



# Getting it right for every child Policy Statement – 2022



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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## 1. Background

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (see [glossary](#)) is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and their families (for definition of child or young person and family see [glossary](#)) with the right support at the right time - so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential.

This policy statement provides an overview of the policy and legislative context for GIRFEC. This includes opportunities brought about by the commitment to the proposed incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (see [glossary](#)) and First and Second Optional Protocols into Scots law, to the maximum extent possible; publication of The Promise and the Plan 21-24 and a continued commitment to eradicate child poverty.

The document gives an outline of the core components of the policy, including refreshed values and principles, and ambitions for how we can do more in practice.

It seeks to reassure leaders, managers and practitioners about how GIRFEC should be delivered within the current legislative and policy framework of rights, information sharing, and delivery of supports and services to children, young people and their families.

The Policy Statement is part of a series of Guidance documents and should be read alongside the following:

- Practice Guidance 1: Using the National Practice Model
  - Improving outcomes using the Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI)
  - Gathering information with the My World Triangle
  - Analysing information with the Resilience Matrix
- Practice Guidance 2: The role of the named person
- Practice Guidance 3: The role of the lead professional
- Practice Guidance 4: Information sharing
- Assessment of Wellbeing – Part 18 (section 96) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

## 2. Overview of key changes

The refreshed Policy Statement contains a number of key changes throughout the document:

- Use of the phrase children **and** young people;
- A change in tone, using positive language, building from the impact of GIRFEC in Scotland;
- An emphasis on working together;
- Further clarity in order to provide confidence for practitioners in delivering GIRFEC through a policy, legislative and practice context;
- A focus on children's rights as an underpinning principle of GIRFEC, ensuring policy and practice protects, respects and fulfils the rights of all children and young people;
- Alignment to key policy areas, for example: The Promise and a continued commitment to eradicate child poverty;
- Highlighting that all children and young people may benefit from the GIRFEC approach;
- An uplifting, visionary statement in relation to Achieving our Ambition, recognising the gaps and opportunities; and,
- A commitment to ongoing participation of children and young people to ensure that they fully understand, and are involved in, all areas of GIRFEC.

### 3. Introduction

The Scottish Government's ambition is to work together with children, young people, families, organisations and communities to make Scotland the best place to grow up. Through Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), everyone in Scotland can work together to build the scaffold of support children and young people need to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential. We want all children and young people to live in an equal society which enables them to flourish, to be treated with kindness, dignity and respect, and to have their rights upheld at all times.

GIRFEC forms a foundation of Scotland's strong track record of respecting, protecting, and fulfilling children's rights in law, policy, and practice. A central part of Scotland's vision is to make this country the best place to grow up. Children have the same rights as all other human beings as well as additional rights that recognise childhood as a special time that requires additional protection. A child's fundamental human dignity as an individual, a family and a community member must be upheld in order for them to have the quality of life they need for their wellbeing and development.

Underpinning GIRFEC with the UNCRC and other existing children's rights protections, will help to create a Scotland where all children and young people are recognised as individuals and rights holders, where their human rights are embedded in all aspects of society – a Scotland where policy, law and decision making takes account of children's rights and where all children and young people have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders.

In supporting our ambition to make Scotland the best place to grow up, the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF, 2018) sets out a collaboratively developed vision to create a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The NPF aims to support everyone in Scotland to work together to achieve our national outcomes, which includes the outcome, 'all children grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.' In line with our holistic and rights-based understanding of the wellbeing of children, young people and families, as set out in the GIRFEC approach, we recognise that the effective implementation of GIRFEC also benefits and contributes to all of our national outcomes.



Figure 1: National Performance Outcomes

We remain fully committed to embedding GIRFEC at the heart of our policies and services, building on the considerable achievements and good practice established since 2006. This is more important than ever, given the current landscape, including:

- opportunities from the proposed incorporation of the UNCRC and First and Second Optional Protocols to the maximum extent possible, into Scots law;
- publication of [The Promise](#) and the [Plan 21-24](#); and
- a continued commitment to eradicate child poverty.

