

Part 3

Roles and responsibilities of practitioners and agencies

The aim of implementing *Getting it right for every child* in Highland is to make sure every child who needs additional help gets that help when it is needed, Where more than one agency is involved, providing help should be integrated. This part of the guidance outlines the roles and responsibilities of all practitioners in every sector helping children and families.

The importance of multi-agency working

For the Highland Pathfinder to work well, everyone needs to sign up to the fundamental principle of working together both within and between services, where necessary. Effective multi-agency working is founded on trust and good relationships, taking the opportunity to gain consents and share information purposefully about individual children and families. Practitioners may also want to hold informal discussions with colleagues from their own and other agencies about how to provide the best possible help to individual children and their families. In a time of change, as in this Pathfinder, it is essential that everyone signs up to a learning environment, with a solutions-led approach to problems. Making sure everyone shares the same philosophy of *Getting it right for every child* creates understanding and commitment to the implementation, but practitioners also need to hone their skills of diplomacy and negotiation.

Providing child and family-centred help

When it comes to helping children and families, Highland has developed two pivotal roles which will ensure every child gets the timely and proportionate help they need. These roles are:

- **the named person**
- **the lead professional**

The named person

All partner agencies in Highland have agreed that every child will have a named person in health or, if they are of school age, in education. These individuals in the universal services will be responsible for making sure that, whilst the family is in touch with that service, the child has the right help in place to support his or her development and well-being.

In most cases **the named person will not have to do anything more than they normally do in the course of their day-to-day work**. In health, this includes the normal checks relating to children's development and health. In education, arrangements may vary according to the size and structure of schools, but the named person will be familiar with a child's progress within *Curriculum for Excellence*. If anyone identifies problems or worries about way a child is progressing, the named person will take action to help the child, or arrange for someone else to do so. His or her role is an important one, in making sure that when problems or worries first arise, a child and family receive a helpful response quickly. The named person will have an important role in making sure children and families are fully informed about what is happening and, unless there is very good reason not to do so, make sure consents are obtained to share information with others.

If a child needs additional help, the **named person** will have the potential for helping the child in different ways. These include following roles:

The named person within his or her own agency

In his or her own agency, the named person will:

- be the first point of contact for the child and his or her parents/carers seeking information or advice, and for any professionals wishing to discuss a worry about the child;
- be the person who makes sure children and families give their consent to any sharing of information about them, that children and families

know why this information is being shared and that the consents are recorded;

- ensure that children and families will be informed when information is shared;
- ensure that core information about the child in the named person's agency is up to date;
- include relevant information from other agencies and decide whether to make this available to other practitioners when they need to see it;
- in preparing a single agency plan, review all information held within their agency and, using the seven well-being indicators of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and responsible and included as a guide, gather any other information needed to identify what might be causing the problems, especially if the child is falling below the targets expected for his or her physical, emotional or behavioural development or is not benefiting from school education;
- lead on preparing, implementing and keeping under review the effectiveness of any single agency plan;
- contribute to planning for the child at key transition points, for example between pre-school and primary or secondary education, and ensure effective transfer of information about the child, including details of any help the child and family have been or are receiving, to the new named person in the agency assuming responsibility for the child;
- identify what extra help might be provided from within the named person's agency, where necessary in consultation with others;
- if the child's needs are more complex, and require help from more than one agency, decide in consultation with managers if it is appropriate for the named person to become the lead professional, or decide how best to appoint a lead professional.

Where the named person becomes the lead professional

Where the named person becomes the lead professional he or she should:

- Ask other agencies to add key information to the named person's assessment in order to understand better what is happening;
- Decide when to request the help the named person has assessed is required;
- Put together a multi-agency Child's Plan, involving the child and family, (making this as simple or complex as necessary) identifying what needs to happen and what help should be provided;
- Ensure that accurate and relevant information from the named person's agency records is incorporated into the Child's Plan;
- Make sure the child and family understand the content and purpose of the Child's Plan;
- Make sure children, families and all relevant agencies have copies of the Child's Plan;
- Put help into action straight away if possible, taking on the role of the lead professional to co-ordinate that help and ensure the Child's Plan is carried out and kept under review;
- Make sure there is a smooth ending to additional help when it is no longer required.

Who should be the named person?

Highland has agreed that during pregnancy and the early period following birth, a child's named person will be the midwife assigned to the family. After the midwife's postnatal supervision ends around ten days after birth or thereabouts a health visitor will become a child's named person until a child begins full-time primary education. Health visitors provide consistent, knowledgeable and skilled contact for families, as do staff in early years' services and other practitioners working with pre-school children. These early intervention services are in a good position to respond quickly and appropriately where children have additional needs.

