



## May 2009

### Sharing - Learning - Implementing

Welcome to the May 09 edition of the GIRFEC Partner Newsletter. This is our regular update - a 'one stop shop' on all things GIRFEC and GIRFEC-related. The Newsletter is issued by email and is produced in sections, including links and updates from other policy areas. We hope it will be of interest and benefit. Please forward to any colleagues who may have an interest. They in turn can use the [subscribe button](#) to keep up to date themselves. There are over 3,500 currently subscribed.

The focus of this newsletter is on **sharing** and **learning**. Getting it right for every child is in transition as we move from development to implementation. We are working with partners to clarify what this means in practice for all those involved and how we the Scottish Government can best facilitate the change needed. And explain why adopting the Getting it right for every child approach will make a difference to outcomes for children and young people as well as bringing streamlined processes and an increased focus on the child.

We will have more on the implementation plan in a future edition of the newsletter. Meantime you will wish to know that the formal development of the Highland pathfinder is coming to an end. Over the summer they are seeking to roll out the new approach to date across the whole of Highland. Mr Ingram visited Inverness on 5 May where, in addition to meeting staff and families, he spoke at an event to mark the ending of the development phase. [Mr Ingram's speech is available online](#) from the website. Other areas are at different stages of development and implementation and we want you to benefit from the experiences of our pathfinders and the early work emerging from our learning partners.

I'd like to highlight three other developments. The first is that the Strategic Group for Getting it right for every child has now met for the second time. Second, the Learning Community which is now up and running as a forum for information exchange and discussion. This is a password protected site where issues can be discussed and experiences shared. Finally, the review of the 1998 child protection guidelines and the fit with GIRFEC.

More details on all of these and other topics follow. We intend in subsequent issues to cover issues such as electronic information sharing, further progress on implementation, more about the lessons emerging, work with the third sector and the adult sector. We would be keen to hear from you about other issues you might wish to see covered. Let us know at [gettingitrightforeverychild@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gettingitrightforeverychild@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

For the moment, I hope you find the newsletter informative and of benefit.

**Boyd McAdam**  
Head of *Getting it right for every child* team

## Pathfinder and Learning Partner Event

A two day gathering was held in March attended by around 90 delegates representing GIRFEC pathfinders and learning partners. The aim of the event was to identify common themes and learning for sharing more widely as part of national implementation. Adam Ingram MSP, the Minister for Children and Early Years, came to hear and discuss the issues and challenges being faced. These are many and varied. But there were also examples of progress and improvements in outcomes arising out of adopting the new approaches. A [summary report](#) on the event is on the GIRFEC website.

## Sharing Information

Work continues on developing the eCare framework as the IT forum through which information and concerns about children may be shared in a safe, secure and controlled environment which respects the privacy of the individual. IT is not driving the practice and culture changes we wish to see. Best practice is being determined first and the IT being developed to support that.

There are two main strands of work underway. The first is to explore how the existing eCare framework can enable authorised practitioners to view a multi-agency plan electronically. This will be for those children facing needs and risk which require integrated action. The second strand is to explore issues around sharing information when the need for a plan is not yet obvious but a practitioner needs to know who else may be working in some capacity with the child (see next article). Many of these issues will be discussed with practitioners in a forum called eCHiSG (electronic children's information sharing group). We hope to announce the chair of this group shortly.

## Nominations wanted for Information Sharing Workshops

The Getting it right for every child and eCare programme teams are hosting a series of three workshops in May and June to support the development of a national electronic information sharing solution as part of Getting it right for every child. Practitioners with practical experience of children's services are invited to nominate themselves or colleagues to this three day series of workshops. The aim is to ensure the practice dimension is thoroughly integrated with the

technical solution currently under development.

The workshops will take place on:

- Thursday **28 May** at Meridian Court, Glasgow
- Thursday **11 June** at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh
- Thursday **25 June** at Meridian Court, Glasgow

We would require the same delegates to attend all three workshops to ensure consistency in the lessons we can take away from the sessions. Find out [more about the workshops](#) via the website.