This document sets out the Scottish Government’s refreshed national policy on GIRFEC and outlines how all sectors and services should work together, in a rights-respecting way, to ensure that all children, young people and families receive the right support, from the right people at the right time.

GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. Through a common understanding of wellbeing, we recognise that children and young people need to grow up safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included, so that they can become confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. GIRFEC is an evidence-based, internationally recognised and child-rights-based approach. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by organisations, services and practitioners across Children's Services Planning Partnerships, with a focus on changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of babies, infants, children, young people and their families.

This suite of documents seeks to reassure leaders, managers and practitioners about how GIRFEC can be delivered within the current legislative and policy framework of rights, information sharing, and delivery of supports and services to children, young people and their families. Progress in improving outcomes for children and young people through GIRFEC has been evidenced over time, for example in the [Review of Findings from the Inspection Programme 2012-2017](#) and [Integrated Children's Services in Scotland: Practice and Leadership – An assessment of progress and improvement](#).

This suite of guidance documents sets out the refreshed position in the light of the [UK Supreme Court ruling](#) that resulted in Parts 4 and 5 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 not being commenced.

This Policy Statement is accompanied by Statutory Guidance for Assessment of Wellbeing as required by Part 18 (section 96(3)) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and refreshed practice guidance on using the National Practice Model, the role of the named person (see [glossary](#)), the role of the lead professional (see [glossary](#)), and information sharing. It is essential that practitioners providing support to children, young people and families have the skills, knowledge and understanding to build relationships and deliver GIRFEC effectively, and to make sure children, young people and families understand how their rights will be respected, protected and fulfilled.

## 4. Policy Statement

GIRFEC as a strengths-based approach seeks to realise children's rights on a day-to-day basis and is therefore underpinned by key values and principles:

- Placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them;
- Working together with families to enable a rights-respecting, strengths-based, inclusive approach;
- Understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society;
- Valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly;
- Considering and addressing inequalities;
- Providing support for children, young people and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential; and
- Everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Based on these principles, GIRFEC is about enhancing the wellbeing of all children and young people as well as building a flexible scaffold of support: where it is needed, for as long as it is needed. This is delivered through the core components of:

- a **named person** who is a clear point of contact for children, young people and families to go to for support and advice. A named person can also connect families to a wider network of support and services so that they get the right help, at the right time, from the right people;
- a **shared and holistic understanding of wellbeing** and a single model of how this can be considered and supported; and,
- a **single, shared and rights-based approach to planning** for children and young people's wellbeing where support across services is needed, co-ordinated by a **lead professional**.

This is supported by use of the National Practice Model ([Practice Guidance 1](#)) which sets out a shared framework and approach to identification, assessment and analysis of wellbeing needs. It provides a consistent way for practitioners to work with children, young people and their families to understand the child or young person's individual growth and development in the context of their rights, unique family circumstances and wider world, exploring strengths, resilience, adversities and vulnerabilities.

Wellbeing is considered and assessed across the aspects of children and young people being Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These are the wellbeing indicators (see [glossary](#)) as referred to within section 96(2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, commonly known as SHANARRI. The UNCRC provides a foundation for the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI). They are overlapping and connect areas that are fundamental to understanding what children and young people need in order to grow, develop and reach their full potential.



## 5. Policy and Legislative Context

GIRFEC puts the rights of all children and young people at the heart of good practice. Children's rights and wellbeing are intrinsically linked and are mutually reinforcing. When a child's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, their wellbeing improves; equally, restricting access to their rights may have a negative effect on their wellbeing. Where a child's wellbeing is flourishing and their rights are respected, they are better able to enjoy and defend these rights, as well as those of others.

It is widely recognised that full realisation of children's rights requires proactivity on the part of public authorities, and not only those working with children and young people but to all bodies undertaking public functions. Children's rights are not just relevant to services for children and young people but in the decisions made and actions taken to deliver adult services, as these impact on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. It is vital to the realisation of children's rights that all those undertaking public functions consider children's rights in their work and seek to give fuller and further effect to these.

