

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: **Education and Children's Services**

DATE: **3rd September 2015**

DIRECTOR: **Gayle Gorman**

TITLE OF REPORT: **GIRFEC/ Children and Young People's Act Update**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/15/038**

CHECKLIST COMPLETED: **Yes**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of progress to date in being ready to implement the Parts 4, 5 and 18 of the Children and Young People's Act that come into force in August 2016.
- 1.2 To seek approval to implement the attached action plan to ensure full compliance with the Children and Young People's Act from August 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (i) Note the content of this report and Action Plan contained within Appendix 1.
 - (ii) Instruct officers to implement the Action Plan contained within Appendix 1
 - (iii) To report back to Committee on progress against actions as appropriate by means of the Service Performance Reports

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations above. Costs will be met from existing budgets.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal

As an Authority we have a duty to fully implement Parts 4, 5 and 18 of Children and Young People's Act from August 2016. Failure to implement the action plan could lead to our not complying with legislation and being open to legal challenge.

4.2 Resources

Officer time and expenditure will be met from existing budgets.

4.3 Personnel

A streamlining of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) processes will enable those undertaking the role of Named Person to discharge their duties confidently, in a timely and efficient manner and in keeping with the legislation.

4.4 Property

There are no implications.

4.5 Equipment

There are no implications.

4.6 Sustainability and environmental

There are no implications.

4.7 Health and safety

Streamlining processes will reduce bureaucracy and associated pressures on those delivering the Named Person service on behalf of the Authority, thus reducing potential workload issues and increased stress levels of those implementing the Named Person service.

4.8 Policy

The GIRFEC Operational Guidance will have to be reviewed in line with changes made. As Education policies are reviewed they will be aligned with GIRFEC to ensure both a common language and adherence to the guiding principles.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The Introduction of GIRFEC

Scottish Government has guided Local Authorities and Partnerships to work collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people since early pathfinder work in 2006. The Children and Young People's Act (2014) enshrined elements of GIRFEC into statute in May 2014 with the final parts of the Act coming into force in August 2016.

GIRFEC is based on ten core components to be applied in all settings and in any circumstance.

1. A focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of wellbeing
2. A common approach to gaining consent and to sharing information where available
3. An integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention
4. A co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, and agreeing actions and outcomes, based on the Wellbeing Indicators
5. Streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time
6. Consist high standards of co-operation, joint working and communication where more than one agency needs to be involved, locally and across Scotland
7. A Named Person for every child and young person, a Lead Professional (where necessary) to coordinate and monitor multi-agency activity
8. Maximising the skilled workforce within universal services to address needs and risks as early as possible
9. A confident and competent workforce across all services for children, young people and their families
10. The capacity to share demographic, assessment and planning information electronically within and across agency boundaries.

One of the greatest challenges for each Local Authority is the provision of the Named Person Service as the role of the Named Person is a significant one. The Named Person has responsibility for making sure that every child or young person has appropriate interventions in place to support their wellbeing. They do this by:

- being the first point of contact for children, young people and families
- compiling a chronology of significant events to help build an accurate picture of wellbeing
- identifying and sourcing any additional support that a child or young person needs in a timely manner
- managing and sharing information related to the wellbeing of the child or young person
- preparing a Child's Plan when appropriate and ensuring regular review of the plan
- supporting and promoting multi-agency working
- communicating effectively with parents/carers

Over the past few years Scottish Government has refined and updated advice to Authorities and Partnerships to support consistent delivery of GIRFEC across Scotland, the most recent being the release of the Draft Statutory Guidance. The draft guidance provides further detail on the elements of the Act coming into force in August 2016, namely Part 4 of the Act (duties on the Named Person Service), Part 5 (Child's Plan) and Part 18 (Assessment of Wellbeing).

The draft guidance provides some clarity around expectations of the Local Authority and Partnerships and a helpful timescale to review our current

processes and practices to ensure that we are fully compliant with the Act from August 2016. Scottish Government has also provided Touchpoints to aid readiness assessments and support planning.