When a child begins primary school, he or she should be assigned a member of the school staff as the named person. This could be a child's class teacher, a teacher with a guidance role, the head teacher or another designated member of staff. As a child progresses through school, the named person may change and on entry into secondary school a child should be assigned a new named person. Each school will make its own arrangement for appointing a named person for every child. Once this has been decided, it should be made clear to each child and family who is the named person. This means that schools are able to make arrangements which best suit them, taking account of their skills and experience, size and location.

Keeping in touch with families and enabling further help to be provided easily

Children, young people, parents and carers should have clear information about who is a child's named person. On entry into primary or secondary education, school information to parents and their child should identify the named person as someone who will have a special responsibility to try to help wherever possible. The named person should also be accessible to the parent, child or young person and be seen as someone they can talk to about any worries or problems affecting a child at school or home.

A child or young person may choose to talk to any adult about things that are worrying them. Children may choose to talk to individuals who are familiar with their background and culture. All staff should know how to bring to the attention of the named person any worries children have shared with them. Unless there is good reason not to, children will be asked to give permission to share this information because it is the named person who will provide a consistent, easy to recognise route for communication and appropriate action by practitioners whenever a problem or worry begins to appear.

Work is in progress in Highland to designate special arrangements for the appointment of a named person for children who are not in touch with either school or health services on a regular basis or who are transient.

The named person is **child-focused**, not family-focused. Therefore in a family with children of differing ages, each child will have his or her own designated named person. One person could be the named person for each child in a family or each child could have a different named person. This should ensure that the needs of any one child are not overlooked because the needs of an older or younger sibling are more immediately pressing. Where there is more than one named person within a family, good communication between all the named persons for a family is essential because it will be important to see each child in the context of his or her whole world.

The lead professional

There are some circumstances where children's needs involve two or more agencies working together delivering services to the child and family. Where this happens, in all cases, a lead professional will be needed. As suggested earlier, where appropriate, the named person may take on the role of lead professional. Otherwise, an alternative person will be appointed and the named person will continue to maintain links with the child. The lead professional then becomes the person within the network of practitioners supporting the child and family who will make sure that the different agencies act as a team and the help they are all offering fits together seamlessly to provide appropriate support for the child and family.

There are two ways in which a lead professional may be needed:

1. Where the named person and others have evidence that suggests a co-ordinated plan involving two or more agencies will be necessary, then a Child's Plan should be drawn up. This may be done without a formal meeting. Allowing for a more informal co-ordination of

assistance without formal meetings supports the principle of timely and proportionate help.

2. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for another practitioner from the named person's agency or from another agency to take the lead. If a practitioner from another agency is to take on the role of lead professional, it is likely that this would happen through a child's meeting, but this will depend on the individual circumstances. The circumstances and actions relating to a child's meeting are described later (see Part 5 of this guidance).

When the Child's Plan has been agreed, the lead professional will:

- usually be the point of contact with the child and family for the purpose of discussing the plan and how it is working, as well as any changes in circumstances that may affect the plan;
- be a main point of contact for all practitioners who are delivering help to the child to feedback progress on the plan or raise any issues;
- make sure that the help provided is consistent with the Child's Plan, that services are not duplicated;
- work with the child and family and the practitioner network to make sure that the child and family's views and wishes are heard and properly taken into account and, when necessary, link the child and family with specialist advocacy;
- support the child and family to make use of help from practitioners and agencies;
- monitor how well the Child's Plan is working and whether it is improving the child's situation;
- co-ordinate the provision of other help or specialist assessments which may be needed, with advice from other practitioners where necessary, and make arrangements for these to take place;
- arrange for the agencies to review together their involvement and amend the Child's Plan when necessary;

- make sure the child is supported through key transition points and ensure a careful and planned transfer of responsibility for these roles when another practitioner becomes the lead professional, for example if the child's needs change or the family moves away, or the named person resumes responsibility for the child when a multi-agency Child's Plan is no longer needed.

The lead professional will be responsible for producing an agreed Child's Plan. The plan will identify when a review is needed and the lead professional will arrange for the production of materials for the review if this is to take place at a meeting. Materials will be circulated to everyone involved, especially children and families.

The lead professional will not do all the work with the child and family; neither does he or she replace other staff who have specific roles or who are carrying out direct work or specialist assessments. The lead professional's primary task is to make sure that all the support provided is working well, fits with involvement of other practitioners and agencies and is achieving the outcomes specified in the Child's Plan.

Who should be the lead professional?