### 5.1 United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is a United Nations treaty, it is a holistic framework for the rights of all children and is the most widely ratified international treaty in the world. The [UNCRC Articles](#) set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child. The Articles should be considered universal, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent, meaning they apply to everyone under the age of 18 (see [glossary](#)), cannot be taken away, they are all of equal importance, and they depend on each other to provide a single framework that is essential to upholding the rights of children. There are [four General Principles](#) which underpin how the Convention should be interpreted and put into practice. These are that children:

- Should not be discriminated against (Article 2);
- Should have their best interests accounted for as a primary consideration (Article 3);
- Have the right to survive and develop (Article 6); and
- Have the rights to have their views heard and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity (see Article 12).

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 16 March 2021. Following a challenge by UK Law Officers to the UK Supreme Court, the Court held that some provisions to be outwith the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government remains committed to the incorporation of the UNCRC to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable, and the majority of work in relation to implementation of the UNCRC can, and is, continuing. The Deputy First Minister has confirmed his preference to return the Bill to the Scottish Parliament via the Reconsideration stage. If the Bill is passed following Reconsideration, it will create new reporting duties for 'listed authorities' under Part 3 of the Bill which would replace the current reporting duties under the CYP (S) Act 2014. Section 6(1) of the UNCRC Bill would, if commenced (albeit in a revised form), require public authorities not to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements as defined by the Bill.

## 5.2 Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

The Scottish Government's Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) is a key tool that those engaging with children and young people in Scotland can use to strengthen their child rights-based approach. The CRWIA is a purpose-built policy and legislation impact assessment primarily designed for use by Scottish Government, but public bodies and children's services can also make use of it. CRWIAs suggest the use of both UNCRC and GIRFEC frameworks to assess the potential impact of a policy or measure on children's rights and wellbeing.

The CRWIA covers individual children and young people, and groups of children, up to the age of 18. The use of CRWIAs also encourages decision makers to seek the views and participation of children and young people in decision-making about the policy or measure under consideration. It is intended to help us champion the interests of children and young people, think about the forms of evidence we use to assess this, as well as challenge us to think about what more we can do to place children and young people at the heart of our policies.

Making Scotland the best place to grow up depends on creating the right conditions within a child and young person's wider world through societal infrastructure, community resources and networks, and supports and services for families. It means making sure that every child and young person has what they need to reach their full potential.

## 5.3 Tackling Child Poverty

There are strong links to the [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#) and to the national mission to tackle child poverty. Article 27 of the UNCRC makes clear that every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development – that is why we must work together to help increase household incomes and reduce costs, ensuring families have the financial resources they need.

## 5.4 The Christie Commission

[The Christie Commission](#) on the Future Delivery of Public Services is highly relevant to how we deliver services for children, young people and families. We continue to work to ensure that effective services must:

- be designed and delivered with and not to people, and must work closely with individuals to understand their needs;
- prioritise preventative measures and early intervention; and
- work together to achieve outcomes and tackle fragmentation and complexity in the system.

## 5.5 The Independent Care Review

The outcome of the Independent Care Review, The Promise, outlines the transformational change that is required to ensure that services are centred around people to create a country that cares. We are working to ensure that for services to be effective they must:

- be shaped around children, young people and families instead of around policy areas, budgets, legislation or monitoring;
- meet the needs of children, young people and families and stand ready to be accessed where they are needed and when they are needed; and,
- listen to care experienced children and young adults in the delivery, inspection and continuous improvement of services and of care.

## 5.6 Equalities

GIRFEC acknowledges that children and young people can experience multiple and overlapping inequalities, and will need support given in a child-focused holistic manner. Scotland has many policies for eradicating inequalities that underpin this approach.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 includes the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between persons who share one or more of the [protected characteristics](#) listed in the Act, and those who do not. Age is a protected characteristic. Article 2 of the UNCRC relates to the protection of children against any form of discrimination.

All children and young people can be negatively impacted by inequality through a combination of forms of discrimination on the grounds of their protected characteristics or perceived characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

These experiences can have long term social, economic and health impacts. Some children and young people may need additional support due to intersectional discrimination, in which different types of discrimination intersect and interact (the intersection of sex and race discrimination, for example).