If you would like to attend please **indicate your interest** by completing the [online enquiry form](#) (completing all fields and stating 'information sharing workshops' in the comments box). **All requests must be submitted by Tuesday 12 May.**

## Strategic Group

The Strategic Group for Getting it right for every child has now met for the second time. Chaired by Sarah Smith, Director of Children, Young People & Social Care at the Scottish Government, membership includes nominees from Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (Jim Stephen), the [Scottish] Associations of Directors of Education (Julia Swan - Falkirk), Directors of Social Work (Harriet Dempster - Highland), and Chief Police Officers (Lesley Boal - Lothians & Borders Police) and the NHS Chief Executives' Group (Ralph Roberts, NHS Borders), and Martin Crewe, Director of Barnardo's Scotland for third sector interests. A number of other Scottish Government officials from relevant directorates also attend.

At a first preliminary meeting the Group looked at the Getting it right for every child programme as a whole - development to date, risks, communications issues. At its second meeting the Group looked in more detail at some of the strategic issues around the programme, particularly as gradually it moves from development and testing in pathfinders and learning partnerships more towards national implementation. The Group was particularly keen to get a good grasp of the issues associated with achieving national implementation against the new background set by the Concordat between central and local government in Scotland and Single Outcome Agreements. At future meetings the Group expects to give more thought to how to work this through in detail, together with focusing on the ongoing evaluation of the programme by the University of Edinburgh and returning to communications, which is very linked to achieving successful implementation.

## GIRFEC Learning Community in Action

Since the launch of the GIRFEC Learning Community worksite in February this year, the number of activated members has steadily swelled to over 200. These self nominated champions cover a variety of roles in relation to GIRFEC; from developing, planning, implementing, policy making and communicating, to one or two pro-active practitioners

who have also been keen to get involved. They also represent a fairly rich blend of practice; from

police, health, education, social work, foster care, to the voluntary sector, SCRA and even child-minding. Members can network, communicate, debate and collaborate with each other via the password-protected, on-line worksite in an open and safe environment.

Members are still adjusting to the worksite, and although numbers are steadily growing, members are encouraged to use the sight pro-actively to ensure that it meets their implementation and development needs. New information and resources are being added to the site daily, although key developments and outputs will still be shared through the main [GIRFEC web section](#) and the [GIRFEC Partner Newsletters](#) as appropriate. Whilst the Learning Community is a collaborative online tool to support those tasked with advancing GIRFEC both Nationally and Locally, the GIRFEC web section - [www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright) - remains the central hub for central GIRFEC communication.

If you would like to know more about the Learning Community or are interested in becoming a member please visit [Learning Community web section](#) or contact [Jenny Massey](#).

## Evaluation - Case Studies and Records

Work continues on the analysis of samples of children's and young people's records and plans in the Highland Pathfinder area and a similar process will begin in May in the Domestic Abuse Pathfinders. This analysis is designed with three main objectives in mind:

- To ascertain whether practitioners are working with the new processes as intended;
- To assess the extent to which the new processes are contributing to the desired outcomes for the children and young people in ways which are timely, appropriate and proportionate to the level of need that has been assessed.
- This part of the evaluation process will also include in-depth cases studies which will involve talking to a wide range of sub-samples of children and young people, their parents/carers, the lead professionals and the other practitioners working closely with each child or young person. The objective here will be to get an overview of each case study child's experiences with children's services as well as to evaluate the level of integrated working across the agencies and the extent to which support was holistic and determined by the needs of each child.

The case studies in Highland are currently being identified and the in-depth interviews with the children and young people and the teams supporting them will begin in May.

The early patterns and trends identified are still apparent now that more records and plans have been analysed, namely, there are some variations in the completion of records and plans as practitioners adjust to new formats and procedures but evidence is emerging of a step change in the practices of the professionals involved.

