



## December 2008

### Making the Connections

Ministers remain committed to the *Getting it right for every child* approach. Adam Ingram, the Minister for Children and Early Years describes it as 'the golden thread' through all policy, strategy and delivery for children and young people. As we move into a new year, the Scottish Government will continue to support, promote and enable culture, systems and practice change across children's services and policy with the production of tools, materials, networks and on-line resources.

Recent debates in the Scottish Parliament - 4 September on *Getting it right for every child* and 20 November on Looked after Children - have reinforced cross-party agreement to strengthen policies that support all children, including the most vulnerable. The recent announcements on Baby P and the Aberdeen inspection have re-enforced the work being undertaken to test robustly the *Getting it right for every child* approach where the protection of children is an issue. This is part of ongoing work in the *Getting it right for every child* programme to strengthen the links across Scottish Government policy areas, in particular early intervention, early years - see item in this newsletter - better health better care, Curriculum for Excellence, More Choices More Chances.

Implementation of *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) continues to have an impact across children's services with positive progress made in Pathfinder areas - see articles in this newsletter - and the agreement with a new Learning Partner to test out specific components in different environments. Progress is being made on the development of a data sharing framework over the next two years to support the approach. This work involves not only the technical development of the eCare framework to support detailed controls over information being shared but also detailed discussions on what practitioners require to do to share concerns. This work is taking place in consultation with 14 Data Sharing Partnerships throughout Scotland established to implement data sharing between agencies at a local level.

Embedding the *Getting it right* approach into local practice means critically examining procedures and practices across all agencies working with children and scrutinising whether they fit with the principles, values and core components as set out in the national guide. GIRFEC is not just about establishing multi-agency groups. It is about thoroughly reviewing and streamlining processes, ensuring that all activities place the child at the centre to make sure that children's views are sought and considered at all stages. And to make sure that all practitioners share a common understanding and language when working with children. Work across related policy activity is giving expression to the approach and philosophy.

Much good work is being undertaken across Scotland under the banner of integrated working. *Getting it right* is more than that. We look forward in 2009 to working with you, learning more about what you are doing and sharing a deeper understanding of what GIRFEC means in practice.

Meantime I hope you find this newsletter of interest and may I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

## Spotlight on the Early Years

The [early years framework](#) was jointly published by the Scottish Government and COSLA on 10 December. The *Getting it right for every child* approach and philosophy is embedded within the framework and threads through the ten elements of transformational change referred to in the framework.

It is during our very earliest years and even pre-birth that a large part of the pattern for our future adult life is set. The early years are therefore a key opportunity to shape a positive future for Scotland. This framework will maximise the opportunities for all our children to get the best start in life, no matter what their background or circumstances. As set out in the joint policy statement published on 18 March this year, the framework is built on the principles of early intervention - a shift from intervening only when a crisis happens to prevention and early intervention.

The document is published in two parts. The first part sets out the case for action in the early years, along with our vision for giving children the best start in life; ten elements of transformational change; priorities for action; how we will move forward with this in the context of the National Performance Framework and Single Outcome Agreements; and a section on realignment of resources.

This framework has been developed with the input of a large number of stakeholders from a variety of sectors and this is reflected in the second part of the document.

## Supporting a Common Approach

A national Guide has been published to support the implementation of *Getting it right for every child*. It provides an overview of the approach and developments so far, information on emerging thinking and builds from the work of pathfinders and existing good practice. The Guide reinforces the message that *Getting it right for every child* threads through existing policy, strategy and delivery, and explains the philosophy behind the approach. It provides the practice model and tools that can be used locally to complement practitioners' own materials and processes to support a common approach across Scotland.

Publication of the Guide provides direction on the way forward for *Getting it right for every child* and marks a significant shift from the development phase to the implementation of *Getting it right for every child*. The Guide is endorsed by Ministers and COSLA and has been produced in sections to make it as easy as possible to incorporate new thinking and practice as it develops. [The Guide to \*Getting it right for every child\* can be downloaded from the internet](#) or if you would like to produce your own copies, [please request a CD](#). The CD also contains stand alone versions of the GIRFEC diagrams and models from the Guide. Printed versions can also be made available for events, workshops and seminars [upon request](#).

Action is not limited to external dissemination of the Guide. Scottish Government policy makers are being invited to participate in a series of internal seminars and workshops over the next few months to reinforce cross policy connections. The aim is to continue raising awareness of the approach and build understanding to support implementation of GIRFEC in policy across the Scottish Government as well as in practical work with children, young people and families.

## National Oversight

A national Strategic Group is supporting the national implementation of *Getting it right for every child*. The Group has been established to provide oversight and direction. The Group represents a wide range of policy and practice interests to ensure the *Getting it right* approach is appropriately connected and represented in children's policy, strategy and delivery. Representatives covering the interests of ADSW, ADES, ACPOS, the third sector, health and policy are participating. Updates on the work of the Group will be made available in the next newsletter.