The lead professional should be the person best placed to co-ordinate the help agreed in the Child's Plan. A lead professional should be able to provide confident leadership and should be familiar with the working practices of different agencies. To avoid confusion or disagreements, Highland will ensure that all agencies have agreed criteria for choosing the lead professional and have a commitment to offer appropriate personnel for this role. In all cases, the child's and family's views on who they would see as best placed to be lead professional should be taken onto account in the decision-making processes.

Choosing the lead professional will also be influenced by:

- the kind of help which the child or family needs;

- previous contact or a good relationship with the child;
- any statutory responsibility to co-ordinate work with the child or family.

In some cases, to make sure the child and family get the best possible help, because the child has identifiable complex needs, or there is a statutory obligation defined in law towards a child, the lead professional will need to come from a particular agency. In time, some of these statutory requirements may change and be subsumed under a *Getting it right for every child* umbrella, but the Pathfinder is working to current legislation and requirements will need to be incorporated into the Child's Plan.

Examples where statutory requirements need to be accounted for are:

- where a child needs a Co-ordinated Support Plan for children's additional support for learning;
- a child is formally looked after, which includes the child being subject to a requirement from a children's hearing or where a child is voluntarily looked after and accommodated;
- a child is the subject of an Antisocial Behaviour Order.

There will also be other administrative categories where compliance with procedures will help ensure a child's safety, for example, for a child whose name is on the child protection register.

The relationship between lead professionals and others in contact with the child and family

It is the lead professional's responsibility to make sure everyone is clear about the different roles they have and the contributions they have to implement the Child's Plan. In some cases, although much of the day-to-day work with the child or family may be carried out by practitioners other than the lead professional, the lead professional should at least have sufficient direct contact with the family to ensure that they are well informed and that the Child's Plan is working properly and to good effect.

The lead professional and the named person

When a child or family has already established a good and supportive relationship with a named person, transferring responsibility for co-ordination of contact and communication with the family to a lead professional who is a different person should be managed carefully to minimise disruption and stress for the family. The child and family need to know that the named person will still be there as part of the team and will continue to be responsible for routine checks on development and educational attainment and any tasks assigned to them as part of the Child's Plan.

The lead professional may not always be providing all the help the child and family needs. Sometimes they will be supported by a core group of practitioners, who have been allocated specific roles and tasks by the lead professional (see below). Where the lead professional is not working directly with the family regularly, he or she will continue to be in close touch with the progress of the Child's Plan. Where there are concerns about risk to the child, which may include child protection issues or children in danger of harming themselves or others, lead professionals must satisfy themselves that work to manage and reduce risk is being carried out effectively and is improving the child's situation.

A core group of practitioners to provide the help that is needed

Currently, in Highland, in cases, where children's safety is an issue, there is a core group of practitioners from different agencies who are working closely with each other and with children and families. In the Pathfinder, the use of the concept of a core group of practitioners to provide help has been extended to all circumstances where there is a multi-agency Child's Plan. In many cases, the work to achieve the outcomes in the Child's Plan will be carried out by this core group of practitioners from different agencies, co-ordinated by the lead professional. It will be helpful for this group of people, who are working with the child and family, to keep in close communication

with each other, with the child and family and the lead professional. Arrangements for implementing, monitoring and reviewing who is doing what should be laid out in the plan.

Supporting the lead professional

All children's agencies must provide appropriate supervision and support to practitioners taking on the role of lead professional, which is tailored to the requirements placed upon him or her by the work with the child and his or her family.

The lead professional is accountable to his or her own agency both for carrying out his or her own professional tasks and also for carrying out the responsibilities which the lead professional role entails. He or she is not responsible for the actions of other practitioners or services. Highland is putting in place a protocol for dealing with a failure or inability by any agency to carry out the tasks or provide the help required of it by an agreed multi-agency Child's Plan. The protocol also seeks to resolve disputes when agreement cannot be reached about who should be the lead professional. See the draft internal Highland document (2007), *Getting it right for every child: Resolving Disputes and Disagreements*.

The lead professional is responsible for informing senior management in his or her agency about any problems that stem from actions in the Child's Plan not taking place. If these cannot be dealt with within the single agency of the relevant partner(s) to the plan, they are to be referred to the Service Managers' Group for resolution (see below, p.14).

Creating an organisational umbrella for helping children and families

If *Getting it right for every child* is to work in the interests of all children and families in the Pathfinder area, and subsequently, for all of Highland, there needs to be an organizational structure that supports the practitioners who are in touch with children and families. All partner agencies in Highland support the

implementation of the Pathfinder through:

1. A managed system of assessment, planning and reviewing across one operational area fully supported by senior managers from all children's services;
2. Quality assurance systems at each level of assessment and planning, to ensure that children are involved appropriately;
3. Aligned structures within the area, around all key services, but especially relevant school groups and social work children and family teams;
4. Arrangements for mediation in individual cases and commitment of special resources.

