

<i>item:</i>	4
<i>report:</i>	CYP43/09

## **UPDATE – GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD** **by Bill Alexander**

### **Summary**

This report provides an update on implementation of *Getting it right for every child* in Highland, including progress with evaluation.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 It is a priority within the Highland Single Outcome Agreement and the Highland Council Programme, to achieve full implementation of *Getting it right for every child*.
- 1.2 The implementation programme was completed in April of this year. Since then, management responsibilities have been passed to Area Service Manager Groups, and the focus has shifted to consolidation of the new processes.
- 1.3 There is still though, some ongoing developmental activity. Work also continues with regard to the achievement of electronic information sharing via the eCare Framework.
- 1.4 Dedicated support from the GIRFEC Change Team is reducing over this financial year. It is likely that only the Project Manager will be remain in place from January until March. As well as the completion of elements of the Project Plan within Highland, this will enable us to continue to support the national programme.
- 1.5 In the meantime, the local evaluation of the impact of the new processes will continue, and a major national milestone is about to be reached with the publication of the national evaluation by the University of Edinburgh – which largely focuses on implementation in Highland.

### **2. Consolidation of the new processes**

- 2.1 Area Service Manger Groups (SMGs) bring together the local managers from Education, Culture & Sport, Social Work, the Community Health Partnership and Divisional Command, along with representatives from the Children's Reporters Administration.
- 2.2 Supported by the Area Integrated Services Co-ordinator, the SMGs are ensuring close operational management of all aspects of *GIRFEC*,

through the use of local Deliverables Plans. Each SMG is also now represented at the Children's Chief Officers Group, where progress on the 'deliverables' is reported.

- 2.3 These reports indicate that *GIRFEC* is largely embedded in practice, and that new systems of assessment, planning and intervention are increasingly regarded as the norm. As part of this, the need for dedicated staff training is reducing – albeit there will require to be an ongoing maintenance programme of training as part of the established integrated children's services programme.
- 2.4 Also, there is evidence of continued enhancement in key areas. In particular, Child's Plans, continue to improve, showing genuine multi-agency and service-user involvement, becoming more outcome focussed, and with clearer actions.
- 2.5 There are though some areas where further progress requires to be made, and also some areas where initial progress is not sustained. In particular, it is clear that there is still insufficient number of multi-agency plans in Health and Education, aimed at achieving early intervention. Thus, while early intervention resources are being used, and it is taking place, it is not being documented – and this clearly brings risks. There is a major focus on addressing this.
- 2.6 Within Social Work, further work is also being undertaken on risk assessment, and on the quality of recording in Child's Plans.

### **3. Continuing developmental activity**

- 3.1 While we published guidance on the *GIRFEC* practice model some time ago, we have been working to review this in a format similar and complementary to the child protection guidance. This has recently been considered by Chief Officers, and it remains an intention to publish it as soon as possible. Clearly though, this will become a significant national document, and it is important to first make sure of its relevance and accuracy.
- 3.2 In the meantime, the separate guidance for education staff has been updated, and should be re-issued before Christmas.
- 3.3 There has also been progress within Health with regard to:
  - A template for community paediatricians to contribute to the Child's Plan.
  - Further Care Pathways, for Epilepsy, Visual Impairment, Learning Disability and Cystic Fibrosis.
  - Health Practitioner Guidance.
  - Processes of referral to the new integrated Child & Adolescent mental Health Service.

- 3.4 While only very limited progress has been made on GIRFEC tools for use in adult services, guidance has been prepared on a 'transitions bridge' between the Child's Plan and Personal Plan for adults, which will be trialled as part of transitions management processes.

#### **4. Electronic information sharing**

- 4.1 Work continues to enable the Social Work Management Information System to publish and view the Child's Plan in the multi-agency store. We are presently re-scoping this activity, to identify whether it is possible to develop a model that is useable in other authorities.
- 4.2 Work also continues to enable Schools to view the Child's Plan in the multi-agency store, and this will involve the first information sharing through the eCare Framework in Highland. Indeed, it may involve the first use of the multi-agency store by children's services in any authority.
- 4.3 The publishing of the plan to the store by schools is scheduled for later in 2010.
- 4.4 While NHS Highland has settled on the use of a management information system, there is much work to be done to put that into place, and also to develop the information sharing capacity.
- 4.5 Police information sharing is also scheduled as a longer term development.
- 4.6 Accordingly, it is planned that an interim solution will be put in place for the main A&E Units, the Raigmore Children's Ward, and the Northern Constabulary Public Protection Units, to access the Social Work Information System direct. This will allow them to identify:
- Whether a child is known to Social Work, and the contact details for the Lead Professional or Named Person.
  - Whether the child is on the Child Protection Register, or there have been recent enquiries to the Register.
  - Whether the child is looked after.
- 4.7 We are also working with the Scottish Government on the associated iAct programme. It is envisaged that this will allow the secure transmission of information via the internet. In particular, this will be useful in Highland for the secure communication of child concern forms.

## **5. Local Evaluation**

- 5.1 The local evaluation of the implementation of GIRFEC now has a number of inter-related elements. These involve members of the GIRFEC Team, operational managers, Quality Assurance & Reviewing staff and the Highland Children's Forum.
- 5.2 This local evaluation should provide both a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the impact of new processes. The major elements involve:
- An audit of Child Concern Forms by Northern Constabulary and SCRA, which confirmed that appropriate referrals were still being made to the Reporter.
  - An ongoing audit of Child Concern Forms, to ensure staff are following procedure, and that necessary action is being taken.
  - An ongoing audit of Child's Plans, to ensure they are fit for Children's Hearings.
  - An ongoing audit of Child's Plans, to evaluate risk assessment and the engagement of children and families.
  - The development of 'fit for purpose' criteria for Child's Plans.
  - An analysis of the experience of children and families across the range of interventions, by the Highland Children's Forum.
  - Practitioner Forums, to reflect on practice, at different levels across the authority.
- 5.3 It is intended to bring further reports on these elements to the Joint Committee.

## **6. National Evaluation**

- 6.1 It was envisaged that the national evaluation report by the University of Edinburgh would be published in advance of the meeting of the Joint Committee. This does not now appear likely, but publication remains imminent.
- 6.2 The evaluation was led by Dr MacNeil and Dr Stradling, who published the earlier research for the Joint Committee on developments in integrated services in Highland. It involved:
- Interviews and focus groups with strategic and operational managers and frontline staff.
  - Follow-up surveys across a larger staff base.
  - Observations of a sample of meetings where children's needs were assessed and plans developed.
  - Observations of a sample of training sessions for managers, Lead Professionals and Named Persons.
  - Interviews and case study analysis of a sample of children, young people and families.

- Analysis of samples of completed Records and Plans for children and young people with a diversity of needs and concerns.
- 6.3 The evaluation has been undertaken at a very early stage, following implementation. However, all the evidence that we have from staff is that, at a high level, the GIRFEC approach is making a positive difference for children and families, and our expectation would be that the evaluation confirms this view.

### **Recommendation**

The Joint Committee is asked to consider and comment on the issues raised in this report.

**Bill Alexander**  
Head of Children's Services