



getting it right
for every child
Implementation Plan



one
scotland
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



safer
scotland
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

getting it right
for every child

Implementation Plan

© Crown copyright 2006

ISBN: 0-7559-5102-6

Scottish Executive
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for the Scottish Executive by Astron B46965 06/06

Published by the Scottish Executive, June, 2006

Further copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS

The text pages of this document are printed on recycled paper and are 100% recyclable.

Introduction

Scottish Ministers issued for consultation 23 proposals for the reform of children's services and invited all those with an interest to let us know what they thought. Over 600 individuals and agencies did and we welcome the high levels of support expressed in those responses. Scottish Ministers are committed to ensuring every child in Scotland gets the help they need when they need it. We are committed to reducing the bureaucracy that gets in the way of ensuring children are protected. Children must have their needs met and, where necessary, action must be taken to protect others from children's behaviour.

We plan a three-pronged approach:

- **Practice change:** In consultation with parents, children and professionals we will develop the tools professionals need in order to do their jobs better – a single assessment record and plan, practice guidance and skills development. We will provide information for parents and practitioners. We will support a number of 'pathfinder' projects that will work differently with families and children, placing their needs at the centre.
- **Legislation:** We will place new duties on agencies to co-operate with each other and share information. We also plan to place a new duty on professionals to be alert to the needs of children and take action to meet them.
- **Removing barriers:** We will find out what gets in the way of joined-up working and what prevents more timely and appropriate responses. We will undertake change where this is necessary – structural, financial, legislative, cultural. The pathfinder projects will provide an opportunity to identify these barriers and identify those which require changes from the centre and those which can be tackled locally.

The implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child* is an ambitious programme and a significant challenge for all those who work with children. It requires a fundamental shift in how children are helped and supported. This will take time. Scottish Ministers will develop and disseminate further information on what these changes will mean in practice.



What the Scottish Executive will do

Practice changes

Many of the proposed improvements can be taken forward under existing legislation through practice change and an increased focus on the child. The Scottish Executive will support this change in a number of ways.

- The Scottish Executive has a team of experts developing national practice tools, training materials and guidance. These are being developed in conjunction with pathfinder projects using a 'bottom-up approach' with children, families and professionals involved in their development.
- A 'prototype' of an IT solution to facilitate information sharing will be available from April 2007 for national roll out and testing with a wider group of children. We also intend to have developed the system specifications necessary to enable agencies' operating systems to be adapted to support the single assessment, record and plan.
- In Highland we are working with agencies to apply the Getting it Right approach in Inverness with a start date of September. We will take this forward incrementally, learning as we go and identifying the barriers to change at local and national level. All the learning from this and other pilots will be written up to assist in national roll out. Although the Scottish Executive is providing project management funding for the pilots, the pathfinder projects are being taken forward on a resource neutral basis.
- A pathfinder on responses to children in domestic abuse incidents is being developed to explore and support agencies in moving to the *Getting it Right* approach in four geographical areas.
- We are working with ACPOS, ADSW and SCRA to explore how, across Scotland, referrals to the reporter can be more focused on children who have to go to a hearing. We are also working with the police and social work to focus referrals only on those who might require compulsion following an assessment, rather than automatic referral as has been the case in some circumstances.
- A team of secondees to the Scottish Executive will develop a practice toolkit which will cover a range of approaches to tackling needs and concerns. The team will also develop an information pack to assist parents in dealing with their children where offending behaviour is an issue.
- We will write the guidance on the use of these tools in consultation with victims, members of the public and communities to ensure the measures command public confidence.



Supporting staff

- We will provide guidance for professionals and panel members on their new role, the assessment record and plan, legislation and new ways of working. We will also provide information on how the reform programme is progressing – what works and what does not.
- We will assist all areas and agencies across Scotland to become ‘change ready’ by disseminating the learning from the pathfinder areas.

National implementation and oversight

- We are restructuring the mechanisms for engaging with stakeholders across all children’s services, through the creation of a Children’s Services Steering Group. The membership of this group will include key stakeholders from children’s services, health, the voluntary sector and police. This group will have a strategic overview of implementing reforms in children’s services including child protection, domestic abuse and youth justice.
- Working groups, with membership from all sectors, will consider the detail of legislation and implementation plans. This will include work to consider the specific changes proposed to the Children’s Hearing system.
- The Scottish Executive will work with community groups, and families and children to ensure that their voices are heard in this process. We wish to build on existing community networks and organisations and are considering appointing a young person to work with the Scottish Executive team. We are developing other ways of reaching these groups such as websites and e-zines.