## Learning Partner News

Two more learning partnerships have been agreed to support our learning and understand of the complexities of implementing GIRFEC nationally. These learning partnerships will ensure GIRFEC is robust enough to be implemented in other areas with different infrastructures and

priorities.

Edinburgh City has combined the work of the GIRFEC Domestic Abuse pathfinder, with their local Team Around the Child (early years) and Team Around the Child (at risk) developments and the Early Intervention and Parenting Initiative, as well as local support through the Children, Young People Strategic Partnership, to implement a city wide Getting it right for every child implementation programme that will be led by a Project Manager. This approach is being introduced initially in two localities.

The Edinburgh work will provide us with understanding of the issues that might affect the implementation of GIRFEC in City areas with high levels of need.

In Angus another Learning Partnership is looking at the interface between developments to introduce a GIRFEC approach to children's services taken by Angus Children's Services and the work underway there to identify and address the needs of Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse (CAPSM). They are also mapping the outcome measures for reporting on children affected by substance misuse and the outcome measures being devised around GIRFEC and will report on how they are complementary or contradictory.

The Angus work will provide information about how specific areas of concern can be addressed within the generic GIRFEC model as well as helping us understand how we define the outcome measures to ensure consistency and coherence of approach across policy areas.

## **Police Guidance being produced**

Guidance on the GIRFEC approach in practice, tailored for the police service, is under preparation through work between the Scottish Government, Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and the eight Scottish Forces. This will draw on lessons learned from the national evaluation of the GIRFEC pathfinders and best practice identified at local level. Its purpose is to bridge the gap between the Scottish Government's '[Guide to GIRFEC](#)' and Forces' development of their own locally adapted Standard Operating Procedures.

The aim of this guidance is to define the role of the police service within GIRFEC in concrete terms and provide evidence to Forces with which to establish partner arrangements in accordance with local policing priorities and single outcome agreements. Models are offered purely as options: it will be for Forces to determine which option, or amalgam of options, best suits operational demand.

## **Child Protection Update**

The Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram, MSP has made it clear that the current review of the national (1998) child protection guidelines should aim to secure a safe and robust transition towards locating the protection of children at risk within the general approach set out by the GIRFEC practice model. This process will be assisted and informed by lessons from evaluative work with GIRFEC Pathfinders and Learning Partners, and by consultation with Child Protection Committees, COSLA and other stakeholders in the process of development of revised child protection guidance. A national working group has been set up to review the national child

protection guidance and Moira McKinnon (Principal Officer - Child Protection, Glasgow Council) has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to look in detail at the applicability of the GIRFEC practice model's approach to risk assessment from the perspective of the child protection practitioner.

A [two-page overview](#), which was produced for the Child Protection Conference held in Edinburgh in March, may be of interest and is available online.

## James Seth Memorial Lecture

Professor Jane Aldgate OBE from the Open University and a Professional Advisor to the GIRFEC team is delivering this lecture that will explore definitions of child well-being giving special attention to developments in Scotland. It will also link well-being to children's relationships with their parents and carers and draw on new thinking on the application of attachment theory in the 21st century to contemporary family life styles. For more information contact: [a.tait@ed.ac.uk](mailto:a.tait@ed.ac.uk) - 0131 650 3915.

## Implementing the Early Years Framework: Delivering a Strategy for Effective Intervention

On Wednesday 20th May the Getting it right for every child team at the Scottish Government is participating in an Early Years Conference that is taking place at The Edinburgh Corn Exchange. The Conference will build on the success of the 2008 Early Years Conference and will bring together professionals from across Scotland involved in Early Years Service delivery. It will examine the content and implications of the Framework; debate how it can be delivered in terms of partnership working, training and finance; and hear from a range of experts in the field regarding its context, implementation and impact. To see the agenda and to book a place please visit [www.holyrood.com/earlyyears](http://www.holyrood.com/earlyyears).

