



# Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 2 - Role of the named person - 2022



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## CONTENTS

Practice Guidance – THE ROLE OF THE NAMED PERSON	1
1. Background	2
2. Overview of key changes	3
3. Introduction	4
4. The named person	5
5. Who should be the named person?	6
6. The role of the named person	8
7. Skills, knowledge, understanding and functions of a named person	9
8. A key role at transition points	10
9. When further information is identified about a child or young person’s wellbeing	11
10. Information sharing about children and young people’s wellbeing needs	12
11. Annex A – Knowledge and skills required to deliver the role of the named person	13
12. Annex B – Glossary of terms	14

## Practice Guidance – THE ROLE OF THE NAMED PERSON

This is the second of a Practice Guidance series to support practitioners and managers embed and implement **Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)** into their everyday practice. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Scottish Government's **GIRFEC Policy Statement**, which refreshes our GIRFEC Values and Principles, and the Core Components of the approach.

The Guidance series is designed to provide further information on the key roles of GIRFEC, **Assessment of Wellbeing**, how to use the **National Practice Model** and to guide our practice and provide clarity and confidence in **Information sharing**.

### The Practice Guidance

Policy Statement

Practice Guidance 1. Using the **National Practice Model**

- Improving outcomes using the **Wellbeing Indicators**
- Gathering information with the **My World Triangle**
- Analysing information with the **Resilience Matrix**

Practice Guidance 2. The role of the **named person**

Practice Guidance 3. The role of the **lead professional**

Practice Guidance 4. Information sharing

### The Statutory Guidance

Assessment of Wellbeing – Part 18 (Section 96) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

## 1. Background

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (see [glossary](#)) is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and their families (see [glossary](#)) with the right support at the right time - so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential.

This guidance on the role of the named person (see [glossary](#)) is intended for practitioners and service leads who work with children, young people and families.

This guidance aims to clarify who would be the appropriate practitioner to fulfil this role. It is intended to support local authorities and health boards to determine how best to support children and young people through the role of the named person.

It seeks to reassure leaders, managers and practitioners about how GIRFEC should be delivered within the current legislative and policy framework of rights, information sharing, and delivery of supports and services to children, young people and their families.

## 2. Overview of key changes

The refreshed role of the named person contains a number of key changes:

- Clarity that the named person continues be delivered on a policy basis, rather than a legislative basis;
- Understanding that the role and function of the named person may be known by other names across the country;
- Clarity of role within single agency (see [glossary](#) planning for children and young people; and
- Clarity on the interface between named person and lead professional (see [glossary](#)) roles.

### 3. Introduction

With the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) (see [glossary](#)) as its foundation, GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. GIRFEC is based on evidence, is internationally recognised and is an example of a child rights-based approach. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by practitioners across children's services, changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of all children, young people and their families. However, more needs to be achieved as we work towards [Keeping The Promise](#) to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all children in Scotland.

The refreshed values and principles of GIRFEC we want to fully embed and implement are:

- Placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them;
- Working together with families to enable a rights-respecting, strengths-based, inclusive approach;
- Understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society;
- Valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly;
- Considering and addressing inequalities;
- Providing support for children, young people and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential; and
- Everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

## 4. The named person

Scottish Government's commitment to the UNCRC is built on practical foundations, including through the universal services of health and education. Children, young people and families need to know who they can contact when they need access to relevant support for their own or their child or young person's wellbeing. Within the GIRFEC approach, these foundations are carried out through the role of a named person who is able to provide a clear point of contact within universal services, if a child, young person or family want information, advice or help.

The support of a named person is available to all children, young people and their families. However, there is no obligation on children, young people and families to accept the offer of advice or support from a named person.

A decision not to access this support at any particular time does not prevent support being accessed in future. Likewise accepting support at any particular time does not create an obligation to continue to accept support. Local arrangements and the term used to describe this role or function may vary from area to area.

