

# Narrowing the Gap in Children's Services cont.

outcomes between different groups.

- Services should be planned and delivered in an integrated way, so that outcome areas are linked and the focus is on ensuring that individual children and young people make progress. Scrutiny of performance, including user feedback, should be used more systematically to enhance and improve provision further.
- Robust systems should be developed to evaluate the combined impact of different interventions on all outcome areas, so that the best use can be made of available resources. For instance, what contribution does the National Healthy Schools Programme make to achieving health targets for different vulnerable groups, or to reducing rates of exclusion?
- Partnership arrangements and accountabilities should be strengthened to safeguard and more accurately respond to the needs of particular groups of children and young people, such as those with disabilities.
- Steps should be taken to improve multi-

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

### **St Helens: Elected members working with young people**

A number of key features have enabled St Helens to develop effective strategies to support young people in making a positive contribution:

- partnership working that exists across all agencies has enabled them to target engagement strategies at different age groups, including very young children
- the priority given to this issue by elected members, through work on youth involvement in local democracy, in order to increase engagement in political and democratic decision making
- the local authority and partners formally adopting the **Hear by Right\*** Standards during 2005/06
- the development of a multi agency strategy for consultation, participation and engagement to ensure these standards are embedded in St Helens's work.
- Consultation with young people

Last year, the voluntary sector was involved in facilitating consultation with young people as part of the development of the Children and Young People's Plan. This year, the outcome of extensive youth debate during local democracy week will be used to contribute to refreshing the Plan.

A key example of the result of this consultation is bullying. This issue has been consistently raised by young people, and this became one of the priorities in the Plan. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (which includes young people) undertook an extensive study of bullying, including a survey across schools, and has continued to regularly monitor progress in this area.

In 2006, bullying was again raised as a major issue by young people during local democracy week, and their views will contribute to reviewing progress and actions in the 2007 Plan. Work is also underway to identify clear measures for establishing baseline information and monitoring progress.

*\*see separate article*