



Social work

HOW YOUR COUNCIL PERFORMED IN 1995/96

Introduction

Each year, councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services in comparison with previous years and how they compare with other councils.

For 1995/96, councils were required to report information on ten performance indicators for their social work service. This leaflet contains information on five of those indicators relating to:

- home care/home help services
- staff qualifications in residential accommodation
- privacy in residential accommodation
- the inspection of residential accommodation
- the provision of respite care.

The information in this leaflet covers the years 1993/94 to 1995/96 and is important for two reasons. Firstly, it shows what performance standards have been achieved in the years leading up to local government reorganisation in April 1996. Secondly, it shows standards against which to measure the work of the new councils following reorganisation.

The Commission has published a comprehensive report on the information for all the services for which there are performance indicators. This provides more detailed analysis of the information over the three years 1993/94 to 1995/96.

Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information - for example, the range in performance achieved by different councils. However, we do not explain why a council has achieved a particular level of performance or what should be regarded as 'good' or 'bad' performance.

Several factors affect the way a council performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of the council - for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it serves. These local factors may mean that a council with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better given the more difficult circumstances it faces.

Before the reorganisation of councils in April 1996, social work services were provided by the nine regional councils and three islands councils.

Some of the information referred to in this pamphlet is not shown in either the tables or the charts. It is, however, available in the Commission's full national report.

INDICATOR 1

The percentage and number of home help/home care clients who received:

- less than four hours of care per week
- four to ten hours of care per week
- more than ten hours of care per week

What the indicator reports

The indicator provides information on the amount of care provided to people in their own homes. The precise help given may vary between councils and the indicator does not deal with the nature of the care provided.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator is affected by the overall level of demand and the particular needs of people who receive the service. Both of these will change over time.

Some councils may have a policy of providing at least some help to a large number of people, with the result that each person may receive a relatively small number of hours. Other councils may concentrate the service more, giving a greater number of hours to a smaller number of people who have greater needs.

While most people who receive the service are elderly, a small minority (just over 10% in most councils) will be under pensionable age, since the service is provided on the basis of need rather than age.

Commentary

In total, there were 87,959 home care clients provided with a service during the year, approximately 3,800 fewer than in 1994/95.

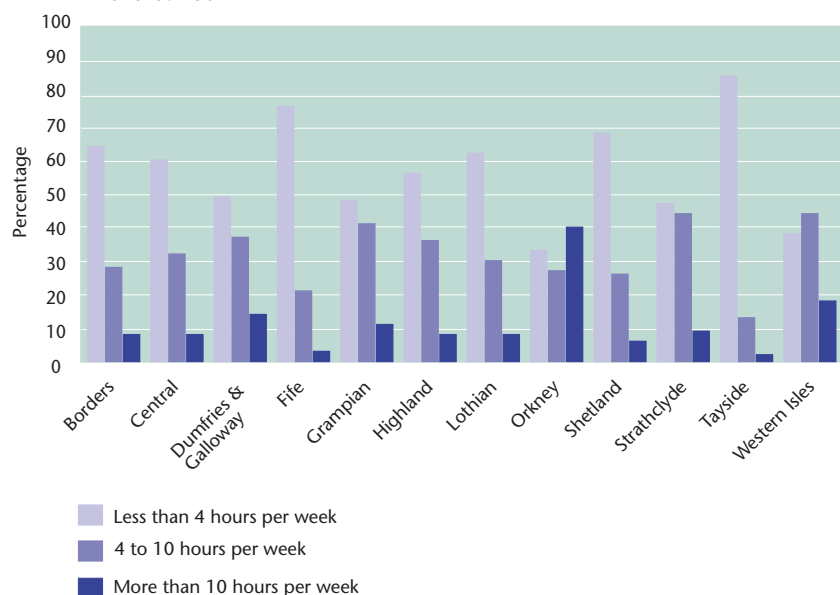
Figure 1 shows that in ten councils the most common level of service was in the band 'less than four hours per week'.

In total, 51,066 clients received home care for less than four hours per week. This represents 58% of all home care clients. The percentage of clients receiving this level of service varied between councils from 33% to 85%.

