

getting
it right
for every child



Implementation of the Child's or Young Person's Plan:
Guidance for local areas on ensuring all children appearing at a
Hearing have a plan by December 2007



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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR THE CHILD'S OR YOUNG PERSON'S PLAN

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

1. *Getting it right for every child* proposes that for all children who require one, there will be a co-ordinated plan based on a view of the child's needs as a whole, identifying the action necessary to address those needs, specifying who is to take what action and recording what improved outcomes are expected within what timescale.
2. The draft Children's Services (Scotland) Bill, was issued for consultation on 19 December 2006 (www.scotland.gov.uk/childrenservicesbill). If enacted, agencies will be required to plan together to meet the needs of children when inter-agency planning and work is needed.
3. On 19 December 2006, the Minister for Education and Young People wrote to Chief Executives to reaffirm that, as required by the Scottish Executive response to the Youth Justice Improvement Programme published in October 2006 (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/09094340/0>), Scottish Ministers expect every child or young person going to a Children's Hearing by December 2007 to have a plan in line with *Getting it right for every child*.
4. Outline guidance on the plan was issued electronically in December. A paper version has also been published on 26 January 2007 and has been sent to agencies for distribution. (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/10334>).

This document is intended to help agencies prepare for implementing the requirements.

5. Attached is a pro-forma for reporting on progress at the end of 2007.

SECTION 2: NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Work to date

6. To date the Scottish Executive has:
 - Published in June 2005, *Getting it right for every child* - proposals issued for consultation on reforming children's services and the hearings system. The outline for the child's or young person's plan was welcomed by almost all consultees.
 - Published in June 2006, the *Getting it right for every child* Implementation Plan which sets out the practice and legislative changes expected and how the Scottish Executive will support these.
 - With Highland, throughout 2006, developed a *Getting it right for every child* pathfinder, launched in the autumn.
 - With key agencies, in September 2006, launched domestic abuse pathfinders in four local authority areas, Clydebank, Dumfries and Galloway, Edinburgh and Falkirk.
 - Briefed national bodies on *Getting it right for every child*, preparing the ground for implementation.
 - Established the Children's Services Steering Group which will lead the changes at a national level.
 - Published on 9 October 2006 the Youth Justice Improvement Programme, setting out the expectation that any child or young person going to a Children's Hearing (*for any reason*) would have a plan in line with *Getting it right for every child* by December 2007.
 - Published on 19 December 2006, draft Children's Services (Scotland) Bill.
 - Disseminated the child's or young person's plan and guidance January 2007.

Future work

7. The Scottish Executive will continue to support implementation of *Getting it right for every child* and implementation of the child's or young person's plan through:

- Funding: Hugh Henry the Education Minister, announced on 12 January additional funding for Local Authorities to support a range of developments. These included ensuring "that there is an agreed plan (which conforms to the requirements set out in *Getting it right for every child*) in place for every child who goes to a Hearing". The money is being provided to local authorities to support implementation of the child's or young person's plan recognising the local authority role in leading children's service planning and in providing reports to Children's Hearings.
- This guidance which includes setting out the Scottish Executive's expectations of agencies for implementation by December 2007.
- The provision of communication materials in March 2007 which raise awareness and understanding for:
 - Practitioners
 - Parents and Carers
 - Children and Young People
- The provision of training materials in March 2007 for those who work with children or whose work impacts on children or young people.
- The development of a National Learning Network providing support to a link person identified in each area and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders.

Implementation of *Getting it right for every child* – where the plan fits.

8. **The child's or young person's plan does not substitute for action, thinking or planning but is a helpful vehicle for recording these and for sharing information.**

9. There are three elements to the implementation of *Getting it right for every child*

- legislation
- practice change, and
- the removal of any barriers (finance, governance structures, legislation).

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/22092413>

10. A number of agencies have already started implementing *Getting it right for every child* where they can do so within existing legislation.

11. At national level, the implementation programme will be informed by the pathfinder projects and the experience of agencies, individually and collectively, as they move forward with implementation. Practice changes will be achieved incrementally over time at a pace that is manageable for agencies; that protects children while agencies are making changes; and, within current legislation.

12. The implementation of the child's or young person's plan in respect of those appearing at a Hearing is only one part of the overall programme but is the first element that we are putting in place nationally for all children. It is a starting point for a number of practice changes that will need to be made. We will learn from this experience and, if necessary, develop further training or practice tools in the light of agencies' experience of implementation.