The intention is to repeal Parts 4 (named person) and 5 (child's plan) of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). These parts of the Act were never commenced, and are therefore not implemented or currently in force. The commitment remains to deliver these core components of GIRFEC within existing frameworks. As such, the policy approach recognises that the role of named person is provided by the relevant NHS health board, Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care Partnership or local authority area in accordance with local arrangements in exercise of existing powers. It is for the local authority and health board to determine how children and young people should be supported through the role of the named person and to take responsibility for local arrangements. Children's Services Planning Partnerships should have oversight of local GIRFEC arrangements to support a joined-up whole system approach.

## 5. Who should be the named person?

The named person is primarily provided by health and education services and is usually someone who is known to the child, young person and family and who is well placed to develop a supportive relationship with them. At times the named person may be involved in multi-agency working to support a child or young person's wellbeing.

Information should be provided that makes it clear to the child, young person and family who their named person is and how they can contact them in the event they need any support or guidance. It is the responsibility of the named person to make contact with the child, young person and their family to offer the support and assistance necessary to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

There is no obligation on children, young people and families to accept the offer of advice or support from a named person. A decision by a child, young person or their family not to accept advice, help or additional support offered is not, in itself, cause for concern. This decision should not affect the provision of services children, young people and their families are entitled to, for example, health visiting. In most cases, the person identified as the named person will be involved with the child, young person or family as another part of their role.

From birth to beginning primary education, the named person for all children is usually their Health Visitor or Family Nurse. Health Visitors responsibilities include the named person role and function. NHS health boards, in conjunction with their Children's Services Planning Partnership, should have clear ways of informing parents (see [glossary](#)), carers and families about their child's named person and the support available to them.

During primary schooling, the named person role is usually fulfilled by a principal teacher, depute or head teacher (or other promoted teacher), depending on the size of the school. The local authority, in conjunction with their Children's Services Planning Partnership, should have clear ways of informing children, young people and families of the transition from their Health Visitor to their new named person, across their child's primary education, regardless of whether they have engaged with the named person previously.

When attending secondary school, the named person role is usually fulfilled, as in the primary school, by a principal teacher, depute or head teacher (or other promoted teacher). During the child's transition to secondary school, the local authority continues to have a role in ensuring children, young people and families are aware of their new named person who should be the consistent point of contact throughout their young person's secondary education, regardless of whether they have previously engaged with the named person.

Some families may have access to more than one named person, e.g. health visitor, primary school and secondary school, due to the ages of their children. These named persons should work closely to assess, plan and deliver support to meet the needs of the child, young person and family, if support is required.

Should a child, young person or family require support from a named person outwith school term-time, contact should be made with their local authority. Local authorities should make contact details available for sources of support outwith term time.



Young people transitioning from school education before the age of 18 should continue to be offered a named person. The local authority for the school the young person was attending is responsible for identifying the new named person as a specific point of contact for the young person. This could be a promoted teacher with whom the young person already has a relationship, or another adult within the local authority. The named person should make contact with the young person to offer support where this is required.

If a young person leaves school before the age of 18; their family should also be informed who the named person is and how they can contact them in the event they need any support or guidance.

For children and young people of school age, but not on a school roll, for example those who are home-educated (e.g. some children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller families), the local authority should identify a suitable named person, such as a local authority officer and inform the child or young person and family of the service and support available.

For children and young people who attend independent or grant-aided schools, the named person provision should follow the same principle as for primary and secondary education noted above. The named person should be someone in a promoted post. The [Scottish Council for Independent Schools](#) provide more detailed guidance for their members.

For children and young people in secure accommodation and some residential special schools, the Head of the Unit or manager of the residential school should be the named person. Where the Scottish Prison Service is the service provider, a young person's named person should be the Unit Manager who has responsibility for the care and support of the young person in legal custody. If a child or young person leaves secure accommodation, named person provision should then be provided by their education provider.