In total, 30,094 people (34% of all clients) received four to ten hours home care per week. Between councils, the percentage of clients receiving this level of service varied from 13% to 44%.

Over ten hours a week home care was received by only 8% of all home care clients (6,799). The percentage of clients receiving this level of service varied between councils from 2% to 40%.

Figure 1: The percentage of home care clients receiving a service in each of the bands



INDICATOR 2

The percentage of care staff in residential homes who are qualified, for each of the following user groups:

- children
- adult offenders
- elderly people
- other adults.

What the indicator reports

The extent to which care staff are qualified is only one of a large number of factors which contribute to the quality of residential care, but it is significant.

The indicator relates only to staff in residential homes managed by councils. Voluntary and private sector homes are not included.

'Adult offenders' includes people who are being supervised by the council - for example, those on probation and parole.

'Other adults' includes people who have physical disabilities or sensory impairments, people who are recovering from mental illness, and people who have learning difficulties.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator will be affected by:

- the policies of councils on recruiting staff who are suitably qualified, and on training existing staff
- the availability of suitably qualified staff.

There is a wide range of qualifications which are relevant for each of the user groups.

Commentary

All 12 councils ran homes for children, elderly people and other adults requiring residential care. However, only Grampian and Lothian provided homes for adult offenders.

Councils employed 2,190 staff in residential homes for children. The percentage of staff who were qualified varied between councils from 4% to 80%.

Grampian and Lothian's homes for adult offenders employed a total of 21 people, of whom 60% and 18% respectively were qualified.

Council residential homes for elderly people employed a total of 6,243 staff, an increase of 835 on the figure for 1994/95. The percentage who were qualified ranged from 9% to 36%.

Councils had 769 staff caring for other adults in residential homes. The percentage of staff who were qualified ranged from 7% to 86%.

Table 2: The percentage of staff in residential accommodation who were qualified

Council	Children		Adult offenders		Elderly people		Other adults	
	Total number of staff	% of staff qualified	Total number of staff	% of staff qualified	Total number of staff	% of staff qualified	Total number of staff	% of staff qualified
Borders	19	42			135	14	6	17
Central	83	31			446	11	26	23
Dumfries & Galloway	80	21			222	14	26	23
Fife	81	33			385	9	19	26
Grampian	128	44	10	60	482	16	7	86
Highland	76	28			276	24	14	7
Lothian	420	28	11	18	674	14	146	19
Orkney	28	4			102	12	9	11
Shetland	10	80			74	16	27	26
Strathclyde	1,155	22			2,734	11	346	20
Tayside	104	33			623	9	124	17
Western Isles	6	17			90	36	19	47
Total	2,190		21		6,243		769	

The percentage of residential care places which are single rooms, provided by councils, the voluntary sector and the private sector, for the following user groups:

- children
- adult offenders
- elderly people
- other adults.

What the indicator reports

Research on the preferences of residents in residential establishments shows that privacy is of particular importance to them. The indicator measures this significant aspect of the quality of residential care. The information is shown for each type of provider.

The indicator is based on the number of bedrooms intended solely for one person.

Points to bear in mind

The service provided is likely to be affected by:

- limitations on the funds available to councils and the owners of homes in the voluntary and private sectors to increase the number of single rooms
- the physical layout of an existing home, which may limit the opportunities for creating single rooms
- design standards for new homes which encourage greater provision of single rooms
- the registration standards established by the independent inspection units of councils, which may include a requirement for single rooms.

Commentary

Councils were the main providers of residential care for children, elderly people and adult offenders. The voluntary sector was the main provider of accommodation for other adults.

Children

All councils ran children's homes, offering a total of 1,482 places. The percentage of single rooms varied between councils from 20% to 100%.

There were voluntary sector children's homes in six council areas offering 685 places in total, and a further 75 places available in private sector homes in three council areas.

Adult offenders

Two councils, Grampian and Lothian, ran homes for adult offenders, offering 22 and 20 places respectively. All 42 places were in single rooms.

There were voluntary sector homes for adult offenders in three of the 12 council areas, offering a further 25 places.

There were no private sector homes for adult offenders.