## New *Getting it right* Learning Partner

West Lothian recently became the second *Getting it right for every child* learning partner to be confirmed. West Lothian will work closely with Scottish Government teams to develop, consult on and test the components of chronology that single agencies need to collect to inform their action. This will enable the creation of a relevant and proportionate, multi-agency summary record in the

child's virtual shared record. They will also consider how that information is structured, recorded and shared, and what is needed to enable it to be securely shared and restructured for multi-agency use.

This work will be fully consulted on through a forum of practitioners, the Children's Information Sharing Group (eCHiSG.). This group of practitioners and staff from all involved agencies and services will quality assure the proposals as they are developed. Learning outcomes will be shared widely through *Getting it right* communication channels to ensure a process and practice that works for all Scotland's children's services, and their practice staff. We look forward to working with our new partner on this vital component of *Getting it right*.

## Learning Community - Exciting Developments

A significantly more robust technical platform for hosting the Learning Community's site is currently under review. We are at an advanced stage of negotiation with partners and hope to reach an agreement very shortly. The technical platform will include an enhanced, more advanced version of Microsoft SharePoint. This alternative solution will be considerably more flexible and adaptable to the needs of the Learning Community as it evolves over time. Once technical aspects have been accounted for, a swift and simple migration can take place early in the New Year. Although this means a further short term delay, the benefits in the long term will be considerable.

We realise the preparatory work has taken longer than anticipated and would ask all those who have expressed an interest in participating in the [Learning Community](#) to bear with us. We are confident that the preparation we are completing will provide a solid, robust and flexible foundation on which to build. Further information is being sent to Learning Community champions.

## Evaluating Progress

During the first phase of evaluation activity the main focus has been on the implementation of changes in children's services within the *Getting it right for every child* pathfinder areas. The initial findings have already been disseminated through the Roadshows held across Scotland in the spring and summer of this year. A fuller report summarising these findings will be made available in 2009.

The report will focus on the extent to which changes in systems, practices and professional cultures have been implemented as intended and highlight where further development work is still needed and where various constraints and other structural factors have delayed or otherwise impacted negatively on the implementation process.

To summarise the key findings in the report to date, while important improvements in practice have already been implemented, there are further areas for development. These include more work to:

- integrate the third sector and adult services into the strategic management and planning process;

- bring about a significant shift from output-focused to outcome-focused thinking and practice;
- address the balance between prevention and crisis intervention;
- address the residual referrals culture in some areas of the universal services;
- demonstrate the benefits to children and families of the changes that have been introduced.

Implementation of GIRFEC is complex and multi-layered. Developments in systems, practices and professional cultures need to be initiated simultaneously, even though they may change at different rates. This is because they interact with and reinforce each other.

The focus of the evaluation is now shifting increasingly towards the analysis of outcomes for children and families and towards mapping the outcomes of *Getting it right* onto the wider landscape created by the National Performance Framework, the Concordat, the post-Crerar Review of Scrutiny and various initiatives which have implications for children's services, such as Curriculum For Excellence.

## Learning in Highland

The implementation of *Getting it right for every child* in the Highland pathfinder area is bedding down in many areas following extensive training, the production of guidance and awareness raising. The roll-out is taking place across geographic areas as part of a managed process to orientate children's services around the GIRFEC approach. As part of the pathfinder experience, lessons learned by Highland are being shared via the [Learning Overview section](#) of [Highland's website](#). The following provides a summary:

Increasing equality for service users:

- Families and services feel involved, informed, included and understood though using my world triangle as an assessment
- For many children where child protection activity has taken place, child's plan meetings have been held to discuss a range of issues. For many of these children, registration has not been deemed to be necessary but multi agency plans have been drawn up

More focused and inclusive professional activity:

- Now services share a common language and approach, it is easier to agree what a child's plan is and what services can be provided
- Having a lead professional as point of parental contact decreases the stress for parents in multi-agency working (National Autistic Society)

More clarity about targeted services are needed:

- Working together helps practitioners cut down inappropriate requests for services and keeps an open channel for sharing risks and concerns

More consistency in decision making:

- *Getting it right* has helped practitioners feel confident about sharing info with other services
- *Getting it right* practice tools help Health Visitors to understand the needs of children and families and gives them confidence in assessing need and accessing services

## Domestic Abuse Pathfinders - Next Steps

The *Getting it right for every child* domestic abuse pathfinders in Falkirk, Dumfries and Galloway, Clydebank and Edinburgh are faced with two principle challenges through 2009 - 2010. Firstly, how to ensure that the lessons learned, new procedures and protocols that they have developed are embedded and rolled out beyond the pilot areas. Secondly, how the individual work streams are brought together to ensure the maximum benefit for the child, recognising that meeting the needs of the parents/carers is a critical element in meeting the needs of the child.

Work on the national Domestic Abuse delivery plan continues to progress with the pathfinders taking on a specific role to test and confirm proposal's recommended in the plan.

