

# Good Scrutiny Awards 2010



Joint Working

## Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (RCT) undertook a review into child poverty as part of a project supporting the development of Save the Children's Child Poverty Solutions Website and Toolkit aimed at local authorities and partner agencies. The review brought together all 5 scrutiny committees and involved working closely with the Executive and local partners. Young people were able to feed into the review which sought to represent their experiences of poverty in the area.

### Impact

- A reduction of waiting times in the Benefits section from 37 to 15.5 days, with fewer staff.
- A 2 year funded benefits maximisation project with the Citizens Advice Bureau – to date this has cost the authority £25,000 to fund and generated an income of £506,000.
- The creation of a Child Poverty Champion (member role), and a Child Poverty Co-ordinator (officer role) to monitor a suite of Child Poverty indicators.
- Wales Programme for Improvement Action Plan “Regeneration of our Communities – Social Regeneration” has been amended to include the development of a Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.

### Why shortlisted

- RCT was chosen as a pilot authority for a project initiated by the Welsh Local Government Association, Save the Children and Welsh Assembly Government.
- The authority was well prepared to undertake the review due to good existing relationships between executive and non-executive members who regularly attend portfolio based meetings.
- Scrutiny arranged a round table event for local service providers in an attempt to get to the bottom of issues and come to shared conclusions.
- Members met with the Framwaith's Young People's Referencing Group who were able to highlight personal and peer experiences of poverty.

“ Although Scrutiny in RCT had adopted a constructive approach this does not mean that it hasn't been persistent and forensic in holding us, the Executive to account, and rightly so. ”

**Councillor Clayton Willis, Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Open Government**

“ The improvement to the Council's website, was a prime example of the Council's response – they were very receptive to the advice and opinions of the bureau as a critical friend. ”

**Erika Helps, Chief Executive, Rhondda Citizens Advice Bureau**