

**Successful Scrutiny**  
**Good Scrutiny Awards 2015**



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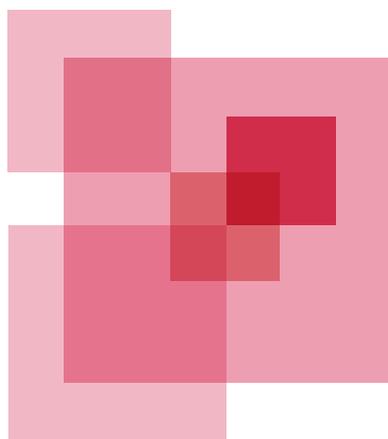
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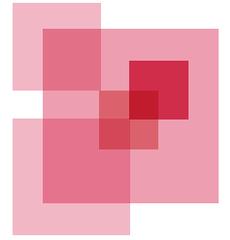
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## **About the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny is an independent charity, focused on ideas, thinking and the application and development of policy and practice for accountability public service. CfPS believes that accountability, transparency and involvement are strong principles that protect the public interest. We publish research and practical guides, provide training and leadership development, support on-line and off-line networks, and facilitate shared learning and innovation.

# Introduction



I am delighted to introduce this edition of Successful Scrutiny, based on the Good Scrutiny Awards results.

One of my first tasks, after taking up the role of Executive Director, was to participate in the awards judging process, a real privilege which gave me an excellent insight into how passionate and determined scrutiny committees can be. The calibre of entries this year was outstanding and demonstrates innovative and inclusive approaches to addressing complex and challenging issues.

As with last year, we had no pre-set award categories. Entries were grouped into those who had: impacted on economic resilience; involved local people and key partners in addressing issues of most importance to the community; raised the profile of difficult or controversial topics of local importance; and helped people gain a voice and means to influence programmes that would directly affect them.

All the entries reflected overview and scrutiny work which made a significant impact on residents' lives. I would like to congratulate the winners and shortlisted entries who were exceptional and whose stories we have shared with you here. Also, a big thank you to our wonderful scrutiny judges who took on the demanding task of shortlisting and selecting winners from a pool of great entries.

Our aim for the awards is to provide recognition for excellent examples of scrutiny. It is also vitally important that we share their successes and learning more widely.

Scrutiny is essential to good governance and good governance leads to better outcomes. By shouting about examples of best practise, we hope to make scrutiny a vital and valued part of the decision-making process.

**Jacqui McKinlay**

Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny



ABOVE: Delegates gather to hear the Good Scrutiny Awards results

# Overall impact award

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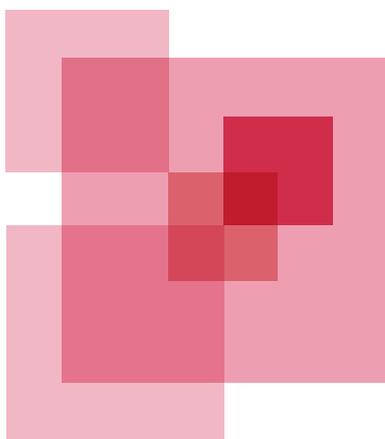
## ☆ Winner: **City of Lincoln Council Lincoln Against Poverty**

Our top winner used scrutiny to take on a significant challenge facing their community and worked to make a real difference to the lives of people in poverty or on the cusp of falling into poverty. A holistic review was undertaken in June 2013 by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee which took a year to complete and involved over 120 partners. This review has enabled the councils to build an effective plan to tackle poverty that includes and is supported by over 120 partners from a wide range of organizations.