## 5.7 Children's Services Planning

Within [Children's Services Planning](#), Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated and focused on supporting and promoting children and young people's wellbeing. It places a renewed emphasis on acting early, prevention and working together using the values and principles of GIRFEC.

Part 3 (Section 8) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires each local authority and its relevant health board to produce a Children's Services Plan every 3 years, in collaboration with its planning partners, including children, young people and families. These plans should reflect a strategic approach to the delivery of children's services which:

- include all local children, young people's and related services including other public bodies, the third sector and private sector providers;
- safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children and young people in the area concerned;
- ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent needs arising;
- is most integrated from the point of view of recipients; and,
- constitutes the best use of available resources.

Taken together, these aims are about creating and maintaining a local environment which facilitates effective GIRFEC practice for all children, young people and families. The Children's Services Plan itself is the description of how public bodies and their partners will work together to achieve this, providing services which are organised and equipped to deliver high-quality, joined-up, rights-respecting, trauma-informed, responsive and, where possible, preventative support to children, young people and families.

Children's Services Plans reflect the wider world of children and young people. They cover children's services as well as wider services for adults, parents (see [glossary](#)), families and communities which all have an impact on children and young people.

Over the last decade, those working with children, young people and families have developed effective practice to turn the aspirations of GIRFEC into a practical reality for children, young people and families. GIRFEC is now well established in most Community Planning Partnerships with examples of joined-up structures and processes and common terminology, resulting in children and young people's wellbeing needs being identified and addressed at an earlier stage.

Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also places a duty on 'listed authorities' (as defined by the Act) to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken in that period to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the UNCRC (as defined by the Act). Some listed authorities to which Part 1 applies will also be subject to duties under Part 3 (Children's Services Planning); in particular, local authorities and health boards.

The [Part 1 guidance](#) notes that while there is no requirement within Part 3 for local authorities and relevant health boards to adopt a child's rights-based approach within their children's services planning process or to link with the Part 1 duty, given the complementary timescales, alignment of the Part 1 and Part 3 duties may benefit both processes by providing a structure within which to plan, review and report on children's rights, cementing the link between fulfilling children's rights and promotion of their wellbeing.

## 6. Range of Support

We know that with the right support at the right time, every child and young person can reach their full potential. The GIRFEC approach is about getting the right support to all children and young people, including those with particular support needs. This includes, but is not limited to, young carers, armed forces children, children and young people who experience inequality and adversity in relation to their sex, gender reassignment, race, sexual orientation, experience of poverty, refugee, asylum or immigration status, children and young people with experience of care, children and young people who are at risk of neglect or abuse, children and young people in conflict, or at risk of being in conflict, with the law and children and young people with additional support needs, which includes disabled children and young people. GIRFEC recognises that children and young people may have multiple and overlapping experiences which should be considered.

Addressing the social and economic circumstances in which people live is essential to supporting children, young people and families. Addressing multiple and overlapping inequalities is key to preventing long term adversity and trauma.

Evidence shows that having safe, supportive relationships with trusted adults helps children and young people to address and overcome adversity and trauma, and go on to reach their full potential. Growing up experiencing adversity or trauma such as abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, community violence, homelessness or growing up in a household where adults are experiencing poor mental health or substance use can impact on a child or young person's healthy development and potentially have long-lasting impacts into adulthood.

There are critical moments when timely and proactive support can make a long-term difference to a child or young person. For example, when a child or young person experiences a significant loss, or an adult they depend on is experiencing significant struggles, or their emotional security is affected by a transition between a school or service. Evidence shows that having safe, supportive relationships with trusted adults helps children and young people to address and overcome adversity and trauma, and go on to achieve their full potential.

Children and young people may need support to access their education. Children and young people's wellbeing can also be impacted by circumstances that create a barrier to their learning. Article 28 of the UNCRC makes clear that all children and young people have the right to education no matter who they are. It is vital that additional support needs are identified, provided for and reviewed in line with the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#). This supports children and young people to access the right support at the right time, from the right people in order that they fully benefit from their education.

