

## Narrowing the Gap in Children's Services cont.

– in order to secure the necessary level of support and style of service delivery that will have a positive impact on outcomes.

### **Good practice example...**

#### **Norfolk: Ensuring all young people's views are heard**

This has been largely achieved through the adoption of **Hear by Right**\* standards. As a result a network of young people's groups has been developed. Norfolk's young people's website [www.norfolkblurb.co.uk](http://www.norfolkblurb.co.uk) provides a range of information for young people including consultation projects and surveys. The site currently receives 20,000 visits a month.

*\*see separate article*

- The importance of councils and their partners having a high level of self-awareness and the ability to undertake accurate self-review, based on good use of data. This enables mapping and analysis of need to be undertaken at a strategic level, and effective multi-disciplinary

assessment of need at a service level. This helps to ensure that the correct priorities are identified and that resources are targeted effectively, particularly at the development of preventative services, and reinforces the need for a robust children and young people's plan.

- The planning and management of transition arrangements as young people move to adult services is critically important and has a particularly profound impact on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those living outside their local area.

**Being healthy** A common area of weakness is the inequality of provision between different areas and different groups of children and young people. This includes poor ongoing monitoring and assessment of the physical and mental health needs of vulnerable groups – in particular disabled children, looked after children and young offenders, especially as they make the transition to adulthood. In addition, partnership working has yet to demonstrate improvement in key health outcomes, such as reducing obesity levels, although

there is some evidence of progress in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies.

**Staying safe** In the higher performing areas, strong partnership working means that child protection has a high profile, and good analysis of need ensures that the most vulnerable children are safeguarded. However, in weaker authorities, there are delays in completing initial and core assessments, thresholds to access social care services are set too

### **Good practice example...**

#### **Shropshire: Intervening early to improve outcomes**

The county council and key partners recognised that although universal and specialist services were of a good standard, there were vulnerable children and young people who were not receiving a sufficiently coordinated and timely service. Determined to improve this situation, all key partners agreed a 'continuum of need' – or 'windscreen', as it is commonly known – to direct a joint approach to partnership working and earlier intervention.