The review covered a wide range of topics including benefits and low income, accessing work, child poverty and education, health, and housing. In Lincoln, one in four children lives in poverty, a significant number of residents are in fuel poverty, and the city is recognised as having one of the highest rates of acute deprivation in England. In 2014, the Lincoln Against Poverty Conference was held and was key in delivering workshop sessions focused on areas reviewed and enabled partners to explore and discuss the different facets of poverty and the support required to move beyond it in the coming year. The council used a wide range of data including statistical data, academic and organisational journals and reports, and case studies on those in the city experiencing poverty first hand. From this extensive review project, and input from partners, 100 suggestions were put forward and used to develop the Lincoln Anti-Poverty Action Plan 2014/15. At the time this report was written, over 80% of the suggested actions had been delivered.

The impressive number of suggested actions implemented demonstrates not only the council's dedication to tackling this issue but the positive and effective outcomes that can be achieved by engaging relevant partners and the community. Some of the key actions that were recommended or directly influenced by the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee include:

- Relocating the Lincolnshire Credit Union from the outskirts of the city into Lincoln City Hall in the city centre. As a result, there were 78 new customers, 78 small loans were issued – key in challenging doorstep loans and resulted in an estimated £121,000 savings to customers by not using a doorstep lender.
- In partnership with City of Lincoln Council, Lincoln Christ's Hospital School, Lincolnshire Credit Union, and Barclay's Bank, Year 7 students undertook money awareness and the benefits of savings courses. Students were provided the opportunity to open savings accounts and were encouraged to start the savings program through an incentive scheme set up by the City of Lincoln Council.
- A loan shark awareness program was undertaken involving the extensive use of multiple media platforms to deliver the message. As a result, 48% of clients surveyed at the JobCentre were aware of the campaign, the Lincoln Citizens Advice Bureau saw a 12.4% increase in people seeking advice compared to the year before, and a five-fold increase in waiting times for debt advice by the Lincoln Christians Against Poverty.
- Finally, the re-distribution and recycling of large household items was improved, as well as a better alignment of food bank and welfare services to address changing situations of those in need.



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“ The scrutiny process was thorough and the councillors and officers were keen to listen to the views of a range of partners. The conference was a huge success and it has provided a real impetus for organisations to work together to address the causes and consequences of poverty. The council provided a strong lead with senior staff and councillor involvement but there was a real sense of listening, involvement and engagement of the variety of organisations involved. ”

Alex Ray, from Longhurst & Havelok Homes, and Chair of Lincolnshire Credit Union

“ Through the Scrutiny Committee and the subsequent poverty conference the council has successfully engaged with individuals and organisations working with the most disadvantaged people in the city. We feel the council is responding to the views and information provided by the voluntary sector when formulating its anti-poverty strategy. ”

Neil Clurow, from Lincoln and District Citizens Advice Bureau



ABOVE: L to R: Julie Lea, Claire Turney, James Wilkinson, Elizabeth Filkin (Chair of Marston Independent Advisory Board), Cllr Sue Burke, and Simon Walters

# Economic resilience award

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☆ Winner: **City of Lincoln Council**  
**Lincoln Against Poverty**

(See page 4 on Overall Impact Award)

Shortlisted: **Brighton and Hove City Council**  
**Seafront Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel**

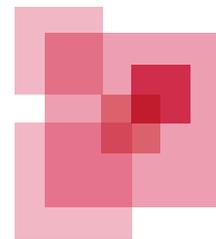
At the council's Executive Leadership Team's request, scrutiny members looked at the issues of the seafront infrastructure in the hopes to develop a consensual approach to long term planning for the much needed improvements. The seafront infrastructure dates back to the Victoria area and requires urgent repair and restoration to prevent it failing and damaging an adjacent motorway, at an estimated cost of £100 million. As an important part of the city's economic and social life, there was significant need to improve the seafront through a cross-party approach and develop solutions that did not rely on external funding. As a long term project, it was essential the scrutiny panel ensured that the seafront restoration project was a long-term priority for the city.