Access to support from a named person should remain in place until a young person reaches the age of 18 (or older if still at school). For those young people who are provided with an Aftercare service under section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 or a Continuing Care service under section 26A of that Act, access to support will continue under local arrangements for these services.

It is important to highlight that during pregnancy, while midwives do not have a named person role, they do embed GIRFEC and its values and principles into practice when supporting expecting parents and giving their unborn child [the best start in life](#).

Where there is a family nurse supporting a young mother they should take on the role of the named person until the child is two years old, at which point the role should be assumed by the Health Visitor.

## 6. The role of the named person

The named person promotes good wellbeing and forms relationships through the provision of a universal service. They are a clear point of contact for anyone concerned about the child or young person's wellbeing; whether that is the child or young person themselves, parents, family members or others working with the child or young person. All practitioners providing a service to children, young people and families, should be aware of and know how to contact the named person.

Where there is a child protection (see [glossary](#)) concern, relevant information should be shared with police or social work without delay, provided it is necessary, proportionate and lawful to do so. More information is provided in the information sharing Charter and [Practice Guidance 4 Information sharing](#).

Once a wellbeing need has been brought to the attention of the named person, it is their responsibility to work together with the child, young person and their family, and other agencies if needed, to explore what support could be provided to address the identified wellbeing needs.

Children, young people and families should always be made aware of their rights around information sharing (please see information sharing Charter and [Practice Guidance 4 Information sharing](#)), and should know what to expect if they have agreed for information to be shared with other agencies. They should be supported to fully participate in discussing how sharing information could support the child or young person's wellbeing. Their views should be taken into account and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, as part of any decision making process. However, in some circumstances, this may not be appropriate. See [Practice Guidance 4 – Information Sharing](#) for guidance.

The named person may have statutory responsibilities within their designated role (e.g. as a health visitor or teacher); these statutory responsibilities may require them to share information regardless of whether the child, young person or family choose to accept their support as a named person.

There are five key GIRFEC questions that practitioners should ask themselves when considering a child or young person's wellbeing needs, whilst maintaining a focus on the rights of the child. The child or young person should fully participate in discussions when considering these questions:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now that is needed and appropriate to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency or organisation do now to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

There may be situations where a child, young person and family no longer wish to continue to work with the individual who has been offered as their named person and will seek someone else to undertake that role. While circumstances will vary, the initial named person should work with the relevant NHS Board or local authority education provision to take reasonable steps to identify and offer another suitable individual. The child, young person and family should be supported to be fully involved in discussions and decision-making to identify an appropriate new named person.

## 7. Skills, knowledge, understanding and functions of a named person

The skills, knowledge and understanding required to carry out the named person functions should be developed and maintained through professional learning. At the heart of this professional learning should be the [Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the “Children’s Workforce” in Scotland](#) that cross-refers to the Guiding Principles of the UNCRC. For most children and young people, the named person should be primarily provided through health and education services by individuals with recognised qualifications, and the skills, knowledge and understanding required to fulfil the named person role as part of their daily functions. However, in a small number of situations, other suitably qualified practitioners will fulfil the role of a named person.

To ensure a universal standard, the named person should have a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills included within [Annex A](#).

The role of Children’s Services Planning Partnerships is key to ensuring a joined-up approach to local delivery of single and multi-agency GIRFEC practice, through for example training, guidance and communications.

## 8. A key role at transition points

The named person should contribute to the assessment and planning process for children and young people who need extra support at key transition points. They should ensure effective transfer of information, in line with information sharing guidance (please see [Practice Guidance 4](#)), to the new named person. The named person may have statutory responsibilities within their designated role (e.g. as a health visitor or teacher); these statutory responsibilities may require them to share information regardless of whether the child, young person or family choose to accept their support as a named person.

For children and young people with additional support needs, any additional support required for transitions should be identified and implemented in line with the [Supporting Children's Learning Statutory Guidance](#) and the timescales set out under the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#).

