



Child Protection Improvement Programme Phase 2 – Communication Strategy

The Vision

Our vision is for a Child protection System in Scotland that keeps children safer from abuse and neglect by placing the wellbeing of Scotland's children at the heart of everything it does.

It is a system that:

- Is embedded within [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) and underpinned by prevention, early intervention and partnership working, recognising that child wellbeing and protection is a collective responsibility
- Engages with families early and listens to children, young people and families in order to provide the right support at the right time
- Enables practitioners to make the right decisions at the right time to protect children where support is not working
- Is transparent and learning, using evidence to effect practice improvements
- Values and supports its workforce
- Is underpinned by children's rights
- Recognises the importance of relationships both within families and between families and professionals

The Context

[The Child Protection Improvement Programme \(CPIP\)](#) was established in February 2016. The core objective of phase one of CPIP was to identify where recommendations for sustainable improvement could be made across the child protection landscape to keep Scotland's children safer from abuse and neglect. The work of the independently-chaired Systems Review Group, which looked at the formal elements of the child protection system; Initial and Significant Case Reviews, Child Protection Committees and The Child Protection Register, made twelve recommendations, which can be found on page 69 of the published report ['Protecting Scotland's Children and Young People: It is Still Everyone's Job'](#). These cover the thematic areas for improvement identified by the group: Leadership, Governance and Accountability; Developing a Learning Culture and Shared Values.

In tandem with the work of the Systems Review Group, eight other work streams either continued and developed improvement work underway (Child Sexual Exploitation; Child Trafficking; Internet Safety) or started the work to address recognised deficits (Neglect; Inspections; Leadership; Children's Hearings; Data and Evidence) resulting in 35 areas for action.

Driven by the National Child Protection Leadership Group, phase two of CPIP will focus on the delivery and implementation of the Systems Review recommendations as well as the 35 actions set out in the [Child Protection Improvement Programme report](#).

Partnership with stakeholders was fundamental to the programme's delivery in Phase one, through the External & Internal Advisory Groups; The Systems Review Group and other strategic and working groups.





The Child Protection Improvement Programme sits in the context of GIRFEC, underpinned by the GIRFEC principles of putting children – and their families – at the centre of decision-making and the support available to them. Alongside the Improvement Programme, work will also be taken forward to address child abuse, which includes specific commitments on:

- Implementing the [National Action Plan on Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
- Implementing the children's aspects of the [Human Trafficking and Exploitation \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- Developing the children's aspects of Scotland's first [Human Trafficking and Exploitation strategy](#)
- Implementing the [Scottish Government's Internet Safety Action Plan](#)

The Programme – Key Messages

A child protection system that is underpinned by GIRFEC and is part of a co-ordinated approach to supporting children, young people and families

We recognise that children, young people and families may have experience of different statutory and voluntary systems: support through GIRFEC, child protection, children's hearings and looked after children systems. What matters for them is not what system they are part of but how they are supported, which is delivered through people and relationships.

In Phase two of CPIP we will continue to work with colleagues across the Scottish Government who all have a vital role in the vision of prevention, early intervention and partnership working, and in particular those leading on GIRFEC, Early Years, Child and Maternal Health, Children's Hearings, Looked After Children and the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to make the right connections across Scottish Government and the wider public sector relevant policies and practice.

A child protection system where structures and processes support children, young people and families

We know that it is not processes and procedures themselves that protect children; but that it is people who protect children.

[The Systems Review](#) reviewed the formal elements of the child protection system and focussed on three thematic areas namely; Leadership, Governance and Accountability; Developing a Learning Culture and ; Shared Values. Twelve recommendations emerged from the review and the Scottish Government accepted these in full.





A child protection system that values and supports the people who work in it

Leadership is crucial in child protection and leaders have an important role in articulating and embedding the shared values that underpin child protection work, creating a line of sight between the strategic vision and practice on the ground.

[The National Child Protection Leadership Group](#) will further support, strengthen and improve activity on child protection across Scotland and will develop leadership events where good practice can be shared.

The workforce is our most important asset in delivering an effective child protection system. The [Social Services in Scotland: a shared vision and strategy 2015-2020](#) identified 'Supporting the workforce' and 'Promoting public understanding' as areas for action and we will work with partners, and build on learning from our practitioner events, to identify how to best support these priorities in relation to Child Protection.

A child protection system that recognises the importance of supporting families to tackle neglect

One of the most significant challenges for GIRFEC and child protection is [neglect](#).

We know that effective early support and assistance are not driven by formal child protection systems and we are looking through our Neglect Improvement Programme at how we bring evidence of good practice in tackling neglect, to the broader universal services audience.

In our work on neglect we are continuing to work with colleagues across government, particularly building on existing work on drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, mental health, poverty and early years and parenting. We will look at how the [Realigning Children's Services programme](#) can support decision-making at strategic level to address neglect.

We are also working closely with stakeholders to re-frame the legislative definition of child cruelty and neglect in section 12 of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, to reflect a modern understanding which includes emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

A child protection system that is transparent and learning

An effective child protection system is underpinned by evidence of what works and data that helps practitioners do their jobs, supports improvement and enables us to invest in the right services to meet needs.

Scrutiny plays an important role in building public confidence in child protection practice and processes and ensuring a line of sight between work locally and the responsibilities of Scottish Ministers in this area. Moving forward we want inspection to be more focussed on the most vulnerable children and will work with the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland and those in the sector to ensure that changes to inspection provide scrutiny but also support improvement and reflect the areas for improvement identified in this programme.





A child protection system that listens to children, young people and families

We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that our programme is informed by the views and experiences of children, young people and families. We will promote and protect the rights of children and young people. We will draw on existing evidence and work with stakeholders to identify the best ways of engaging with children, young people and families.

Purpose of the Communications Strategy

The continued engagement, expertise and partnership of leaders, practitioners, academics and representatives of the third sector is fundamental to the successful implementation of the [Child Protection Improvement Programme](#) and surrounding work.

This strategy will ensure that stakeholders understand the work being undertaken and that everyone is kept informed of the progress of the Programme – it will also enable clear communication of the direction and progress of recommendations.

How will we do this?

[A National Child Protection Leadership Group](#), chaired by The Minister for Childcare and Early Years, will support, strengthen and improve activity on child protection across Scotland. Membership of the Leadership Group consists of individuals who have demonstrated a track record of strong leadership and who will balance the views of their organisation alongside the professional expertise they have built throughout their career. We will regularly communicate about the progress and how this Group is supporting CPIP and the sector to provide a tangible improvement for Scotland's children and young people.

[A regular electronic update](#) will provide a round-up of news and development of the Improvement Programme and will be distributed via internal and external links. To subscribe or unsubscribe please [contact us here](#).

[The Scottish Government Child Protection Website](#) will act as an information hub, providing regular updates on the Programme's progress as well as progression on the work strands helping to deliver the child protection system vision for Scotland.

[The Girfec Twitter account @girfec](#) will enable us to promote messages regarding the Programme on social media and other platforms.

[Stakeholder Engagement](#) will allow us to communicate and engage with partners, providing on-going opportunity for feedback on the Implementation of the Child Protection Improvement Programme.





Child Protection Team – Scottish Government

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