree that considerable progress has been made in involving service users and Carers and providers in strategy and service developments in this ALA and whether there has been considerable progress in improving access to services locally?**

Options	Q16. Do the local authorities agree that considerable progress has been made in involving service users and carers in strategy and service developments in this ALA?	Q18. Do the local authorities agree that considerable progress has been made at involving providers in strategy and service development in this ALA?	Q20. Does the local authority agree that there has been considerable progress in improving access to services locally?
Strongly agree	33%	50%	37%
Tend to agree	48%	41%	47%
Neither agree nor disagree	12%	6%	13%
Tend to disagree	7%	2%	3%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Q16 Does the local authority agree that considerable progress has been made in involving service users and carers in strategy and service developments in this ALA by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
County	26%	48%	22%	4%	0%
London Borough	33%	43%	5%	19%	0%
Metropolitan Council	32%	53%	16%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	39%	48%	6%	6%	0%

Q18. Does the local authority agree that considerable progress has been made at involving providers in strategy and service development in this ALA by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
County	58%	35%	8%	0%	0%
London Borough	43%	43%	10%	5%	0%
Metropolitan Council	58%	42%	0%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	45%	45%	6%	3%	0%

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Q20. Does the local authority agree that there has been considerable progress in improving access to services locally by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
County	37%	48%	11%	4%	0%
London Borough	52%	29%	14%	5%	0%
Metropolitan Council	32%	58%	11%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	30%	52%	15%	3%	0%

**Table 17: The differences that have been made to service outcomes by involving service users and carers?**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Differences that have been made to service outcomes	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Tailoring/flexibility	1	3	3	1	8
Consultation	4	2	0	5	11
Tender/procurement involvement	8	3	2	7	20
Communication	4	4	1	3	12
Service review	2	3	4	7	16
Decommissioning/moving service	7	0	0	5	12
Other	0	0	1	2	3

**Table 22: There were 11 different groups that were mentioned to have gaps in access to local services**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Access issues	No. of times mentioned				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Move on	1	0	1	1	3
Access to information/single access point	3	2	3	2	10
Referral routes/arrangements	1	2	1	3	7
Gateway	1	1	2	5	9
Floating support	1	1	1	2	5
Pathways into services	1	2	1	0	4

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 23: The achievements which the local authorities are particularly proud of in involving users, carers and providers**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Achievements	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Greater service user involvement/user champions	8	4	6	8	26
Peer arrangements of various types	3	0	3	2	8
Move on better/new access/pathways/single assessment	4	4	3	12	23
Provider links better	5	1	2	5	13
Better for named group	9	3	3	5	20

**Table 24: The risks and opportunities which the local authorities can see in involving users, carers and providers in the future**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Risks	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Removal of ring fence endangers funds for preventative/early intervention/socially excluded	2	3	5	7	17
Diversion of funds to adult care/stat services/social services	1	2	1	1	5
Leakage of funds to other LAA /ABG projects	6	2	1	3	12
Losing identity/governance	2	0	1	1	4
Losing strong user involvement	3	2	1	3	9
Weaker links to esp. smaller providers/destabilising	2	2	1	2	7
Individual budgets/personalisation linked risk	1	2	0	4	7
Other	0	2	1	2	5
Opportunities	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
More flexible/complementary services	1	2	2	3	8
Common access points/gateway arrangements	1	1	0	5	7
Joint commissioning/funding	0	0	1	2	3
Grow with LAA/consult better via LAA/influence via LAA	0	0	2	0	2
More service user engagement/personalisation/individual budget opportunities	6	3	5	7	21

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

### **Section E: Commissioning, procurement and quality assurance**

**Table 26: Whether the local authority agrees that their quality of commission and procurement within their ALA has significantly improved under the Supporting People programme**

Options	Total
Strongly agree	5%
Tend to agree	62%
Neither agree nor disagree	32%
Tend to disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know	0%

**Table 25: Current contracts, as of 1 December 2008**

Contract type	
Interim	14%
Ending by April 2009	25%
Ending by April 2010	26%
Ending by April 2011	23%
Later than April 2011	11%