Following feedback on the draft Statutory Guidance, a finalised document is anticipated from Scottish Government in September 2015. When we are in receipt of the updated guidance the Action Plan contained within this report will be reviewed to ensure it fully supports our preparations.

5.2 Evaluation of our readiness for full implementation of parts 4, 5 and 18 of the Act

5.2.1 Part 4 Provision of the Named Person Service

NHS Grampian provides the Named Person Service for all children from birth until school age. NHS Grampian effectively passes the Named Person role to the Head Teacher of the primary school or special school as a child joins Primary 1. Placing request procedures can lead to uncertainty around timely school placement confirmation. When a child transfers to secondary school, the Named Person Service is usually discharged by Guidance staff.

Colleagues in Social Work are the Lead Professional for children who are Looked After and beyond school leaving age. Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) are available in the Universal Services to signpost to the Named Person efficiently and accurately when a wellbeing concern is raised. Police Scotland share all concern reports in keeping with legislation.

Arrangements are currently in place to support children and families over holiday periods and during periods of staff sickness. This now needs to be formally agreed and aligned to the Named Person Service prior to August 2016. This will be accomplished as a result of information gathered throughout the summer to ensure that those best placed to discharge the duties are attached to the service. The provision of the Named Person Service for those between 16 and 18 and not in education, to travelling families and those home educated will be agreed following the publication of the revised Statutory Guidance in September.

Many individuals have an excellent understanding and commitment to providing the Named Person Service but we will work to address some issues around interpretation of the role over the coming months to ensure that a robust and consistent service is available. Staff shortages across the NHS and education are impacting considerably and will need to be considered carefully, in advance of August 2016 as will potential workload implications for those undertaking the role of Named Person. There is a need to explore the extent to which a Named Person can expect others to 'assist' to ensure that everyone has clear expectations of each other.

Single and multi-agency training is well established and supporting guidance will be reviewed to ensure that colleagues are well placed to discharge their duties, with specific training for those discharging the Named Person role being

developed. The development of Named Person networks will be explored from August 2016 in order to identify challenges and proactively address them.

We intend to review supporting documentation for parents looking at how the Named Person Service will be exercised and arrangements for contacting them. The planning of the release of this information will be undertaken with representative groups. This supporting documentation will be part of a wider review of communication to ensure that professionals, partners and families are aware of how this important legislation will impact upon them.

5.2.2 Part 5 The Child's Plan

A multi-agency approach to planning has been in place for some time now and work is currently underway to further refine our approach.

The need for this refinement was agreed by our Integrated Children's Services Board following concerns raised by those in the Universal Services in terms of the potentially onerous nature of the Child's Plan and a desire to streamline approaches to support earlier intervention. A working group comprising colleagues from health, education and social work has been established to take this forward over the summer months, with a sub group looking at how best to extract information from each Management Information System in a bid to eliminate the double entry of core data. The Child's Plan format will grow as greater multi-agency involvement is required to support a child or young person. We are mindful of ensuring that the refined plan meets the needs of the child, families and the many partners supporting wellbeing. We are confident that our work will help us launch a refined Child's Plan and associated guidance in September.

The streamlined approach will support engagement with the child and young person in the development of the plan along with appropriate timescales for review. This will ensure that all detail within the statutory guidance is taken into account around the storage and recording of information to protect those discharging the functions of the Named Person Service.

A suite of training and engagement events is being planned for September to support completion of the revised Child's Plan. This will support a greater degree of consistency of assessment and clarify thresholds of intervention from other services. The guidance will also establish how the plan is to be reviewed by all relevant parties prior to being passed to the receiving Named Person to aid transition processes. Training and engagement events will provide an ideal opportunity to agree a definition of 'targeted intervention' as the need for this level of intervention will trigger the need for a statutory Child's Plan.

