

**narrowing  
the gap**  
in outcomes



# the five themes

**Narrowing the Gap (in outcomes) will look at five themes over two years (key lines of enquiry).**

- **How to** create and sustain the right links between schools, children's centres and children's services.
- **How to** engage and support parents and carers in helping their children to succeed.
- **How to** use the new systems and processes brought into being by Every Child Matters to orientate services more towards prevention and early intervention.
- **How to** strengthen and align local leadership and governance arrangements – both professional and political.
- **How to** strengthen systems for developing local leaders to deliver improved services based on the understanding of what works.

Narrowing the Gap (in outcomes) is a two year Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) funded project that started in June 2007. Hosted by the LGA and supported by IDeA, it aims to make a significant difference, on a national scale, to the performance of Children's Trust arrangements in 'narrowing the gap' in outcomes between 'vulnerable' children and the rest, against a context of improving outcomes for all children. It will tell the story about 'what is working' and 'what still needs to be done' encouraging both central and local government to keep the faith with the Every Child Matters agenda, as the means of improving outcomes for all children but in particular, those who are most at risk.

It will provide local government and key partners with 'leading' emerging practice about what works; determine the most effective ways of disseminating and pushing this practice around the system, supporting the growth and development of local leaders (professional and political). In doing so, it will also identify useful models of local authorities supporting and developing the work of other local authorities (strengthening the 'family of local government') in delivering improved outcomes for children.

It will draw together existing evidence about what is working and why, and will test out different approaches in Narrowing the Gap (in outcomes) through the active engagement of up to 30 local authorities across the country.

Practice on the ground will help inform national policy – across the DCSF and other government departments which have a responsibility for improving outcomes for children and young people; help to strengthen and improve capacity within the regional government offices and contribute to the emerging ‘intelligence and improvement’ function of the DCSF, helping make better sense of the relationships between national, regional and local government.

Christine Davies CBE (former Director Telford and Wrekin Council) is leading the project on behalf of the LGA and DCSF. She is supported by a core team which includes Dame Gillian Pugh (former Chief Executive of Coram Family), Jane Held (former Director London Borough of Camden), Barbara Hearn (Deputy Chief Executive, NCB) and other senior figures. The project is also supported by an extensive programme network of organisations across the children’s sector.





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