13. The child's or young person's plan is only one part of the child's record which is currently in development and other parts of the record will be published as and when they are complete. We intend that an early 'prototype' of the record will be available for April 2007. Throughout 2007, information on these and other elements of the programme will be issued.

14. The aim of *Getting it right for every child* is to improve outcomes for all children. The provision of a plan for those children who go to a Hearing will not, of itself, improve outcomes. All agencies are expected to work with children and families and to provide help at the earliest opportunity without referral to the Reporter. It is only when compulsion is required that it should be necessary for a child to be referred to the Reporter. Where a child does need to appear at a Hearing it is likely that their circumstances will be complex and there may be uncertainty about their future wellbeing. It is particularly important, therefore, for these children that agencies plan to meet their needs, both short and long term, in a way that will deliver better outcomes.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

15. The strategy set out below is intended to assist all areas and in particular those that may not yet have started to make changes. In order that the Scottish Executive can properly support areas through the change process we are suggesting a phased approach.

Phase 1 Awareness raising January 2007 to February 2007.

Phase 2 Training – March 2007 to May 2007.

Phase 3 Implementation March 2007 to December 2007.

Phase 4 Review improvement in January 2008 onwards.

Phase 1: Awareness Raising January 2007 to February 2007

16. A national symposium was held on 30 January hosted by the Minister for Education and Young People, Hugh Henry, and the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, Robert Brown. The event was attended by Chief Executives and senior officials representing services for children across Scotland.

17. The event is downloadable from the website for *Getting it right for every child* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices>). The website will be updated throughout 2007 with materials for awareness raising or training that can be used at local level.

Phase 2: Training (March 2007 – May 2007)

18. How agencies prepare and train staff will depend on agencies' own existing programmes and timetables for implementation. It will be for local areas to ensure that relevant staff are suitably trained. Agencies might wish to provide training on a multi-disciplinary basis. As a minimum, areas will need to ensure that all staff who will be preparing plans for those children or young people appearing at a Hearing by December 2007 have the knowledge and skills required. Those areas that are already working in a multi-disciplinary way may, from the outset, want to involve the full range of staff who work with children.

19. The Scottish Executive will provide training materials by March 2007 to support the development and writing of a child's or young person's plan.

20. In this early phase the training materials will focus on assisting practitioners and line managers to understand the new requirements and consider the practice changes required.

21. We are not anticipating that practitioners will need to develop new assessment or planning skills. They may need to think about how they use their current expertise in a different way. If implementation of the child's or young person's plan suggests there is a skills deficiency then the Scottish Executive will work with agencies as part of the *Getting it right for every child* roll out to establish how this might be addressed.

Phase 3: Local Implementation March 2007 – December 2007

22. Readiness to implement: the implementation of the child's or young person's plan across all of Scotland in respect of those children appearing at a Hearing will be a considerable undertaking for some areas. In this first year we need to be realistic about what can be achieved.

23. The Scottish Executive is expecting that:

- plans will be in place for every child who appears at a Hearing by December 2007;
- plans will be completed within current (time interval) timescales for report writing;
- the plans will reflect the needs of the child and any action proposed will be proportionate to risk and needs. Where action in the plan is complete prior to a Hearing and there is no further need for action, the plan should be reviewed with an update provided for the Hearing
- the plans can suffice as Initial Assessment Reports (IAR) and Social Background Reports (SBR), subject to local inter-agency agreements (the SBR being a more detailed report and the IAR involving more limited information).

24. There is no doubt that the integration of existing systems and processes is one of the most challenging aspects of creating a single plan for a child or young person. We do not expect that all of this work can be achieved across all agencies by December 2007.

25. Our expectation is that practitioners will become familiar with the new style and format of providing information to the Reporter and this will help improve co-ordination and maintain a clear focus on the child's needs and outcomes.

26. Annex A provides a project plan outline that may assist agencies with their preparations.

27. In order to ensure that for every child appearing at a Hearing there is a plan in place by December 2007, it is likely that implementation will need to be well underway by the autumn to ensure that this will be achieved. Suggested milestones are included in Annex A.

28. At present the task of writing reports for the Reporter and for Children's Hearings falls primarily to social workers, in consultation with other professionals, the child and the family. In some areas, children's plans or reports are multi-agency. This is not yet the norm across Scotland.

