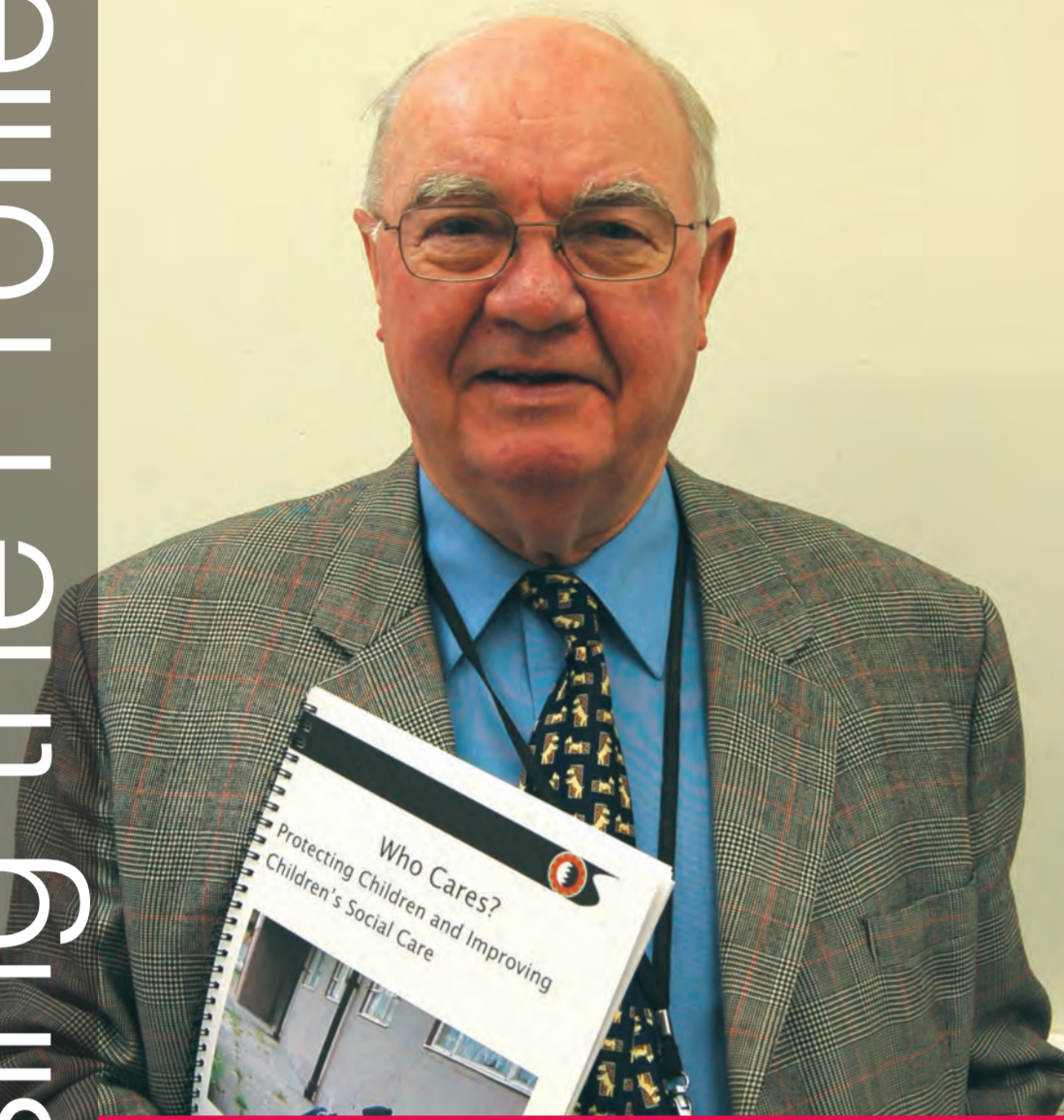


Good Scrutiny Awards 2010

Raising the Profile



Birmingham City Council

Following a critical Annual Performance Assessment of children's social services, Birmingham's executive asked scrutiny to carry out an inquiry, chaired by Cllr Len Clark. The resulting report, entitled "Who Cares?", was hard-hitting and received unprecedented local and national media coverage. The report's recommendations were unanimously agreed cross-party and fully accepted by the executive. Scrutiny had an immediate and high-profile impact and is helping Birmingham tackle its deep-rooted and serious problems in children's social care.

Impact

- The media coverage of this report was massive: Cllr Clark did 11 interviews, including Radio WM, Midlands Today, Sky News, Channel 4 and the Press Association, with articles in every national newspaper.
- Scrutiny made interim recommendations on urgent issues and the final report was debated by the City Council, with scrutiny monitoring the resulting action plan.
- This entry demonstrates a new culture of openness and willingness to be challenged.

Why shortlisted

- The scale of press coverage was described by the judges as "absolutely striking", as was the nature of it.
- Many national reports described the "Who Cares?" report as coming from an external inquiry, as if they could not believe such a frank and hard-hitting report could come from "within" the council.
- The judges felt that this was scrutiny acting as a truly independent "critical friend".

“ In a refreshingly brief 22-page document, Cllr Clark and his all-party inquiry did not pull their punches... It is possible that the Clark report may mark a turning point for children's services. ”

**Public Affairs Correspondent,
Birmingham Post**

“ Cllr Clark's work on Protecting Children and Improving Children's Social Care is an excellent example of everything our 'critical friends' in Scrutiny should be: robust, challenging, fair and focused on improving outcomes for our city. ”

**Cllr Mike Whitby, Leader of Birmingham
City Council**