To support the infrastructure of the Pathfinder implementation, there are four key roles:

- the Integrated Services Co-ordinator
- the Integrated Services Officer
- the Quality Assurance and Review Officer
- the Service Managers' Group

Integrated Services Co-ordinator

The Highland Pathfinder is a multi-agency system and no one Service Manager can have sole responsibility for management of the full *Getting it right for every child* implementation. It is critical that there is a co-ordinated management system to provide an umbrella of organisational support. To make sure this happens, a dedicated post of **Integrated Services Co-ordinator** is being appointed in each operational area, both in Inverness where the Pathfinder will begin but also to be ready for roll out of the system across Highland.

These posts work to the local service managers, to ensure that assessment and planning systems are working appropriately, proportionately and safely in each area. Children and families need to know about these structures to reassure them that agencies are working together on their behalf.

Integrated Services Officer

The role of **Integrated Services Officer** will replace that of Senior Family Liaison Officer role. Integrated Services Officers will ensure effective assessment and planning for early intervention and will co-ordinate the arrangements where a Liaison Meeting is needed.

Quality Assurance and Review Officers

Quality Assurance and Review Officers will undertake quality assurance processes across all children's plans, including chairing the meetings of those children with high level needs or particularly complex plans. For now, that will include all children who are looked after and accommodated, and those with Co-ordinated Support Plans.

The Service Managers Group

This new group replaces the current Caseworking Subgroup and the Youth Offender Forum. It collectively ensures the effective operation of assessment, planning and intervention processes within the Area, and considers the needs of some children in very specific circumstances. The **Service Managers Group** will be involved:

- where the requirements of the plan cannot be achieved from within area resources or where external or specialist services are needed;
- where allocation of a significant resource needs to be sanctioned;
- where disagreement between professionals, agencies, or children and their families cannot be resolved by following the conflict resolution policy, or through single agency management structures;
- where those tasks currently fulfilled at the Youth Offender Forum in relation to persistent offenders, the use of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Parenting Orders and Intensive Supervision and Monitoring scheme are needed.

The Service Managers Group is made up of area managers in police, health, education, and social work in each of the three areas of Highland. In order to enhance discussions about young offenders the Children's Reporter should

attend as well as the Area Housing Manager in relevant circumstances. The Services Managers Group will be accessed via the Integrated Services Co-ordinator.

Creating a common base for a shared child's record

The Highland Pathfinder Service Delivery Model requires well co-ordinated records, where essential information relevant to the child's needs can be shared between agencies on a need to know basis. Currently, each agency working with children in Highland records its activities separately. This will still happen within the Pathfinder even when an electronic information sharing infrastructure can be established and will be necessary to chart the progress of individual services. However, there will be some changes to the way in which information is recorded within systems when the Pathfinder is first implemented.

1. The universal services of health and education will now have a common element to their records which includes the recording of demographic factors, key events and achievements/milestones in children's lives.
2. Where a child needs a multi-agency Child's Plan, this will follow the same format and content in all circumstances, except that where compulsory measures require plans for a children's hearing, the reasons for compulsion will be recorded.
3. Social work has aligned its documentation for child protection and for looked after children with *Getting it right for every child*. Although the statutory requirements in the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995* for looked after children will need to be met, the information required for assessing and planning for children has been aligned with the processes of assessing and planning that apply to all children with additional needs.

The Main Points from Part 3

- Everyone needs to sign up to the principle of working together for *Getting it right for every child* to work;
- Each child in Highland will have a named person in the universal services of health and education;
- In most cases the named person will not have to do anything more than they normally do in their day-to-day work;
- Where a child needs additional services, the named person will normally be the first point of contact for the child and family and will co-ordinate help within their own agency;
- Where more than one agency is providing help, a lead professional will be appointed who will co-ordinate the help but the named person will continue the day-to-day duties they have to the child;
- Choice of the lead professional will depend on the help a child and family need, any previous good relationship with the family and any statutory obligations to the child;
- The lead professional will have specific roles to make sure children and families who need additional help are well supported;
- Lead professionals will not usually be expected to provide all the help for the child and family and will be supported by a core group of practitioners;
- Named persons and lead professionals will be supported by their agency structures and managers to make sure *Getting it right for every child* is implemented smoothly;
- Highland will also support named persons and lead professionals through the roles of Integrated Services Co-ordinators, Integrated Services Officers, Quality Assurance, Planning and Review Officers for children who are the subject of statutory orders, and the Service Managers' Group who will allocate high level resources, resolve disputes and take over the tasks of the Youth Offenders Forum;
- The Pathfinder is developing a common base for a child's shared record.