29. At this stage of the *Getting it right for every child* programme, the Scottish Executive is not requiring agencies to develop every plan in a multi-agency way. However, this will be required following implementation of the Children's Services (Scotland) Bill, currently out for consultation. Agencies will need to determine the extent to which this phase of implementation provides a useful opportunity to begin to develop multi-disciplinary ways of working to meet the needs of children in a unified way. This will depend on the extent of the change required at a local level. Local pilots for multi-disciplinary plans in a particular locality may be a useful way of assessing the scale of the task for all agencies.

30. In the future all children will be subject to only one plan. The child's or young person's plan has been designed to meet a wide range of needs. It has the capacity to meet the requirements of all statutory inter-agency requirements - eg care plans, co-ordinated support plans. Agencies should ensure that children are subjected to the minimum amount of planning. Until new legislation comes into effect, there may be more than one report provided to the Reporter and Children's Hearing in relation to the child – but this should be discouraged.

31. Local areas can implement the child's or young person's plan as soon as they are ready to do so. Attached is an implementation check list at Annex B to help areas assess their readiness to implement.

Phase 4: Review, development and improvement (January 2008 onwards)

32. By the first week in January 2008, local areas should submit a report on progress using the reporting template attached at Annex C. We require the following information.

- a) Number of individual children or young people who have appeared at a Hearing for a decision which disposes of the case;
- b) Number and percentage of the cases identified in a) above where the Children's Hearing had a plan in line with *Getting it right for every child*;

In order to help us continue to improve it would also be helpful to have information on

- c) An outline of the experience of local areas in implementing the child's or young person's plan;
- d) What changes might be needed to the Plan/Hearings Report;
- e) Any future support needs.

33. In January/ February 2008, the Scottish Executive will consider, in the light of the experience so far, what further work needs to be done to take forward the implementation of *Getting it right for every child*.

Local inter-agency arrangements

34. *Getting it right for every child* will impact on the work of all agencies. A number of areas in Scotland already have well-formed inter-agency structures for taking forward projects such as this. Other areas have developed *Getting it right for every child* Strategy Groups. Areas will need an inter-agency group/mechanism that can manage/steer the project and be accountable for its implementation.

35. As local authorities are currently required to both provide reports for the Hearing and to plan to meet the needs of all children in their area, local authority Chief Executives are ideally placed to take a lead in making sure that suitable arrangements are in place to take forward this work.

36. The Scottish Executive is seeking the name of a nominated person with whom we can link. Agencies are invited to nominate a practitioner advisor who can act as a local reference point for advice. Annex D.

Annex A: Project Plan Outline

The text provides guidance about how an implementation framework might be populated. Those areas with asterisks suggest the text that might be used.

Background and Context

This section should set the project within the wider local area implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child and within other strategic objectives.

Project Description

- * To ensure every child who appears at a Hearing has in place a child's or young person's plan by December 2007.
- * To ensure that every staff member who has a responsibility for completion of the child's or young person's plan understands what is required of them and is sufficiently skilled to undertake the task.
- * To ensure progress on implementation is monitored and returns are submitted to the Scottish Executive.

Scope and Scale

This section should detail the size of the task identifying the number of social work and other staff (eg health and education). Current numbers of IAR's, SBR's requested by the Reporter may also indicate the scale of the task as well as the percentage of reports which are written by social workers and other professionals. Any other demographic information which will help to quantify the task might also be included.

Governance and management arrangements for the implementation

This section should include:

The arrangements for managing and steering the project including:

- * The inter agency group which will steer the project
- * The name of person with overall responsibility for implementation
- * The name of the link person (with responsibility for ensuring returns are made to the Scottish Executive) and overall responsible person if this is different
- * The name of the individual who will act as a Practitioner Advisor

Resources

This section should include:

- * Staff (planning, co-ordination, managing)
- * Practice change implications for practitioners
- * Material resources - training, technology, information materials

Risks and how they will be Managed

Risks to be addressed should include:

Resources
 Skills and knowledge
 Time
 Quality
 Senior management support
 Stakeholder buy in(esp. parents and children)

Likelihood:

* high/ medium/ low

Impact:

This section should record how the achievement of the project will be affected by the risk

Action:

This section should record the action which will be taken to reduce the risk or impact of each of the risks identified.