Elderly people

All 12 councils ran homes for elderly people, offering a total of 8,277 places. The percentage of single rooms in council-run homes ranged from 70% to 100% (Table 3).

There were voluntary sector homes for elderly people in 11 of the 12 council areas, providing 4,306 places. The percentage of single rooms varied from 58% to 95%.

The private sector provided a further 5,439 places in homes for elderly people in 11 of the 12 council areas. The percentage of single rooms ranged from 39% to 100%.

Other adults

All 12 councils ran homes for other adults, offering 1,101 places in total. The percentage of single rooms ranged from 20% to 100%, although there was only one council with less than 70% of its places in single rooms.

There were voluntary sector homes for other adults in ten of the 12 council areas, offering 5,919 places, and the percentage of single rooms ranged from 64% to 100%.

The private sector offered a further 689 places in homes for other adults in eight council areas, and the percentage of single rooms ranged from 17% to 100%.



Table 3: Single rooms available in council homes

Council	Homes for elderly people		Homes for children		Homes for other adults	
	Total places	% single rooms	Total places	% single rooms	Total places	% single rooms
Borders	229	91.3	8	50.0	6	100.0
Central	399	74.9	37	100.0	20	70.0
Dumfries & Galloway	276	97.8	36	56.0	19	100.0
Fife	444	100.0	46	60.9	108	100.0
Grampian	978	74.4	121	27.3	181	75.7
Highland	358	97.8	49	100.0	29	93.1
Lothian	1,164	73.0	250	88.0	108	75.0
Orkney	71	88.7	9	100.0	10	100.0
Shetland	67	91.0	11	81.8	15	20.0
Strathclyde	3,266	69.5	852	49.9	430	73.5
Tayside	838	99.9	58	98.3	159	99.4
Western Isles	187	74.3	5	20.0	16	100.0

INDICATOR 4

The average number of times per year residential care homes run by the council and other providers are inspected.

What the indicator reports

Councils are responsible for carrying out independent inspections of all residential care homes in their area, including their own and those run by private and voluntary organisations. The purpose of inspections is to establish whether each home meets the standards of care required. These standards include the physical condition of the home and the personal care of residents.

Scottish Office guidance suggests that a target of two inspections a year for each home is appropriate. This target is accepted by councils and the indicator shows the extent to which each council has met it.

Points to bear in mind

The intended frequency of inspections is determined by councils in the light of the Scottish Office guidance.

The actual rate of inspection will be affected by:

- the number of homes to be inspected
- the extent and detail of inspection work undertaken.

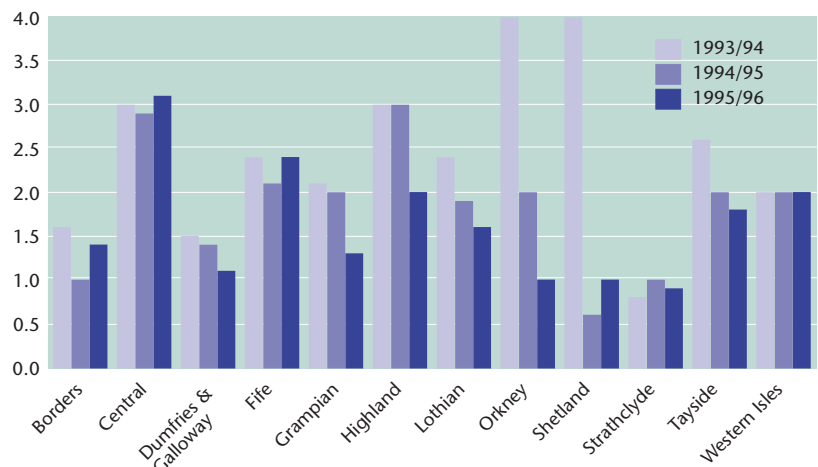
Commentary

In 1995/96, only four councils had an average inspection rate which met the Scottish Office standard of two inspections a year.

This is a reduction from seven councils in 1994/95 and nine councils in 1993/94.

The average number of inspections per home carried out by each council ranged from 0.9 per year in Strathclyde to 3.1 in Central.