[The Additional Support for Learning Review](#), led by Angela Morgan, considered implementation of the additional support for learning framework. It made a number of recommendations seeking to improve the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs. In 2020, Scottish Government and [COSLA](#) published a [joint action plan](#) which set out the measures we would take to address the findings of the review. We have achieved progress in a number of key areas and we continue to work with partners to ensure:

- support is put in place to encourage and strengthen children and young people's participation in the development of key policies and guidance;
- deeper understanding and celebration of the achievements and successes of all children and young people with additional support needs; and

- meaningful engagement with parents and carers and supporting families to access the right support at the right time; and
- positive and sustained collaborative working underpinned by our ambition for all children and young people to be valued, respected, included and supported to reach their full potential.

Article 19 of the UNCRC concerns the protection of children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment while in the care of their parents or anyone else who looks after them. Child protection (see [glossary](#)) processes fall at the urgent end of a range of services which include prevention and early intervention. The GIRFEC principles and approach should be applied consistently across the range of services. Children who are subject to child protection processes may already be known to services and may already have a child's plan in place. Child protection processes should build on existing knowledge, strengths in planning and partnerships to reduce the risk of harm, and to meet the child's needs.

The [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#) reflects this integration of child protection within the GIRFEC range of support and uses GIRFEC language and core components to frame identification and proportionate responses to child protection concerns within the National Practice Model (please see [Practice Guidance 1](#)). The guidance outlines the range of support for all children, from universal support through to protection from significant harm, underlining that the wellbeing and safety of children are indivisibly connected. There is a clear articulation of the importance of GIRFEC to protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time.

Within the GIRFEC framework is a range of support from universal, additional, specialist and intensive services which can be delivered through single agencies (see [glossary](#)) or jointly through an integrated approach. This scaffold of support consists of:

- Family and community provide everyday support and care;
- Universal provision supports development and builds resilience;
- Additional support works to overcome disadvantage and supports learning;
- Specialist and intensive help addresses more complex needs that impact health and wellbeing; and
- Compulsory intervention ensures action to overcome adversity and risk.

## 7. Keeping the Promise

GIRFEC, [The Promise](#), and children's rights are indivisible components in our delivery of Scotland's vision for all children, young people and families.

GIRFEC contributes to the platform for developing work on family support and delivering The Promise made to all of Scotland's children, young people and their families. There is a shared commitment to build on the foundations of The Promise, to reorganise how we think, plan and prioritise for children, young people and their families. Those foundations of Voice, Family, Care, People, and Scaffolding of The Promise carry over into the first of three Plans: The Plan 21-24 with priorities in A Good Childhood, Whole Family Support, Supporting the Workforce, Planning and Building Capacity.

For GIRFEC to be applied using a rights-respecting approach, the views of children and young people should be sought and listened to. There must be a compassionate and caring decision-making culture focused on children and young people and those they trust. Children and young people should be meaningfully and appropriately involved in all matters which affect them, including in decision making about their care.

[Staying Together and Connected: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers](#), our National Practice Guidance, reflects our ambition to act on what we have heard. We listened to people with experience of care, who told us that separation from their sisters and brothers had a lifelong impact. The guidance puts children's wellbeing at the heart of decision making, with the voices of children reflected throughout its development. Of crucial importance is the expectation that brothers' and sisters' relationships should be nurtured and helped to recover where that is needed. Crucially, sisters and brothers should share the same home, away from home, where it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. When that is not possible the Guidance offers creativity to professionals to promote brothers' and sisters' time together, where appropriate.

## 8. Achieving our Ambition

GIRFEC is an internationally recognised, ground-breaking policy, which continues to be our national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, since its inception in 2006. GIRFEC creates the conditions where children and young people can flourish, reach their full potential and go on to build a Scotland that is even better for future generations. The aspirational values and principles, alongside the core components, give us a clear framework to strengthen the implementation and realisation of children's rights and The Promise, to make life better for all children and young people in Scotland.