Legislation

- We are committed to legislate on a duty to share information to protect children at risk.
- The detailed provisions of the draft Bill to implement *Getting it Right for Every Child* will be presented for consultation towards the end of the year. All children’s services will be covered by its provisions, as well as proposed changes to the Children’s Hearing system. If introduced in June 2007, the Bill should be fully implemented by 2010 with the supporting legislation and guidance in place and training in the new systems undertaken. This Bill will legislate in the following key areas. To:
 - place a duty on agencies to be alert to the needs of children and to act to improve a child’s situation;

- place a duty on agencies to co-operate with each other in meeting the needs of children and to establish local co-ordination and monitoring mechanisms;
- require agencies involved to agree an action plan and keep it under review where a child's needs are complex or serious and multi-agency input or compulsory measures are likely to be needed;
- require referral to the Children's Hearings system to meet two tests: significant needs and a need for compulsion. One of the indicators of significant need will be a pattern of behaviour which gives rise to concern.

An outline timetable for the next few years is attached at the end of this document.



What *Getting it Right for Every Child* will mean for you if you are a child

What services will do for you

- When you are having problems you should be able to find out easily what help you can get and how to get it.
- You should be able to say what you feel and know that your views are important. You should feel sure that people will do all they can to help you.
- You should know that if you keep doing something that puts you at serious risk, now or in later life, action will be taken. For example, if you keep offending or taking drugs.
- You should be able to find out easily what help you can get.

Planning for help and making sure you get it

- When you are given help you should not have to keep going to meetings or to keep having to tell different people what you've already said.
- If action has to be taken, you should have a written plan showing what everyone hopes to do to help you and what you will do to help yourself. You should know when this plan will be reviewed.
- There will be a single record of information about you which those who work with you will see. Wherever possible, who sees what information will be agreed with you.
- You should have only one action plan setting out all the help you need and who is giving you that help.
- If someone has said they will do something in your plan they will have to do it. You will also be expected to do what you have agreed to. Any changes to your plan will have to be agreed.

If you need to go to a Children's Hearing

- You will go to the Children's Hearings system if people feel you need a lot of help and they believe that action has to be taken to make sure you get it. The Hearing will talk with you about the plan and decide what has to happen.
- You should know who to speak to about any aspect of your plan.
- The Children's Reporter will decide if a Children's Hearing is held. A Hearing will be held if you have significant needs and you need to be made to do something to help you.
- If the Panel members on the Hearing feel that you need help right away, they should be able to decide that you get that help. This might happen even if all the papers or plans are not ready for you to discuss. If that is the case they will have to look again at the decision as quickly as they can.
- If you keep doing things that create worries about you, you will have to meet with people, possibly the Hearing, every time this happens. These people may decide on more serious action to help you help yourself.
- Hearings should be held at a time that suits you and your family. Where possible this should mean you are not stopped from going to school.
- If you have to go back to the Children's Hearing, at least one of the panel members should be there from your last meeting.

How we will know if we are getting it right

We will know if we are getting it right for every child if:

For Children, families and communities

- Children get the help they need it when they need it. Help is proportionate, timely and appropriate.
- Action improves each child's situation and reduces risk.
- The approach supports the achievement of good outcomes for all children, demonstrated through Children's Plan targets.
- Children and families experience a co-ordinated and unified approach to having their needs met.
- Children and families say they know about the services and support available to them, have confidence in using them; believe their needs are being addressed and their views heard.
- Communities are engaged in activities that support children.
- Communities are more confident about the responsibilities of services.
- Communities are more confident about how their concerns are being dealt with.

For Staff

- Staff at all levels have more time to spend on activities that will improve outcomes for children, and less in duplication and overlap, including fewer reports, meetings and discrete records.
- Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child, the response pathways are clear, and they can be confident of the response of others in the child's network.
- Staff are supported by their agency and other professionals and have the skills, knowledge and tools to improve children's lives.

For the Agency

- There are effective policies, processes, structures and tools for the delivery of good outcomes. These are integrated into practice at all levels and are sustainable beyond the efforts of individuals.
- Agencies individually and collectively know how well they are doing, can account for their agencies performance and there are mechanisms in place to resolve difficulties, improve performance.



What it will cost

The *Getting it Right for Every Child* proposals envisage significant reductions in bureaucracy, a freeing up of front-line staff to get on and help children, and greater authority to take action. The application of a single system of assessment, access to one record and a single plan for each child will lead to a better use of resources. The number of cases where information is provided to the reporter, with all the accompanying paper work, should reduce significantly. Professionals should have to attend only one planning or review meeting for a child where all the child's needs will be addressed. This may require more preparation and will be more comprehensive but such meetings should be fewer in number.