## Impact

- The establishment of a Seafront Investment Programme Broad and a lead 'Senior Responsible Officer' identified to manage the seafront as a coherent programme.
- A commitment to produce a Seafront Investment Plan for September 2015.
- The identification of £30, 000 to support the progress of the project, and recently another £9 million to improve the roads.
- A co-ordinated programme of major projects that unlocks all the potential development sites and exploits its assets through identifying all funding opportunities.

“ *Brighton and Hove put involvement front and centre in its seafront infrastructure review – a drop-in event which attracted 80 local traders started the process, giving councillors in-depth local insight before they even began to have discussions with officers. In addition three public evidence sessions helped inform the committees' recommendations. The wide-spread support by the council of the report recommendations is testament to the fact that the scrutiny involved so many local people.* ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge



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Shortlisted: **Peterborough City Council**  
**Scrutiny in a Day**

Following the 2012 Welfare Reform Act, the impacts were significant for the councils, its partners and the residents of Peterborough. As a series of important changes are expected between 2012 and 2017, the council felt it was essential they fully understand how these new changes would impact them and how best to support the people that would be most affected. As such, in July 2013, the Scrutiny Committees and Commissions participated in a ground-breaking joint review in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the issues and opportunities, and to scrutinise responses on this cross-cutting agenda.

**Impact**

- Recommendations to sustain the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS) which provides vital support to around 500 clients a month were made to the council and played an important role in securing the future of the scheme.
- Using a Return on Investment exercise, the Scrutiny Committee report concluded that ongoing investment into the scheme would prevent significant costs to the council and other public sector partners.

“ *The “Scrutiny in a Day” Review is an exemplar of the inclusive partnership based approach embraced by the Peterborough City Council,[...]. The real and positive impact of the Scrutiny Review was to give Members and Senior Officers an insight into the reality and impact of poverty and destitution on people and families living in the City. Providing an overview of the journey people facing crisis undertake, the services and support available to them to break the cycle, and the resources available to empower them to make better decisions in the future and identify triggers to seek out early interventions to future problems.* ”

Keith Jones, Chief Executive, Peterborough Citizens Advice Bureau

# Involvement

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☆ Winner: **Birmingham City Council**  
**“Living Life to the Full with Dementia”**

At the suggestion of the Service Director for Health and Wellbeing, the Health and Social Care O&S Committee decided to conduct an inquiry into dementia services and to look at the issues in terms of services and expenditures faced by the local authority and health partners as the number of people living with dementia increased. Birmingham has an estimated 14,000 people living with dementia and this figure is expected to rise to approximately 16,000 by 2021. Current expenditure on dementia related activity is around £300m and this figure is set to increase to circa £350m by 2021. In the current economic climate of shrinking budgets it is imperative to ensure money spent on commissioning services is delivering the desired outcomes.

In May 2014, a 3-year Dementia Strategy for Birmingham and Solihull was published. From there, the Key Actions from the Strategy was used as a focus for the inquiry with the aim to produce a set of recommendations that would highlight any issues that needed addressing in order to drive through those actions.

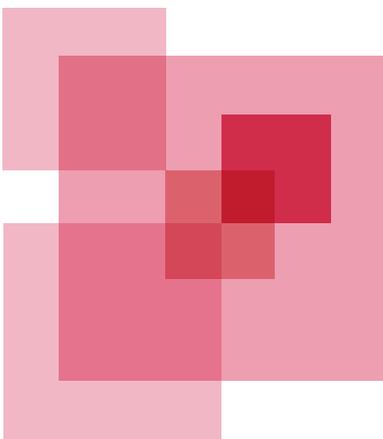
The Committee wanted a short, sharp, focused inquiry working to tight deadlines in order to present the final report to the City Council meeting in early November.

In order to ensure the optimum level of involvement, a small group of service users were invited to join the committee members at two public evidence gathering meetings, not to give evidence, but to listen to the evidence and respond accordingly from a service user perspective. The inclusion of service users in this way was a refreshingly innovative way of engagement and those who participated represented a diverse cross section of the community.