GIRFEC prioritises an equitable approach that considers each child or young person's unique circumstances. Recognising and tackling multiple and overlapping inequalities is key to creating a successful country where all can reach their full potential.

Commitment to the eradication of child poverty, gender inequality and inequality related to disability, race, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, experience of care, immigration, refugee and asylum seeker status is fundamental to our success. Eradication of all forms of inequality cannot be achieved by one person alone, and every professional whose work directly or indirectly impacts upon children and young people has a part to play (specific policies, guidance papers, training and best practice can be found in [Annex A](#)).

Significant progress has been made in embedding GIRFEC to support all children and young people in Scotland. When GIRFEC is put into practice fully, we know it works well and makes a positive difference. It provides a consistent framework and shared language for children, young people and families, those who work directly or otherwise support children and families, the strategic planning and delivery of children's services (which includes related services such as adult- and community-based services), and in shaping national policy.

However, we also know that GIRFEC practice is varied across Scotland. Effective practice needs to be shared and replicated, and meaningful involvement with children and young people must be undertaken. Identification of need, and therefore resources and support, must be provided sooner. We must continue working together with children, young people and their families, taking a holistic approach to wellbeing, recognising that a child's wellbeing is experienced within the context of their family, local community and wider society.

We acknowledge the significant progress made so far in embedding GIRFEC by practitioners working alongside children, young people and families across Scotland. We now have an opportunity for transformation. We can focus on recovery and renewal from the pandemic, making sure there is strategic coherence across all policy areas affecting children and young people. Building on the bedrock of children's rights, we have the opportunity to embed GIRFEC, creating the conditions for Scotland to be the best place for all children and young people to grow up.

We will continue working with children, young people and their families to ensure that they fully understand, and are involved in, all areas of GIRFEC practice.



## 9. Annex A – Equality and Rights Legislative and Policy Context

[Scotland's Race Equality Framework](#) sets out a cross-section of outcomes related to community cohesion and safety; participation and representation; education and lifelong learning; employability, employment and income; and health and home.

[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled people](#) is based on the social model of disability, is rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the independent living movement, where disabled people can live the life they choose, participating equally alongside other citizens.

[The New Scot Integration Strategy](#) aims to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into Scottish communities from day one of arrival. A refugee is entitled to the same social and economic rights as any UK citizen.

[The Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#) outlines Scotland's approach to ending child poverty with a focus on maximising family incomes, boosting life chances and helping build sustainable communities.

[Equally Safe](#) is Scotland's policy for preventing and responding to gender-based violence, it positions gender equality as both the cause and consequence of gender-based violence. GIRFEC incorporates this policy and takes an equitable approach to understanding unique experiences of gender inequality that children and young people have, supporting them to have an equal start in life that is equally safe.

[The Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) provides the legal framework for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier, or barriers, to learning. The Act aims to ensure that all children and young people are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards reaching their full potential.

## 10. Annex B – Glossary of Terms

### **Agency/agencies**

In this suite of documents the term ‘agency/agencies’ means an organisation or business providing a particular service.

### **Age of a child**

GIRFEC and the UNCRC (which Scottish Government intends to incorporate into Scots law to the maximum extent possible) applies to everyone under 18. Before birth, midwives and maternity professionals can apply the values and principles of GIRFEC and support to the parents in considering their wellbeing, and that of the unborn baby. During a child’s life, GIRFEC then continues to apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18, or older if still at school, including young people who have left school but are not yet 18. Where young adults have specific needs, other legislation ensures ongoing support for them beyond 18 years of age, including Section 29 of the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), where the definition of a young person refers to those having attained the age of 16 and are still at school. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, extends continuing care for eligible young adults up to the age of 21 and after care for young adults who have care experience, up to the age of 26. These Acts ensure ongoing support for these young adults beyond the ages defined above in the GIRFEC framework.

### **Child or young person**

An individual who has not yet attained the age of 18 years.