Figure 4: The average number of inspections per year of residential homes



INDICATOR
5

The number of people assessed as requiring respite care and the percentage of that number for whom at least one such arrangement was made, for the following groups:

- elderly people
- people with learning difficulties
- children with disabilities.

What the indicator reports

Respite care is support for the carers of vulnerable individuals. The respite is temporary relief from the responsibility of providing care, by the provision of alternative care.

Often the purpose of respite care is to prevent a breakdown in care in the household which would result in the person having to be admitted to permanent care. Respite care may, therefore, be provided on a planned or on an emergency basis.

Respite care can take various forms, such as admission to residential care for the vulnerable person, 'sitter' services, 'share-the-care' and 'breaks-and-opportunities' schemes.

Although the information set out opposite is expressed in terms of the assessment of vulnerable people, it is in fact as much about the needs of the carers of those people, as about the needs of the people themselves.

The indicator provides information in relation to three of the main user groups.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator will be affected primarily by:

- the number of requests for assessment for respite care and the pattern of services required
- the priority given by the council to the development of respite care.

The indicator does not take account of the nature of the service provided or the number of times respite care is provided for the same person.

Care may not be provided in the same year as an assessment is made. It is possible, therefore, that care will be provided to more people than are assessed in any year.

Commentary

Figure 5 shows the proportion of assessed people in each council area who received respite care. This varied between councils:

- for elderly people from 80% to 100%
- for people with learning difficulties from 56% to 100%
- for children with disabilities from 57% to 100%.

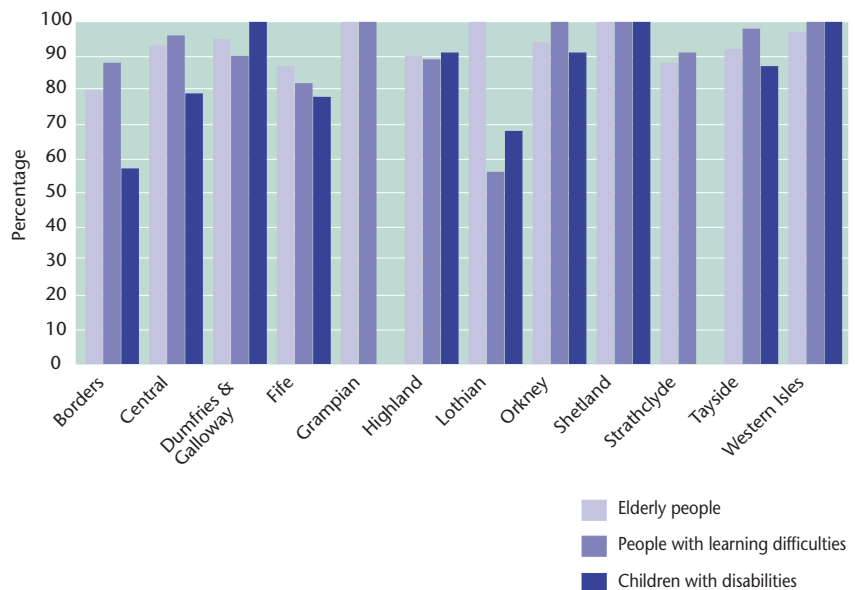
In total, 11,321 elderly people were assessed as requiring respite care, a rise of 3,300 since 1993/94. The number who received respite care was 10,316.

Some 6,794 people with learning difficulties were assessed as requiring respite care, and 6,008 received it.

There were 2,201 children with disabilities who were assessed as requiring respite care in the ten councils that reported this information. The remaining two councils, Grampian and Strathclyde, did not report the number of children assessed.

A total of 3,071 children with disabilities received respite care in the 11 councils which reported this information. Grampian did not report how many children received respite care.

Figure 5: The percentage of assessed persons who received respite care



The Accounts Commission for Scotland is a statutory, independent body which through the audit process assists local authorities and the health service in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources.

The Commission has published similar pamphlets for other services. These are:

Police and fire services
Education
Housing
Protecting you and your environment

Copies of all the pamphlets in this series, and the Commission's national report covering all the performance indicators for a wide range of council services, are available from your council office; your library; or the Accounts Commission for Scotland.



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