Other examples of key transitions where extra support may be required, although not an exhaustive list, include [Transition Care Plans](#) for young people moving from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health and Care Services, young people who need social care support making the transition from children's services to adult services and also young carers moving from a [Young Carer Statement](#) to an Adult Carer Support Plan.

## 9. When further information is identified about a child or young person's wellbeing

Further exploration of wellbeing needs may lead to additional support. There are several ways this can happen. It is good practice, and in keeping with taking a child's rights-based approach, to give the child or young person the opportunity to say what they think about the sharing of their information. Their views should be taken into account and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, as part of any decision-making process. However, in some circumstances, this may not be appropriate. See [Practice Guidance 4 – Information Sharing](#) for guidance. Where the named person notes wellbeing concerns, there are two options:

**Support within universal services:** Single agency adjustments or arrangements may be sufficient to address wellbeing concerns without the need for the full assessment and planning process. For example, a child who needs extra support at the beginning of the school day may be helped by agreeing a “soft start”, arriving early when the school is quieter, possibly to participate in a breakfast club. On other occasions, it may be helpful to use the National Practice Model as a framework for assessment and planning (see Practice Guidance 1). The tools within the GIRFEC approach should be used proportionately depending on the level of support required.

**Support where there is a need for other organisation's involvement:** Together with the child or young person and family, the named person should initiate the single planning process. They may take on the role of lead professional. Alternatively, the lead professional role can be taken on by another agency or organisation.

The named person should support full participation of the child, young person and their family (where appropriate) and request support from other agencies based on assessment. These services should be provided without the delay of a reassessment from the second agency. There should be discussion with the child, young person and family, to ensure there is clear understanding of the decision-making. This support could be provided from within education or health, or from a targeted or specialist service, or from the third sector. This kind of trust and co-operation is fundamental to the success of GIRFEC. Additional information may be required and the gathering of this could include more specialist assessment of a particular aspect of a child or young person's needs, such as an assessment of mental health needs. In this case, the specialist assessment should build further on the information that has already been gathered.

## 10. Information sharing about children and young people's wellbeing needs

To provide practitioners with clarity and confidence in sharing information, [Practice Guidance 4](#) in this series provides Information Sharing Charters for children and young people, and parents and carers. These can be shared with children, young people and families as a basis for conversations about their privacy rights in relation to sharing information about them. The charters explain how children, young people and families can expect information about themselves to be managed and aims to make their privacy rights easier to understand. On all occasions when information is shared, it should be shared proportionately and the purpose should be to offer help and support as early as possible.

## 11. Annex A – Knowledge and skills required to deliver the role of the named person

- The values and principles underpinning the GIRFEC approach;
- Wellbeing and the use of the National Practice Model (please see [Practice Guidance 1](#)) for the Assessment of Wellbeing (please see [Statutory Guidance](#));
- Taking account of children’s rights in line with the UNCRC;
- Recognise, evaluate and respond proportionately to a wellbeing need using a strengths-based approach;
- Work together with children, young people and families, including supporting them to fully participate, including where communication barriers exist, how to access appropriate support if required;
- Lawfully record and process information, in line with information sharing guidance (please see [Practice Guidance 4](#));
- Develop, use and manage a chronology;
- Recognise when the response to a wellbeing need(s) demonstrates a requirement for a child’s plan (see [glossary](#));
- Be aware of the grounds for a referral to the Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration (SCRA) and recognise when a referral is appropriate in relation to the child or young person; and
- Understand the relationship between a wellbeing need and a child protection concern and [how to follow local child protection procedures](#).

## 12. Annex B – Glossary of terms

### **Agency/agencies**

In this suite of documents the term ‘agency/agencies’ means an organisation or business providing a particular service.

### **Child or young person**

An individual who has not yet attained the age of 18 years.