Stakeholder Analysis

Who:

* Strategic Manager and Planners

What are their Needs:

* Information and Awareness

How Many:

* x number

By When:

* xx xx xx date

* Operational Managers / Social Workers, Teachers, Health Visitors, Midwives

* Confidence and Competence to develop child's or young person's plan

* x number

* June 2007

* Children's Reporters / Children's Panel Members

* Confidence and Competence to respond to child's or young person's plan

* x number

* June 2007

* Children / Young People / Parents / Carers

* Clear and Confident on how to participate in their own Plan

* Estimated x number

* June 2007

Progress Monitoring and Reporting

Progress monitoring arrangements:

- * *Written Progress reports to steering/management group.*
- * *Monitoring return to Scottish Executive*

Quality arrangements:

This section should contain Inter-agency arrangements for reviewing whether plans are in place, quality of the plans and impact on practice.

Communication Strategy

This section should contain communication arrangements for all the stakeholder groups identified above (paper, electronic, face to face, committee reports etc.)

MILESTONES	2007												2008		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Ma
Awareness raising	█														
Identify changes that need to be made to existing systems and procedures			█												
Implement necessary systems and procedure changes to meet targets			█												
Any changes complete									▲						
Begin implementation as staff are trained (see readiness checklist)		█													
Measuring progress and identifying what else needs to be done					█										
Local management report on progress										▲					
Every child appearing at a hearing target achieved															▲
Data collection completed															▲
Prepare report to the Scottish Executive												█			
Report submitted															▲

Delivery Mechanisms

This section should contain information about how local areas describe the activities they will carry out to achieve the objectives eg:

- * *Web based training resources made available to all staff*
- * *Inter-agency workshops using case studies*
- * *A phased approach to modifying existing assessment and reporting templates*

Annex B: Implementation Readiness Checklist

Question	Yes	No	Date to be completed
Strategic managers, relevant staff and planners across education, social work, health, the police and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration are aware of the Scottish Executive expectation that every child appearing at a Children's Hearing will have a plan in place in line with <i>Getting it right for every child</i> by December 2007			
Front Line managers have received basic awareness raising information to allow them to manage front line staff in preparing plans or responding to requests for information			
Front line staff have a copy of the child's or young person's plan guidance			
Front line staff are able to prepare child's or young person's plans			
Existing assessment and reporting templates and processes have been modified as agreed to incorporate child and young person's plan			
Reporters and practitioners have a shared understanding about information to go to Hearings			
Panel members have received training on the Plan*			

* The Scottish Executive will be developing training for panel members and will advise areas of timescales for training shortly.

Annex C: Progress Report on Implementation

To be returned by 7 January 2008 to:

Getting it Right for Every Child Team
Area 2BS
Scottish Executive
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Email: gettingitrightforeverychild@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices>

By 7 January 2008, local areas should provide the following information:

- a) Number of individual children or young people who have appeared at a Hearing for a decision which disposes of the case;
- b) Number and percentage of the cases identified in a) above where the Children's Hearing had a plan in line with *Getting it right for every child*;

In order to help us continue to improve it would be helpful to have information on

- c) An outline of the experience of local areas in implementing the child's or young person's plan;
- d) What changes might be needed to the Plan/Hearings Report.
- e) Any future support needs .

Annex D: Link person and practitioner advisor

To be returned by 28 February 2007 to:

Getting it Right for Every Child Team
Area 2BS
Scottish Executive
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Email: gettingitrightforeverychild@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices>

a) The name of a Link Person (senior level) in each local authority area who will keep in touch with the Scottish Executive and link between local agencies to ensure a report will be returned to the Scottish Executive at the end of the year.

- To maintain links with the Scottish Executive (*Getting it right for every child* team) for advice and support on project implementation;
- To liaise with local agencies to identify training and development requirements;
- To report progress to local agencies and the Scottish Executive;
- To help agencies identify the arrangements that need to be put in place to secure implementation;
- To advise the Scottish Executive on next steps on implementing *Getting it right for every child* in the light of local experience.

b) The name of an individual who will act as a practitioner advisor as part of the national network of practitioner advisors

- To maintain links with the Scottish Executive (*Getting it right for every child* team) for advice and support on practice matters relating to the child's or young person's plan;
- To support and advise local practitioners and to be part of a national network of advisors who will assist each other and help develop practice.

Further information on implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child*, can be obtained by contacting CHRteam@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



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