## Impact

- Working towards making Birmingham a dementia-friendly city beginning at the District level by ensuring that public services reflect the needs of people with dementia.
- Expenditure on dementia services being reprioritized towards early assessment and interventions which lead to better outcomes for people with dementia, including exploring the feasibility of developing new models of respite care to meet demand.
- Birmingham GPs will identify vulnerable patients and make referrals to the West Midlands Fire Service for their homes to receive a fire safety check.
- Increased information and awareness about dementia within the community, including making information available to all City Council Members and staff in order to raise awareness and requesting Birmingham secondary schools consider including Dementia Awareness lessons as part of their year 9 curriculum.

“ To be honest, when John and I received the invitation to attend the meetings we didn't know what Scrutiny was. We do now. We agreed to participate because we wanted to use our experience of accessing activities and support to help shape the way that services are delivered in future. We simply hoped that our contribution would be a way of helping others who find themselves in our situation. Now we've been part of a Scrutiny panel and seen how it



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*works we realise what an important role it plays in how the City is run. We actually took part in both evidence gathering sessions and, at the end of the second session, we were given time to talk about our views of the evidence we had heard. Therefore, we feel that our opinions were valued and reflected in the report. But our involvement didn't end there. We were invited to, and participated in, an event to launch the report prior to it being presented to the City Council meeting. ”*

Mrs Gill Collins, carer for her husband, John, who has dementia.

Shortlisted: **Brighton and Hove Council**  
**Seafront Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel**

(See page 6 on Involvement)

Shortlisted: **Paragon Community Housing Group**  
**Paragon's Scrutiny Team – Our Journey to Excellence**

For the past three years, Paragon Community Housing Group has focused on meeting the national standards for tenant scrutiny through a clear co-regulation framework. This framework was developed with residents, which has meant there is a clear understanding of aims and visions, and has influenced how the partnership can work most effectively. The jointly-agreed aim for the co-regulation approach has been to raise customer satisfaction through service improvements. This is achieved through independent inspections of the services, a clear process of scrutiny, and recommendations and reporting.

#### **Impact**

- Over the last three years, 12 scrutiny events have been completed and over 20 major recommendations adopted.
- Improvement to services include introducing a new easy-access phone number system, a mobile caretaking service, a handyman service, review on grounds maintenance service, and recruiting a new anti-social behaviour specialist, to name a few.
- Significant financial savings of approximately £87, 000 has been achieved by reviewing and accessing different services of the business including grounds maintenance and legal and associated fees.

“ *In my experience of this type of scrutiny around the country, I find this team particularly effective. They are accountable and transparent, being a part of a representative structure relating to Paragon and wider communities and neighbourhoods. They have grown to perform their part of the 'co-regulatory relationship' with Paragon that national models envisage. The proof of the pudding is the range of service improvements and value-for-money developments they have achieved. ”*

Michael Guest, Independent Advisor for Scrutiny

# Raising the profile

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☆ Winner: **Birmingham City Council**  
**“We Need to Get it Right”: Scrutiny’s Role in Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Birmingham**

The Education and Vulnerable Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to look at the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Birmingham and to determine whether the local authority had the correct procedures in place to adequately protect young people, in light of the recent cases in Oxford, Derby, Telford and elsewhere.

As well as looking at whether the Council’s own house was in order, the role of partner agencies such as the Police, health and local Safeguarding Children Boards (SCB) were examined to determine potential improvements in partnership working. The intent was to raise awareness of CSE activity in Birmingham, to note some of the improvements that have been put in place to protect children and to put into the public domain some concerns.

The judges were excited by the quality of entrance for this award not only for their effectiveness in raising the profile of good scrutiny work but for their ability to hopefully inform future debates about how local councillors can continue to advocate the concerns and ambitions of local people during a time of significant uncertainty and change. Birmingham’s work on CSE was particularly praised for its ability to effectively help raise the profile of an issue in a sensitive way and propose concrete solutions an authority and community can act on.

