

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **2nd June 2016**

DIRECTOR: **Gayle Gorman**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Update on readiness for full implementation of Parts 4, 5 and 18 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/16/025**

CHECKLIST COMPLETED: **Yes**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of progress made towards preparing for full implementation of Parts 4, 5 and 18 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 1.2 To advise Committee of detailed costs associated with the implementation of the Action Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (i) Note the content of this report, the Action Plan contained within Appendix 1 and documentation within subsequent Appendices
 - (ii) Instruct officers to continue to implement the Action Plan contained within Appendix 1 and collaborate with Partners to update the plan for August 2016
 - (iii) Instruct officers to use performance measures and national best practice to improve the wellbeing of children and young people.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications associated with the recommendations above. Costs will be met from existing budgets and additional Scottish Government funding as detailed as in Appendix 1.

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 31st 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 and additional Scottish Government funding.

4.3 Personnel

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

The SEEMiS module has been joint funded by all Local Authorities and will be place for August 2016.

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.

4.8 Policy

The GIRFEC Operational Guidance has been reviewed in line with legislation. As Education and Children's Services policies are reviewed they will continue to be aligned to ensure the use of common language and adherence to the guiding principles of Girfec.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1. The Introduction of GIRFEC

The Scottish Government first consulted on the implementation of Girfec in 2006 following pathfinder work in early 2006. Girfec supports multi-agency working to improve outcomes for children and young people through shared ways of working. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 enshrined elements of GIRFEC into statute in May 2014 with the final parts of the Act coming into force on 31st August 2016.

Each Local Authority must provide a Named Person Service. 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; and
- communicating effectively with parents/carers.

A report and Action Plan was presented to Committee on September 5th 2015 prior to the publication of the revised Statutory Guidance. It was acknowledged at that time that the updated Statutory Guidance would result in changes to the Action Plan.

5.2 Revised Statutory Guidance

The revised Draft Guidance was published on 1st December provides clarity on how The Authority and Partnership should fulfil their legislative requirements from August 2016; the finalised Statutory Guidance is expected in May/June 2016.

The key aspects of the revised Draft Statutory Guidance to note are:

- how children's rights link to wellbeing with a strong emphasis on the voice of the child;
- that communication or learning impairment cannot be seen as a barrier to seeking views;
- that assessments of wellbeing must be based on strengths and undertaken in collaboration with the child and family;
- clarity on how to handle, store, process and share information through existing means wherever possible;
- two considerations used to determine if a Child's Plan is required; and
- the relationship between statutory and non-statutory plans and how they support improved outcomes for children and young people.

The Revised Statutory Guidance was well received and has helped streamline approaches to develop more consistent practice.

5.3 Additional National Supports

The Management Information System (SEEMiS) used by all Local Authority Schools across Scotland, has been nationally commissioned to provide an application to support the delivery of GIRFEC. Aberdeen City has opted into Phase One of the roll out of the application and we anticipate a series of training opportunities being available to staff from May 2016.

The module will reduce bureaucracy around information handling and information sharing and support assessment and planning, thereby providing an important help to those undertaking the role of the Named Person.

The Scottish Government has produced a series of Practice Materials. These are based on some of the tests that have been undertaken by Local Authorities and shaped by Lead Officers from all Local Authorities. Publication of the materials was phased and has helped shape decision making.

Following requests from Lead Officers across Scotland, The Scottish Government has produced information suitable for a range of audiences to ensure that families and children and young people access consistent information. This will form the basis of our communications with stakeholders.

The publication of How Good Is Our School 4 along with aligned documents for Community Learning and Early Learning and Childcare, have promoted new ways of working collectively to support the very different needs of our communities and our plans have been amended to reflect these key national drivers.

5.4 To advise Committee of progress made and our readiness for full implementation of Parts 4,5 and 18 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Delivery of the Named Person Service

All staff discharging the duties of Named Person have been invited to attend the mandatory training in June. An agreement on the discharge of the Named Person Service for vulnerable groups has been reached and includes support for children and young people over holiday periods, for 16 – 18 year olds who are not in full time education, for children and young people from travelling families and for those who are home educated.

Child's Plan

Following consultation on our revised Child's Plan and consideration of the Child's Plan Order, a finalised Child's Planning format was endorsed by the Integrated Children's Services Board in April 2015. The format contained in Appendix 2 will be subject to yearly review to ensure that it supports improving outcomes for children and young people. The Child's Plan will be used to request assistance from others who have a duty to support the Named Person, thus reducing the number of processes to follow when seeking assistance from others across the Partnership.

A Child's Plan is required when a wellbeing need has been identified and the need cannot be met through the provision of what is 'generally available', the need requiring a more 'targeted intervention'. Services are currently clarifying interventions that are 'targeted' with The Family Information Service canvassing Third Sector organisations to identify their 'general' and 'targeted' availability. A visual to display this information will be prepared for publication by June 2016.