### **Child protection**

The processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

### **Children’s human rights and UNCRC**

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms which we all have in order to live with dignity, equality and fairness, and to develop and reach our potential. Human rights are a list of things that all people – including children and young people – need in order to live a safe, healthy and happy life.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has been incorporated into UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Everyone, including children and young people, have these rights, no matter what their circumstances. Under international law, States/Governments are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Those delivering public services should respect human rights when they make decisions, plan services and make policies.

Children’s human rights span the entire spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. Children and young people also have additional rights that recognise that childhood is a special, protected time, in which children and young people must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity. Specific human rights for children are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community. By recognising children’s rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the child as a whole and multi-faceted person. It is important to be clear that all rights are equal, there is no hierarchy of human rights.

We know that children and young people face unique barriers to realising their rights. Their future often depends on the action taken by adults to implement their rights in practice. As children their voices can be unheard, or more easily dismissed. For that reason, the UNCRC recognises that children and young people are human beings with fundamental rights that are written into international law. It also makes clear that special action needs to be taken to ensure those rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. As one of the core United Nations (UN) human rights treaties, the UNCRC helps to safeguard the dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all children and young people. It does this by making sure that important rights set out in other international human rights treaties are applied in a way that is relevant and appropriate to the needs of all children and young people.



## **Child's Plan**

A personalised child's plan is developed when those working with the child or young person and family identify that a child or young person needs a range of extra support planned, delivered and co-ordinated. The child's plan should reflect the child or young person's voice and explain what should be improved for the child or young person, the actions to be taken and why the plan has been created.

## **Family/families**

Not all family units look the same. In this suite of documents the term 'families/family' can mean adoptive, biological, foster, kinship, extended, composite and others, for example settings and homes that have felt like family. Some children and young people may belong to more than one family.

## **Getting it right for every child**

This is Scotland's national approach to promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. It provides a consistent framework, shared language and common understanding of wellbeing. GIRFEC puts the child or young person at the heart and helps children and young people get the right support from the right people at the right time.

## **Lead professional**

When children, young people and families require the help and support of a child's plan, a lead professional will be needed. The lead professional is an agreed, identified person within the network of practitioners who is working alongside the child or young person and family. In most cases, the professional who has the greatest responsibility in coordinating and reviewing the child's plan will undertake this role.

## **Named person**

This is a clear point of contact for times when children, young people and families require information, advice or help. The named person is mainly provided by health and education services and is usually someone who is known to the child, young person and family and who is well placed to develop a supportive relationship with them. Local arrangements and the term used to describe this role or function may vary from area to area. A named person can help children, young people and families access relevant support for a child or young person's wellbeing. Where there is a child's plan in place, the named person will work alongside the lead professional, continuing to provide general advice or support, while the lead professional will be the point of contact in relation to the plan. In some cases the named person will also be the lead professional.

## **Parent**

This document uses the term 'parent' within the meaning of section 15 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The term 'parent' includes a person who is a genetic parent of a child, a parent by adoption, and those who are parents by virtue of Human Fertilisation and Embryology legislation. In this document, the term also embraces a person who has parental responsibilities in relation to the child or young person, who has care of the child or young person, or who is a guardian of the child or young person whether appointed by parents or the court.

## **Transition**

A transition is a change, from one stage to another. Most children and young people will experience transitions as they move into an early learning and childcare (ELC) setting, from there to primary, from stage to stage, from primary to secondary, between schools and from secondary to further education and beyond.

## **Wellbeing**

For the purposes of these guidance documents, wellbeing is a measure of how a child or young person is doing at a point in time and if there is any need for support. The eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) provide a framework for assessment and planning in relation to wellbeing.

### **Wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI)**

Any assessment of a child or young person's wellbeing should be founded on the 8 wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included, sometimes referred to as SHANARRI. The wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) are informed by the UNCRC. They are overlapping and connect areas that are fundamental to understanding what children and young people need in order to grow, develop and thrive.



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