

1.1 Getting it right for everychild (GIRFEC) and named person

Key issue(s)

- In September 2019 the incumbent Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, announced that he would withdraw the Children and Young People (Information Sharing) Scotland Bill and seek to repeal parts 4 and 5 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 on named person and child's plan. He confirmed a commitment to named person and child's plans on a non-statutory basis and to development of refreshed practical guidance to support professionals in using the GIRFEC approach.
- The GIRFEC refresh work was paused during much of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Work has now re-commenced and refreshed GIRFEC policy and practice guidance is in development through working groups including practitioners from relevant sectors. Indicative dates for publication are October-December 2021, subject to Ministerial agreement on the approach for finalising guidance materials. A further priority is to address remaining issues in putting GIRFEC into practice through implementation and improvement support.
- In April 2021, GIRFEC materials refresh working groups commenced, with membership drawn from a wide range of health, local authority and third sector bodies as well as national organisations.
- An update on progress with the GIRFEC refresh will be provided to Ministers with advice on the approach to finalising the practice and policy guidance, and on plans for further implementation support.
- A suitable legislative vehicle for repeal of the relevant parts of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 will be proposed for Ministers to consider.
- Promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people, and preventing additional stresses on families at this time, through preventative approaches usually delivered by a named person, and planning for children under the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach, remain paramount at this time.

Top Lines

- The health and wellbeing of our children remains paramount and we are working with our partners in health, schools, local authorities and the third sector to provide support and mitigate against the impacts of this crisis to those children and families who may be struggling.
- It is essential that we continue to support and safeguard the wellbeing of all children, young people and their families. Getting it right for every child continues to lie at the heart of all our policies and services to support children, young people and families.
- It is more important than ever that those who already have a strong relationship with these families continue to provide the care and support they need wherever possible.
- The most effective support and protection of children continues to involve working with the family to provide early, responsive support, before urgent action is needed.

- It is more important than ever that schools, local authorities and health boards continue to provide a named person or clear point of contact for initial advice and support about a child's wellbeing, to assess needs, and make plans for support.
- Our manifesto commits to implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child within the first 6 months of the new parliament. GIRFEC lies at the heart of all our policies and services to support all children, young people and families and seeks to realise the rights of the child on a day to day basis.
- Our manifesto commits to "Keep the Promise" by implementing the Independent Care Review findings by 2030. The Independent Care Review recognises that we already have much of the required policy and legislation in place to deliver the foundations of the Promise that has been made to Scotland's children and young people and their families, including Getting it right for every child and UNCRC incorporation. The Promise Fund builds on this to keep the promise that has been made.

GIRFEC – Way Forward

- The Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to fully embedding the Getting it right for every child approach. GIRFEC is internationally recognised, locally embedded and positively embraced by practitioners across children's services, changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of children, young people and their parents.
- The best way to promote and embed GIRFEC further is through promoting and supporting best practice. We have therefore committed to developing new policy and practice guidance to provide confidence, clarity and practical support to deliver GIRFEC, underpinned by necessary, relevant and proportionate information sharing.

Information Sharing

- Local protocols for sharing information and raising child protection concerns should not change. Where any person becomes aware of the risk of significant harm to a child from abuse or neglect, then the Police or Social Work should be alerted without delay.

POLICY CONTACT: [redacted] [redacted]