**Table 27: Whether there has been any commissioning jointly with other authorities**

Options	Total
Yes	43%
Planned but not yet delivered	18%
No	39%

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given

If yes or planned but not yet delivered please explain	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Homeless	1	1	0	2	4
Drug and alcohol/offender/ex-offender	3	3	5	8	19
HIV/Learning disability/mental health	1	6	2	4	13
Gypsy/traveller	1	0	0	1	2
Complex needs	1	0	1	0	2
Young people	1	0	1	0	2
BME	0	1	0	1	2
Domestic violence	0	0	1	2	3
Floating support	2	5	1	0	8
Joint with whom?	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Local neighbouring authorities	7	11	7	8	33
PCT	1	1	0	0	2
With (or other) county council	1	0	0	2	3
Probation	1	0	1	1	3
Internal department	1	1	0	1	3
Sub region	0	2	0	0	2

**Table 28: Achievements which the local authorities are particularly proud of in commissioning, procurement and quality assurance**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Achievements	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Specific new/remodelled service	5	5	5	5	20
Joint working/procurement/commissioning	8	4	4	12	28
User involvement/focus	4	1	2	7	14
Regional work/lead on	3	0	1	1	5
Willingness to decommission/close if needed	3	0	2	0	5
Innovative work/pilots	2	2	1	0	5
Lead within authority in understanding markets, commissioning & procurement	3	1	2	2	8

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 29: The extent to which current arrangements for protecting vulnerable adults and young people receiving SP funded services are adequate**

Options	Total
Strongly agree	23%
Tend to agree	59%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%
Tend to disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	1%

Table 29 by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
County	22%	74%	4%	0%	0%	0%
London Borough	19%	43%	14%	14%	5%	5%
Metropolitan Council	32%	58%	0%	11%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	21%	59%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Grand Total	23%	59%	11%	5%	1%	1%

**Table 30: Local authorities' particular concerns around safeguarding**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Safeguarding 30 & 31	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
No secrets definition too narrow/POVA too limited	3	1	1	2	7
Links with others too weak	2	1	0	1	4
Concern regarding safeguarding with individualised budgets	6	5	4	2	17
Lack of profile/providers not keen to be trained	0	0	2	5	7
Cost to providers of ISA requirements	1	1	0	0	2
CRB checks not automatic requirement	1	0	0	0	1
Children not covered	1	0	0	0	1
Individual budgets	0	1	0	1	2
Weak coordination/links to statutory services	0	2	1	1	4

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Safeguarding 30 & 31		No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
Risks	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total	
Risk of standards falling if funds reduced after ring fence removed	1	3	0	0	4	
Specific concerns e.g. shared rooms	1	1	0	1	3	

**Table 31: Local authorities' particular success in improving safeguarding**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Solutions	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Local revised alert pathways; local policies widened to include SP	2	2	0	0	4
Developed strong links with local safeguarding panels/arrangements and other key services like adult care	3	3	0	6	12
Inadequate services decommissioned	0	1	1	0	2
Real push to get providers to training; used reviews to raise improvements	6	4	3	6	19
Putting aspects of safeguarding in contracts	1	2	2	4	9
Developing strategies for children/minors in general and via specific issues / schemes	2	1	1	2	6
Awareness raising/info for service users/customers	4	0	1	1	6
Improve coordination	5	1	3	7	16
Response specific to local concern	1	2	1	1	5

**Table 32: Whether the local authority intends to continue using the Quality Assurance Framework for future quality monitoring.**

Options	Total
For all relevant contracts	94%
For most	6%
For some	0%
For a few	0%
Will not continue	0%

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 34: Looking to the future, the risks or opportunities that the local authorities can see in quality and monitoring**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Risk issues	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Individual budgets	4	0	0	0	4
Loss of staff capacity to monitor effectively (nos, training)	4	0	0	2	6
Loss of ring fence resulting in loss of focus	2	0	1	1	4
Other partners ignoring the QAF	2	3	3	2	10
Less universal, less consistent - could risk loss of provider support/difficulties across authorities for providers	1	0	2	4	7
Danger of joint monitoring becoming lowest common denominator	1	1	0	0	2
End of national requirement may mean dilution of quality monitoring	1	0	4	3	8
Opportunities	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
New QAF can raise standards	5	2	4	3	14
Spread approach to partners	1	7	2	8	18
Widen definitions; promote wider preventative agenda	0	1	1	0	2
Tailor for small providers	1	0	1	0	2
Link to LAA targets	1	0	2	0	3
Opportunities for joint monitoring	4	0	1	2	7
Opportunities for more user focus	0	1	1	2	4