Work is now underway to take the lessons learned from the initial and proper focus on the response to domestic abuse for children and young people, to how these lessons can be effectively applied to all aspects of children's services. The pathfinder areas are continuing to work in partnership with service users and providers on the development of the universal GIRFEC model in each of the areas, ensuring that needs and risks are addressed in an integrated holistic way.

The Minister for Children and Early Years, Adam Ingram visited the Falkirk pathfinder this month to learn more about the distinctive approach the pathfinders are taking and the specific challenges and issues they are facing in implementing GIRFEC.

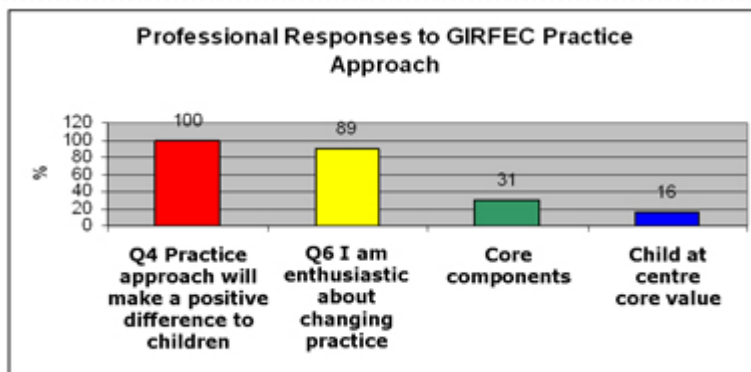
Information from the [Clydebank Domestic Abuse pathfinder can now be accessed via their website](#).

## Learning in Lanarkshire

The first six months of Learning Partner status has been a hectic time for the newly appointed resource team in Lanarkshire. With help from Educational Psychology an initial engagement programme was designed to engage with staff and measure levels of awareness and enthusiasm.

The results have been encouraging and a huge credit to those who have championed *Getting it right for every child* up till now. When asked to record their agreement to the statement: "A *Getting it right for every child* practice approach will make a positive difference to children's lives"; 621 practitioners awarded 7 or above, out of 10 which is 99% of those with an awareness of the programme. And despite practitioners reporting concerns about a constant diet of change, 89% remain enthusiastic about changing their practice in line with *Getting it right*. The baseline exercise also highlighted areas for future work particularly in clarifying the detail of the programme including the core components and underpinning values. These were only recently published in the Scottish Government's national guidance and will be part of continuing awareness raising.

Both the baseline exercise and benefits analysis clearly demonstrate that professionals across children's services have much more in common than in contrast. All professional groups highlighted earlier, better and more effective help as the main benefits for children and young people, and that they would be empowered, listened to and have better relationships with adults.



"We will be able to prevent some young people from entering adulthood damaged"

"*Getting it right for every child* will break cycles of negative impact for the future"

Staff also identified benefits to themselves, the most common being increased job satisfaction. Within a clearer, more streamlined and better co-ordinated system they would feel more supported, valued and respected.

At the conclusion of the first phase of the *Getting it right for every child* programme in Lanarkshire, it is clear that a positive branding exists amongst a highly engaged and motivated workforce who are determined to work together to contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people. The challenges will lie in the next phase working on such a scale across a complex environment.

For fuller details on progress in Lanarkshire including the Lessons Learned Log, please contact [Mairi.Tulbure@southlanarshire.gov.uk](mailto:Mairi.Tulbure@southlanarshire.gov.uk).

## Scottish Learning Festival

A *Getting it right for every child* seminar was delivered at the Scottish Learning Festival this year in partnership with the Highland pathfinder education team and Julia Swan from ADES. The seminar was fully subscribed and provided delegates with information on how *Getting it right* links with Curriculum for Excellence. Delegates heard more about the *Getting it right* approach, a strategic overview of education services and how GIRFEC threads through them, and a practical update on putting GIRFEC into practice. The presentations can be viewed on the [Scottish Learning Festival website](#).

## *Getting it right for every child*: Childhood, Citizenship and Children's Services

In September, the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde hosted a three day event entitled, *Getting it right for every child*: childhood, citizenship and children's services. Further [information about the event and the presentations can be viewed online](#).

## Allied Health Professions and Education Partnership Working Project

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In order to promote good practice in partnership working between Education Services and Allied Health Professions (AHPs), the Scottish Government has created two development officer posts jointly funded by the Education and Health directorates. The aim of the project is to support and promote partnership working between education staff and Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. The project will include the publication of national guidelines and CPD materials and will be supportive of current legislation and policy including *Getting it right for every child*.

For more information contact:

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## Children in Scotland - Workforce Debate

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Over the next 12 months, Children in Scotland is inviting the children's sector workforce and partners to join in debate about future workforce development. This will be supported by the production of newsletters, seminars and a major conference in Glasgow on 4 March. The government is keen to ensure "transformational change" in the outcomes for children and their families. The workforce has a key role in delivering this but can we be sure it is sufficiently equipped to deliver the change required? Can we learn anything from the approach taken in Europe and Scandinavia?

To join the debate visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce)

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