## Impact

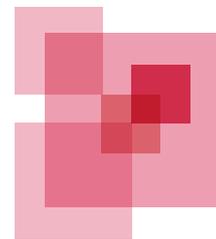
- The inquiry has succeeded in raising awareness of CSE with both practitioners and communities, putting forward a wide range of recommendations across the Council, community and other key partners to improve training and resources concerning CSE.
- An agreement was obtained by partners to be named as ‘responsible parties’ regarding this issues.
- A DVD and resource pack for schools has been launched and the SCB’s CSE strategy is being redrafted.
- Members will be assessing progress on a regular basis and at least every six months until they judge that all recommendations have been completed.

“ The council can be seen to tackle a difficult issue with an immersive approach which took a lot of personal commitment from participants. They made efforts to speak to ‘hidden voices’ in the community and made sure that recommendations were made around awareness and training for members as well as staff and not just policy. ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

“ The scrutiny inquiry was wide ranging and thorough in its work identifying the key areas for Improvement. The recommendations in the report are therefore important and now need to be implemented in full and their effectiveness reviewed within the next 12 months. ”

Rob Willoughby, Children Society



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Shortlisted: **Cornwall Council**  
**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Select Committee**

The review was initially requested by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People to look at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHs), particularly their performance. This was sparked as there appeared to be a lack of demonstrable progress in improving outcomes for children and young people with mental health issues in addition to issues being highlighted by frontline teams. The Committee approached local and national voluntary sector organisations for evidence, worked with a local organisations working with young people, and the Cornwall Children in Care Council to receive anonymised information from current and previous users.

**Impact**

- The report produced significant media interest both locally and nationally, and highlighted concerns regarding child and adolescent mental health, and mental health charities were also able to use it to increase their exposure and reinforce the findings of the report.
- Following the recommendations being accepted by agencies, the report was submitted to the parliamentary Health Select Committee as evidence for their national review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

“ *Many issues came out of the hearing are now being addressed by relevant agencies. The action plan that was produced was extensive and it was impressive that the committee further challenged it to ensure closer levels of accountability. We have followed the process through attendance at OSC meetings. This was my first Select Committee hearing and it inspired confidence in the system and approach – so much that Healthwatch would readily escalate concerns if we felt we needed to.* ”

Debbie Pritchard, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Cornwall

Shortlisted: **Gloucestershire County Council**  
**Badger Cull Scrutiny Task Group**

A scrutiny task group was set up following a decision by Gloucestershire County Council to undertake a review of the social impact of the pilot badger cull. From the outset it was agreed that the group would not consider the reasons why the Government decided to undertake a pilot cull in Gloucestershire or engage in the scientific debate. The group invited evidence from those affected by the cull to identify the lessons learnt and pass on the findings to partners including Defra and the Home Office.

A picture emerged of communities caught in the middle of the tensions that had grown between those carrying out the cull, farmers, their families, protestors, individuals alleged to have acted unlawfully, and the Police. Regardless of the political and scientific viewpoint of those giving evidence, the task group provided a forum for the public and organisations to voice their concerns and to allow practical solutions to be found to ease the effect on communities. In conclusion, the exercise

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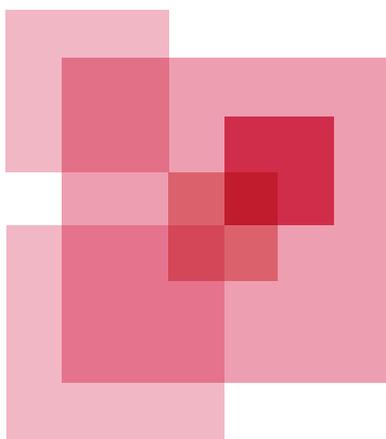
is a demonstration of the power of effective scrutiny to influence national policy makers and address areas of local concern.