## Early and Effective Intervention Practice - A Conference Roadshow

A series of one day conference road shows for practitioners, managers and policy leads in the field of youth justice, child care, education, health, police and youth work are taking place in May and June at the following locations:

- **27th May** in Dundee
- **2nd June** in Glasgow
- **9th June** in Ayr
- **4th June** in Edinburgh

The events will be Chaired by Professor Bill Whyte from the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre for Scotland. The multi-agency early and effective intervention strategy will be launched as part of the events. This is a free event, for which you can [register online](#).

## UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Scottish Government is committed to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and to promoting and supporting the rights of all children in Scotland as a key strand of our activity to improve outcomes for all and give children the best possible start in life. All of the rights in the Convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination.

The principles, values and core components of the Getting it right for every child programme are based on the UNCRC. As part of our commitment to the UNCRC, the Scottish Government recently consulted on a draft response to the 2008 Concluding Observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The consultation had 3 elements: a written consultation; a series of consultation events; a consultation exercise with children and young people.

A [Summary of Written Responses](#) and a [Summary of Consultation Events](#) is available on the Scottish Government website, as is a [Report on the Consultation with Children and Young People](#). The final Scottish Government response to the 2008 Concluding Observations will include a list of priority areas for action in children's rights.

To find out more visit the [Children's Rights web section](#) or email a request to join the Children's Rights newsletter mailing list to [childrensrights@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:childrensrights@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

## Protection of Vulnerable Groups Information Events - June 2009

A series of six, free information events are being hosted by the Scottish Government in June that aim to bring organisations up to speed with implementation activities and provide an opportunity to consider and discuss aspects of the PVG Scheme. The events will be of interest to people who are responsible for recruiting people to work with vulnerable groups. Find [more information online](#).

## Changing Lives

The Service Development Group, one of the five programmes set up to deliver Changing Lives, has recently produced a [Personalisation publication](#) which brings together three elements around personalisation.

Find out more about Changing Lives in the Spring/Summer 2009 edition of the [Changing Lives Newsletter](#).

## Valuing Young People - Principles and Connections to support young people to achieve their potential

In April, the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop, MSP launched

Valuing Young People - Principles and connections to support young people to achieve their potential. The publication has been designed in partnership with COLSA as a helpful tool to ensure connections between, and through, existing services can be made by delivery partners. The paper has been shaped by organisations across the public and third sectors as well as young people themselves. It offers a set of common principles for organisations (locally and nationally and across all sectors):

- to deliver services that reflect the reality of young people's lives
- to work with local partners to address barriers and gaps
- to recognised and promote young peoples positive contribution to their communities
- to involve young people at an early stage in developing services and opportunities

The aim is to promote these principles as the norm and embed them in practice. For national partners, they would underpin policy developments and national delivery. For local partners, particularly those involved in Community Planning Partnerships, they would influence Single Outcome Agreements and provide a reference for local service delivery. And for young people, they should lead to better services which provide better value and improved long-term outcomes.

For more information see the [Valuing Young People publication online](#), and for supporting documentation see the [Reference Paper for Valuing Young People](#).

## Action for Children Scotland Research Report

Action for Children has recently published research undertaken by Synergy Research and Consulting Ltd into identifying the role of targeted family support in increasing the reach and impact of Action for Children services for children and families.

The [full report](#) highlights:

- the importance of recognising and valuing interim outcomes
- the necessity for families to have access to a service continuum
- that having a range of service bases is very helpful for delivering flexible services
- the role of outreach work in bridging families into services
- the art of integration: stigma is not a given
- the value of a skills mix
- that early referral pays dividends

## GIRFEC-related Events/Requests

We are keen to support your local GIRFEC implementation activity and as implementation progresses, we are receiving an increasing number of enquiries. To help us ensure we manage your enquiries we have produced a requests form that will help us consider and fulfil your requirements.

We will endeavour to meet your request but it may not be possible to do so in every instance. Please complete the [notification of an event form](#) so that we can consider your needs and get back to you.

For all other enquiries, please contact:

- Lorraine Spalding at [lorraine.spalding@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.spalding@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)
- Jenny Massey at [jenny.massey@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.massey@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

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