SEEMiS

An extensive training programme has been planned for June to ensure key staff are confident in the use of the SEEMiS wellbeing module. The module will support best

practice in the keeping of chronologies and further streamline processes. Officers have been developing a Carefirst solution to provide a similar support for Social Work colleagues.

Professional Learning

Multi-Agency Training has been reviewed by practitioners across the Partnership. Practitioners identified that locality based training should be available to help develop collaborative working practices and strengthen relationships in keeping with GIRFEC principals. There was a strong request for differing levels of training to ensure more in-depth training is available to those undertaking key duties and several requests for both multi-agency and single service training during the early stages of implementation. This feedback has informed approaches to training from April 2016.

An on-line Learning Together Guide is due to be published in recognition of the increasing difficulty in releasing staff to attend training. A GIRFEC and Child Protection Module has been updated for all practitioners working across Education and Children's Services to complete on a yearly basis. A Named Person Network has been established. The Network enables concerns to be raised at the earliest opportunity so that solutions can be identified, tested and put in place.

Professional Learning tools have been developed as colleagues have identified a lack of confidence/consistency in particular areas. Tools developed to date include a booklet to support the chairing of effective Child's Plan meetings and a range of resources designed to enable children and young people to engage in discussions around their own wellbeing. All materials will be formally launched at the Named Person training in June.

Girfec Operational Guidance

The Girfec Operational Guidance has been reviewed to ensure it is in keeping with all national guidance and is being shared during the Named Person training to ensure that children, young people and families experience consistency. This mandatory approach is helping to address some issues around the consistency of chronologies with a range of training tools developed to support best practice exemplification. The training is also helping to provide clarity about the duty of others in supporting those delivering the Named Person Service. Areas identified for improvement in the ICS Inspection have been further addressed during the development of the guidance. The Operational Guidance will be subject to 6 monthly review to ensure that we are responsive to any emerging difficulties.

Information Sharing

The GIRFEC group collaborated to produce a scaffold for staff to guide their thinking around information sharing. The two page visual summarises local guidance and the Named Person Network believe it will be a helpful aid memoire. Early tests suggest that it is helping to build confidence in information sharing.

Partnership Working

Officers across and beyond the Service along with partners are currently collaborating to agree wellbeing priorities across each Associated School Group (ASG). We anticipate that ASG Partnerships will be operational from August 2016 and will pool expertise, help shape supports on offer locally and reduce timescales in

accessing support. This approach will help empower those involved by sharing skill sets across a partnership.

Communication

A suite of leaflets has been developed for children, young people and parents and carers. The documentation summarises how the Named Person Service will be exercised and contact arrangements. This information will be enhanced through direct engagement with children, young people and families across each Associated School Group planned over June to coincide with the National Communication Strategy.

The Girfec Website has been refined and hosts all of the information available to partners, children and young people and families. This work is closely aligned with the Integrated Children's Services Communication Strategy to ensure consistency across the Partnership and make best use of existing channels of communication.

5.5 Readiness for Full Implementation of the Act

The Service is well placed to meet the legislative requirements of the Act from August 31st 2016.

The Action Plan within Appendix 1 has been updated to reflect work to date and also contains detailed information of how resource has been allocated. This demonstrates that Aberdeen City Council will be in a position to meet the legislative requirement of Parts 4, 5 and 18 of the Act.

A risk register was put in place to guide our work and has ensured timescales for full implementation of the Act have been met.

Officers have responded flexibly as refined information has been made available and have amended plans to ensure readiness for full implementation by August 31st 2016. The recent review of the Operational Guidance provided a further opportunity to evaluate our processes against The Scottish Government Touchpoints. This review has helped ensure that approaches are in keeping with legislation.

Procedures and practice will be kept under regular review and set timescales for formal review of both the Child's Plan format and the Girfec Operational Guidance have been set. A further partnership Action Plan will therefore be developed to guide our work over school session 2016/2017.

5.6 Summary of Associated Costs

Aberdeen City Council received £14,000 from the Scottish Government to support the preparations for the implementation of Parts 4, 5 and 18 in 15/16. This money was used to meet some of the costs of the Multi-agency training and added to that already identified from existing budgets to support partnership working.

The settlement figure for Aberdeen City for 16/17 includes an increased allocation to support implementation. A proportion of the allocation has part funded the SEEMiS module with remaining funds detailed on the Action Plan 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 the recent challenge in the Supreme Court.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Failure to instruct officers to use performance measures and national best practice to guide the modification of approaches to maximise their impact on the wellbeing of children and young people could result in systems and processes being put in place that do not directly impact on the wellbeing of children and young people across Aberdeen City.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Touchpoints (Scottish Government 2015)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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