### Impact

- Identified that this did not have a wide social impact across Gloucestershire, but that there was a very significant and real impact in small pockets of communities across the predominately rural county.
- A series of recommendations with cross party support were made to public bodies setting out a number of simple actions which would do much to address the concerns of local people if acted upon quickly.
- Establishment of Multi-agency Group to get all interested parties together to help ensure safety for all during the cull period. Meetings are held throughout the year, not just during the cull, on a bi-monthly basis.

“ *The Gloucestershire badger cull hardly needs its profile raising but this scrutiny task force was able to give a voice to a community which was caught in the middle of the controversy. It highlighted the significant impact the culls were having on small pockets of the population and through its recommendations there was shift in the way in which the culls were policed, the flow of communication surrounding them and members of task group were invited to meet with the Secretary of State for the Environment to be able to discuss the problems facing the communities the members represented.* ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge



# Influencing beyond boundaries

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☆ Winner: **Calderdale Council**  
**People's Commission – Improving Health Together**

In February 2014, three local NHS providers published a “Strategic Outline Case” that proposed a reconfiguration of acute hospital services in Calderdale and Huddersfield. Their preferred option was to establish Huddersfield Royal Infirmary as a specialist unplanned hospital and Calderdale Royal Hospital as a specialist planned hospital. The Accident and Emergency service would close at Calderdale Royal Hospital, so a purpose-built 21st century hospital which currently has 450 beds would be reduced to 85 beds.

This was unexpected and no consultation had been done with the council or within the local area by the NHS providers, and resulted in considerable anxiety and anger in community. Councillors wanted to be assured that quality NHS services would be available for Calderdale residents and that any changes to the acute hospital were not made in isolation but were properly planned within the wider health and social care system. Most importantly, they wanted a mechanism through which the views of Calderdale residents could be heard loud and clear. With this in mind, the People's Commission held five public meetings between July and November 2014 and nine locality events to listen to the views of the public across Calderdale.

As the winner, the Judges were particularly impressed with Calderdale's direct public engagement and the way in which scrutiny had delivered true community leadership.

## Impact

- In August 2014, it was decided to postpone a decision on commissioning hospital services until 2015 when the People's Commission was complete.
- Recommendations produced by the People's Commission were passed on to the Health and Wellbeing Board, placing the work firmly in the partnership between the Council and the NHS, and making the board a deciding and doing body rather than a 'receiver of reports.'
- Because of those same recommendations, the Health and Wellbeing Board has changed the way they working to include: making sure the right people are round the table, possibly including providers; having shared accountability; agreeing budgets; dealing with long and short term consequences (continuity); making decisions; publically supporting collective decisions; communications, etc.

“ *This project showed how scrutiny can be used to change the dynamic in a difficult local conversation and also showed how councils can deliver local system leadership. They ran an open and transparent process, online and offline, and changed what was a very adversarial situation into a more collaborative and positive conversation for their community.* ”

Good Scrutiny Award Judge

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Shortlisted: **Birmingham City Council**  
**“We Need to Get It Right”: Scrutiny’s Role in Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Birmingham**

(See page 10 on Raising the Profile)

Shortlisted: **Surrey County Council**  
**Member’s Championing Friends, Family and Community Support**

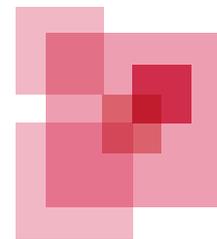
With 65% of the population falling into the ‘older people’ category in Surrey and a need to reach a target savings of £42 million in Adult Social Care, the Friends, Family & Community Support (FFC) was identified as a mechanism for achieving these targets. The FFC takes an asset-based, community led approach, meaning it looks at the resources, skills, talents and passions of an individual, their family, friends and community and works with them to achieve the best outcomes. The Adult Social Care Select Committee (ASCSC) scrutinised the plans for the FFC approach to ensure that as well as helping the Council to achieve its savings targets initiative was seen as a programme of reform designed to provide better outcomes for adult social care users.