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 35 and 37: Whether there is sufficiently clear local understanding of the current and emerging needs of the client groups covered by the programme to underpin future strategy and service commissioning, and whether current strategic priorities for Supporting People are reflected in the local Community Strategy and in the Local Area Agreement.**

Options	Q35: Is there a sufficiently clear local understanding of the current and emerging needs of the client groups covered by the programme to underpin future strategy and service commissioning?	Q37: Current strategic priorities for Supporting People are reflected in the local Community Strategy	Q37: Current strategic priorities for Supporting People are reflected in the Local Area Agreement
Strongly agree	19%	27%	38%
Tend to agree	63%	45%	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	16%	12%
Tend to disagree	4%	10%	9%
Strongly disagree	0%	2%	2%
Don't know	0%	1%	1%

Current strategic priorities for Supporting People are reflected in the local Community Strategy by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
County	26%	48%	19%	7%	0%	0%
London Borough	14%	52%	24%	0%	5%	5%
Metropolitan Council	42%	37%	5%	16%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	26%	41%	15%	15%	3%	0%
Current strategic priorities for Supporting People are reflected in the LAA by authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
County	37%	44%	15%	4%	0%	0%
London Borough	20%	35%	25%	10%	5%	5%
Metropolitan Council	63%	16%	5%	16%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	35%	47%	6%	9%	3%	0%
Grand Total	38%	38%	12%	9%	2%	1%

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 36: Whether the local authority has agreed plans to update local needs information for SP client groups as part of the local JSNA**

Options	Plans agreed	2	3	4	No such work yet considered
per cent	17	26	28	11	18
authority type <sup>2</sup>	Plans agreed	2	3	4	No such work yet considered
County	19%	15%	37%	11%	19%
London Borough	15%	25%	40%	5%	15%
Metropolitan Council	21%	37%	21%	11%	11%
Unitary Authority	15%	29%	18%	15%	24%
Grand Total	17%	26%	28%	11%	18%

**Table 38: The major unfilled gaps identified in current provision in terms of particular user groups and in terms of particular provision type**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Major unfilled gaps identified in current provision in terms of particular user groups	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Gypsies/travellers	1	3	3	6	13
Socially excluded	1	1	2	0	4
BME	2	0	1	3	6
HIV/aids	0	0	1	2	3
Mental health/Learning and physical disabilities	18	11	10	17	56
Dual diagnosis	1	3	0	1	5
Offenders/Ex-offenders	6	4	2	4	16
Migrants/Refugees	2	0	2	1	5
Young people/Teenage parents	12	11	4	7	34
Elderly	9	4	6	9	28
Drug and alcohol problems	6	10	4	6	26
Other	1	0	0	3	4

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

**Table 39: Achievements local authorities are particularly proud of in needs assessment and future strategy**

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Achievements local authorities are particularly proud of in needs assessment and future strategy	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
Influencing strategy	12	1	5	7	25
Specific services developed	4	4	3	10	21
Specific needs analysis development	4	4	5	9	22
Other	3	3	2	4	12

**Table 40: Whether the local authority has started to consider the local implications of personalisation and choice for service development**

Possible responses	Total
Yes, planning has started	43%
Yes, discussions under way	41%
Aware of the issue but little done	16%
Not yet considered at all	0%

**Table 42: How far the local authority agrees that:**

Options	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Service development is focussed on quantified outcomes for service users	34%	54%	7%	4%	1%	0%
Monitoring is carried out against shared outcome targets at Commission Body level	25%	36%	27%	11%	2%	0%
Supporting People outcome information is used to monitor Supporting People funded strategies and activities	45%	36%	14%	4%	0%	1%
Supporting People outcome information is used by partners to support a range of targets including LAA targets	13%	42%	29%	12%	4%	1%

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Options	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
We are working with partners to adopt an integrated approach to identifying and delivering against outcomes in future	28%	47%	22%	2%	1%	1%
<b>Monitoring is carried out against shared outcome targets at Commission Body level broken down into authority type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
County	19%	33%	33%	11%	4%	0%
London Borough	24%	48%	14%	14%	0%	0%
Metropolitan Council	26%	26%	32%	16%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	29%	35%	26%	6%	3%	0%
Grand Total	25%	36%	27%	11%	2%	0%