### **Child Protection**

The processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

### **Children’s human rights and UNCRC**

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms which we all have in order to live with dignity, equality and fairness, and to develop and reach our potential. Human rights are a list of things that all people – including children and young people – need in order to live a safe, healthy and happy life.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has been incorporated into UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Everyone, including children and young people, have these rights, no matter what their circumstances. Under international law, States/Governments are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Those delivering public services should respect human rights when they make decisions, plan services and make policies.

Children’s human rights span the entire spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. Children and young people also have additional rights that recognise that childhood is a special, protected time, in which children and young people must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity. Specific human rights for children are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community. By recognising children’s rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the child as a whole and multi-faceted person. It is important to be clear that all rights are equal, there is no hierarchy of human rights.

We know that children and young people face unique barriers to realising their rights. Their future often depends on the action taken by adults to implement their rights in practice. As children their voices can be unheard, or more easily dismissed. For that reason, the UNCRC recognises that children and young people are human beings with fundamental rights that are written into international law. It also makes clear that special action needs to be taken to ensure those rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. As one of the core United Nations (UN) human rights treaties, the UNCRC helps to safeguard the dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all children and young people. It does this by making sure that important rights set out in other international human rights treaties are applied in a way that is relevant and appropriate to the needs of all children and young people.

### **Child's Plan**

A personalised child's plan is developed when those working with the child or young person and family identify that a child or young person needs a range of extra support planned, delivered and co-ordinated. The child's plan should reflect the child or young person's voice and explain what should be improved for the child or young person, the actions to be taken and why the plan has been created.

### **Family/families**

Not all family units look the same. In this suite of documents the term 'families/family' can mean adoptive, biological, foster, kinship, extended, composite and others, for example settings and homes that have felt like family. Some children and young people may belong to more than one family.

### **Getting it right for every child**

This is Scotland's national approach to promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. It provides a consistent framework, shared language and common understanding of wellbeing. GIRFEC puts the child or young person at the heart and helps children and young people get the right support from the right people at the right time.

### **Lead professional**

When children, young people and families require the help and support of a child's plan, a lead professional will be needed. The lead professional is an agreed, identified person within the network of practitioners who is working alongside the child or young person and family. In most cases, the professional who has the greatest responsibility in coordinating and reviewing of the child's plan will undertake this role.

### **Named person**

This is a clear point of contact for times when children, young people and families require information, advice or help. The named person is mainly provided by health and education services and is usually someone who is known to the child, young person and family and who is well placed to develop a supportive relationship with them. Local arrangements and the term used to describe this role or function may vary from area to area. A named person can help children, young people and families access relevant support for a child or young person's wellbeing. Where there is a child's plan in place, the named person will work alongside the lead professional, continuing to provide general advice or support, while the lead professional will be the point of contact in relation to the plan. In some cases the named person will also be the lead professional.

## **Parent**

This document uses the term ‘parent’ within the meaning of section 15 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The term ‘parent’ includes a person who is a genetic parent of a child, a parent by adoption, and those who are parents by virtue of Human Fertilisation and Embryology legislation. In this document, the term also embraces a person who has parental responsibilities in relation to the child or young person, who has care of the child or young person, or who is a guardian of the child or young person whether appointed by parents or the court.

## **Practitioner**

In this guidance, practitioner means any person involved in working with children, young people and/or families, whether on a voluntary basis or through paid work. In addition to roles typically thought of as working with children and young people such as health visitors and teachers; this includes wider activities that work with children, young people and families, such as housing services or police.

## **Transition**

A transition is a change, from one stage to another. Most children and young people will experience transitions as they move into an early learning and childcare (ELC) setting, from there to primary, from stage to stage, from primary to secondary, between schools and from secondary to further education and beyond.

## **Wellbeing**

For the purposes of these guidance documents, wellbeing is a measure of how a child or young person is doing at a point in time and if there is any need for support. The eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) provide a framework for assessment and planning in relation to wellbeing.

### **Wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI)**

Any assessment of a child or young person’s wellbeing should be founded on the 8 wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included, sometimes referred to as SHANARRI. The wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) are informed by the UNCRC. They are overlapping and connect areas that are fundamental to understanding what children and young people need in order to grow, develop and thrive.



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