The use of Action Plans will help agencies identify what programmes or resources need to be available and should ensure more effective planning and funding processes at a local level. Agencies will need to ensure resources and activities are not duplicated.

The Scottish Executive will invest in the:

- development of the single assessment, record and plan
- national tools for use by staff
- training and awareness materials
- evaluation of the pathfinder projects and the programme
- communication strategy to ensure that all those working with children are kept informed.

Getting it Right for Every Child is about doing things differently, rather than doing more of the same. We expect agencies to invest in practice changes and realign their resources to meeting need. Through the pathfinder projects we will understand better what sort of resources are needed at what points in a child's life and how the shape of services needs to change in order to ensure resources follow need. This information will be made available to all areas.

The Children's Hearing system

The *Getting it Right for Every Child* proposals emerged from the review of the Children's Hearing system. Scottish Ministers remain committed to the principles of the system and wish to clarify and re-enforce its role in helping Scotland's most vulnerable children where compulsory measures of supervision are required. *Getting it Right for Every Child* sets out how children's services can be reformed to improve the lives of all children. When some children have to enter the formal compulsory system, the focus must remain on improving outcomes for them, building on whatever multi-agency activity and planning has been undertaken in advance. Many of the proposed changes to the Children's Hearing system will be set out in detail in the draft Bill.

The dedication and commitment of the volunteers over the past 35 years have been a lynchpin of the system. The next few years will see a period of change as services adapt both within the existing law and under new legislation. Appointed volunteers, such as panel members, will have to adapt to the new single assessment, record and plan and to the clarified roles for both reporters and Children's Hearings. Consultation on the legislation will provide an opportunity to explore more thoroughly the implications for volunteers working in the system. We intend that volunteers in the Children's Hearings system are better supported and we will support them through this transition period.

Children's services

The responses from children and those working with them across all sectors to the *Getting it Right for Every Child* proposals show that there is a high level of support for the principles of what Scottish Ministers are seeking to achieve.

In some cases the proposed change reflects the developments in parts of Scotland towards an integrated approach to meeting children's needs. But we need to make sure that all children in all parts of the country receive the services they need when they need it. This is not the case at the moment. Many practitioners wish to spend more time working with children and families and less time on paperwork. These proposals will give them that space. Implementation of these proposals also give practitioners greater authority and greater accountability for their actions.

The proposals require everyone working with or involved with children to place the child at the centre of activity, to break down barriers and processes and to deliver help to the child. Action must be appropriate, proportionate and timely and must improve the outcomes for the child. This will be challenging. It will require professionals to think about the child as a whole, and not just in relation to their immediate professional concern. We recognise that there may be anxieties over capacity, the need for training, how accountability is ensured, and how to ensure children are not placed at risk. The Scottish Executive will work with children, families, agencies and communities to address these issues. There are many benefits to be gained. There will be reduced bureaucracy with more time to help children. Children and families will experience more immediate help and better outcomes. There will be greater clarity over who is doing what, and what is expected of agencies, parents and children. Scottish Ministers are clear that change is essential if we are all to make a difference to children's lives.



	2006-2007				2007-2008				2008-2009			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Legislation		Bill Preparation		Consult on draft Bill				Bill in Parliament				Commencement of Bill and Start of implementation
Pathfinders		Develop pathfinder		Highland pathfinder starts		Further pathfinders		Ongoing Pathfinders				
Evaluation				Baseline information for pathfinder evaluation								
				Evaluation and feedback (locally and nationally)								
Communication				Ongoing communication about <i>Getting it Right</i> : key messages; experience of pathfinders; training and awareness materials								
				Preparation for and information on national roll out								
				Specific engagement with stakeholders: Children's Services Steering Group; <i>Getting it Right for Every Child</i> legislation reference and implementation groups; forums with children, families and communities								
Preparation for change		Development and refinement of single assessment, record and plan		Revision of guidance materials		Disseminate materials nationally to support single assessment, record and plan		Begin systematic national roll out				
				Develop improved access to information for children, families, staff								
				Development of prototype electronic support				Roll out of system specifications to prepare for single assessment, record and plan				
				Removal of barriers; governance, funding, structures								
Awareness and training				Developments and dissemination of materials to raise awareness and understanding of <i>Getting it Right for Every Child</i>								
				Development of training programmes and formal training programmes								

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

© Crown copyright 2006

This document is also available on the Scottish Executive website:
www.scotland.gov.uk

Astron B46965 06/06

Further copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS

Telephone orders and enquiries
0131 622 8283 or 0131 622 8258

Fax orders
0131 557 8149

Email orders
business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