Supporting People outcome information is used to monitor Supporting People funded strategies and activities broken down into authority type <sup>2</sup>	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
County	41%	19%	30%	7%	0%	4%
London Borough	45%	50%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Metropolitan Council	47%	37%	16%	0%	0%	0%
Unitary Authority	47%	41%	9%	3%	0%	0%
Grand Total	45%	36%	14%	4%	0%	1%

**Table 45: Whether the local authorities agree that the following Supporting People developments are influencing other development locally**

Options	Strongly agree (%)	Tend to agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Tend to disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Don't know (%)
Supporting People needs analysis for socially excluded vulnerable groups	24%	60%	10%	5%	0%	0%
Supporting People partnership arrangements	27%	55%	9%	7%	0%	1%
The Supporting People outcomes framework	21%	54%	18%	7%	0%	0%
Support planning	26%	54%	12%	6%	0%	0%

### Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

Options	Strongly agree (%)	Tend to agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Tend to disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Don't know (%)
The Quality Assurance Framework	34%	52%	8%	6%	0%	0%
Supporting People commissioning arrangements	25%	58%	10%	5%	0%	2%
Supporting People experience and arrangements for service user involvement in strategy and service development	20%	52%	21%	7%	0%	0%
Supporting People experience and arrangements for working with a range of providers	31%	55%	9%	4%	0%	0%

The response options to this question were left open; the categories given here have been taken from the open answers given.

Local examples of influence (one council may comment more than once)	No. of times mentioned <sup>1</sup>				
	County	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Council	Unitary	Total
QAF/quality standards	2	1	1	2	6
Partnership working	3	0	2	2	7
Support planning	0	0	1	2	3
Joint funding/commissioning	2	0	0	1	3
Joint working with providers	2	1	2	2	7
Outcomes	2	0	2	2	6
Commissioning/Procurement/Contract management	4	0	1	5	10
Social inclusion	1	2	1	0	4
Needs analysis	3	0	0	0	3

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

### Section I: The support local authorities have received from central government in programme development.

**Table 46: How useful was the CLG framework and guidance in developing the following?**

Options	Essential	Very useful	Useful	Not very useful	No use	Don't know
Strategy and needs analysis	15%	19%	49%	13%	2%	3%
Service quality	47%	36%	16%	1%	0%	1%
Partnership working	18%	26%	48%	9%	0%	0%
Commissioning arrangements	22%	30%	37%	9%	0%	1%
Service user involvement in strategy and service development	19%	22%	44%	14%	1%	1%
An outcome framework	43%	37%	18%	3%	0%	0%

**Table 47: How far would the local authority agree that:**

Options	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The Key Lines of Enquiry issued by the Audit Commission have helped set standards and promote good practice	47%	43%	6%	2%	1%	2%
The Inspection programme helped raise the profile of the service locally	57%	28%	8%	6%	1%	0%
Inspection reports (for your own and other authorities) in helped to deliver improvement	57%	36%	5%	1%	1%	1%
Having three inspectorates working together added value	37%	36%	19%	1%	3%	4%

## Appendix 3 – Survey of Supporting People Administering Local Authority Lead Officers

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<sup>1</sup> The total number of responses mentioned by the local authorities may be greater or less than the total number of each authority type depending on how many times the local authority answers were given for this question if at all. For example if there are 15 Counties in the survey, there may be more or less than 15 responses for Counties.

<sup>2</sup> The percentages are derived from each authority type

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### Abbreviations

ALA	Administering Local Authority
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
CAF	Commission Assessment Framework
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CSCI	Commission for Social Care Inspection (now CQC)
CSIP	Care Services Improvement Partnership
FACs	Fair Access to Services
HACT	Housing Association Charitable Trust
HIA	Housing Improvement Agencies
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspection of Probation
IB	Individual budgets
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MAA	Multi Area Agreement
MAPPA	Multi Area Public Protection Arrangements
NI	National Indicator
NHF	National Housing Federation
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
PCT	Primary Care Trust
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RIG	Regional Implementation Group
VIP	Value Improvement Pilot