**Impact**

- In September 2014, ASCSC recommended that ‘Member Champions’ be identified to develop the FFC programme within their locality. The role of Champions has raised the profile of FFC by giving Councillors the tools to be more active in promoting the benefits of the programme.
- The Champions meet with a range of partners on a regular basis to gather and share information. As a result, an effective partnerships between districts, boroughs, the County and external organisations has developed.
- Champion networks have also made significant progress in raising the profile of the FFC, have helped reduce social exclusion, and with officers in Adult Social Care to put together a database of funding opportunities.

“ *The introduction of Member Champions has provided a vital link between communities and social work practitioners. Members have a great deal of knowledge about their local area and can help promote the social benefits of FFC by introducing residents and carers to the vast range of resources available in the local community. The FFC programme is essential to the Council achieving its strategic goals and ensuring that the best possible outcomes for residents can be achieved in the face of austerity.* ”

David Hodge, Leader of SCC



## ☆ Joint Winner: **London Borough of Redbridge Health Needs of Disabled Children**

Of the UK's 770,000 disabled children, only around 6% receive any form of regular nationally funded support. The vast majority of families are therefore caring for their children, who often have severe and complex needs, without any support from publicly funded services. In Redbridge, this has become an increasing concern as data on the local area has shown an increased in the number of children with disabilities and complex needs.

The Health Needs of Disabled Children Scrutiny Working Group provided a rare opportunity for key stakeholders to collectively evaluate the efficacy of arrangements brought in since 2010 for the support of children with disabilities, and produce an action plan to improve outcomes for service users.

In particular, the local Redbridge Child Development Centre, which houses some of the most important services that children and young people with disabilities access, was highlighted as an issue by two parents that were co-opted onto the group. This pointed to a need to engage a range of service providers and stakeholders in ways that could facilitate frank dialogue about the future of services, with parents playing a key role in that discussion.

Redbridge Overview Committee established the working group in October 2012 and its initial terms of reference were expanded to specifically include co-production with health partners and service users. The general approach to incorporating key members of the community into the review of services for disabled children particularly impressed judges.

### **Impact**

- As a result of face-to-face dialogue between the parent co-optees on the group and representatives from the main service providers in the Borough, all 22 of the Working Group's recommendations were agreed to by Cabinet in 2014.
- Some key recommendations include clustering services in a single location, appointing a Child Health Commissioner for the borough and, through co-production, the development of a code of practice setting out expectations for health assessments.
- Additionally, the Working Group developed longer term plans to seek support from NHS England in improving the number of health visitors in Redbridge.

“ *We had a great experience being part of the Working Group. It represents a great example of strategic parent participation. We had a first class Chair in Cllr Norman and the other Councillor members, as well as in the Scrutiny Team. The Report is so good and represents such good practice that it and our consistent involvement in health issues in Redbridge as a Parent Carer Forum was presented as best practice by Contact a Family in a report for Department for Education and Department of Health. We have also sent it to the President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.*

*We hope that Cabinet will hold those identified to account in all areas of the recommendations. With over five years of trying to improve health services*

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*for our children and families have led us to this important report. It endorses all that we have been asking for - a new Child Development Centre, clinical care pathways for conditions, faster and more quality services and so on. It is also set in the context of the upcoming SEND changes which we wanted very much. The fact that it has been evidenced through visits out of the borough and in the borough and through calls for evidence means that it carries weight. ”*

**Mary Busk, Parent Carer**

☆ **Joint Winner:** **Paragon Community Housing Group**  
**Paragon's Scrutiny Team – Our Journey to Excellence**  
(See page 9 on Involvement)

**Shortlisted:** **Surrey County Council**  
**Member's Championing Friends, Family & Community Support**  
(See page 14 on Influencing Beyond Boundaries)