The roll out of the 'Reclaiming Social Work' model over the next year will support our delivery of appropriate targeted interventions. The work of colleagues in social work will be complemented by our development of an Associated School Group (ASG) Partnership model where supports can be accessed at the earliest opportunity at a local level. Collaboration between education, health, social work and the third sector will reflect the spirit of

GIRFEC and allow us to collectively support vulnerable children and young people.

5.2.3 Part 18 Assessment of wellbeing

Guidance on information sharing is in place although not as widely understood as we would like. We now need to ensure that the guidance is fully understood by all and that our processes, both single and multi-agency support effective and consistent information sharing. Processes linked to each service will be agreed by October 2015 to ensure clarity of expectation and support clear recording when there is disagreement. This work will help interpreting 'relevant and proportionate' information sharing as outlined in the Act.

We are working to establish how best to use secure e-mail to share information and how best each agency can make use of secure Management Information Systems (MIS) to support their information storing. We anticipate that we will have a clear way forward by November 2015.

We are in the process of developing a range of flow charts to support effective information sharing in order to allay fears and build confidence in those discharging the Named Person Service. Consideration is also being given to how best education can share information electronically when seeking support for a child's wellbeing from others. Training will be provided based on these developments and policies E.g. the Transition Policy for Education will support these processes further as we work to ensure that GIRFEC is firmly embedded within all service policy and processes.

We plan to develop some guidance for parents on information sharing to ensure that they are aware of their rights and the role they play. We anticipate that this will be available to families by October 2015.

5.3 Action Plan to support the implementation of the Children and Young People's Act

A great deal of work has been undertaken in preparation for full implementation of the Act over recent years. This work will be built upon as we sharpen our processes in line with the most recent guidance so that we do not put undue pressure on those delivering the Named Person Service.

The Scottish Government Touchpoints have been used to aid our evaluation both across the Service and with multi-agency Partners with an Action Plan devised to address areas to be either developed or refined prior to August 2016. One of the greatest pressures is around staff vacancy levels and staff capacity and we have taken these factors into account in compiling the Action Plan.

The wider Integrated Children's Services Plan has been used to help shape sections of the plan to ensure that work around GIRFEC reflects priorities highlighted for development in the recent Integrated Children's Services Inspection.

For ease of monitoring progress, the Action Plan has been compiled under the following headings:

- Sharing and receiving information
- Assessing and planning
- Supporting the Named Person
- Sharing information about the service
- Strategic management

It is acknowledged that some areas of the Action Plan may have to be revised when the Statutory Guidance is published in September 2015.

The full Action Plan is available in Appendix 1.

6. IMPACT

6.1 Corporate

Single outcome agreement – the agreement states that partners will:

- Make a decisive shift from reactive problem solving to root cause prevention;
- Capitalise on Aberdeen’s existing strengths to build sustainable positive outcomes;
- Make significant progress toward the radical collaboration required to meet the long term social and financial challenges

Early intervention and close partnership working are fundamental to GIRFEC.

6.2 Inclusion Service Improvement Plan

Key objectives within the Inclusion Service Improvement Plan include:

- Ensure partnership approaches and GIRFEC arrangements are supporting children and young people
- Decisions on resources are designed around the needs of children and young people
- Improve our use of data in helping identify priorities for improvement and in monitoring improvement, of outcomes for children and young people

These key objectives evidence how the Inclusion agenda is closely aligned with GIRFEC and the Children and Young People’s Act.

6.3 Public

This report is likely to be of some interest to the public given some general anxiety nationally around the functions of the Named Person Service.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Failure to instruct officers to implement the appended Action Plan will result in The Authority not being in a position to discharge its' legislative duties from August 2016 and potentially leave those undertaking the role of Named Person vulnerable and our children and young people not fully supported.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Draft Statutory Guidance on the Children and Young People's Act (Scottish Government 2015)
- Children and Young People's Act 2014
- Touchpoints (Scottish Government 2015)
- A Guide to Getting it Right for Every Child (Scottish Government 2014)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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