

# getting it right for every child

**Draft Guidance to staff working in  
Voluntary and Independent Sectors**



## Guidance on Voluntary and Independent Sector Processes

This guidance is for people working in the voluntary or independent sector who may recognise a concern about a child, who may become a partner to a Child's Plan or who may be asked to become a Lead Professional.

Getting it right for every child is about working together for better outcomes for children. In the voluntary and independent sector this involves extending the current responsibility to consider child protection issues for every child an agency or individual works with to a holistic approach where the child's whole well-being is considered. This a child-centred approach ensuring services work together around the child with the child and parents as partners in the process.

Any organisation or individual working with children and families should establish a dialogue with the child and parents about the child's well-being and ensure that the service they offer supports the well-being of the individual child.

Appendices one to three visually represent the processes below. Actions shown in bold.

### Concern Perceived by parent, child or other (Appendix 1)

When a concern about any aspect of the child's well-being is raised, in the first instance consider if the child is at risk of abuse or neglect by asking these questions:

- Is there an immediate or ongoing risk to the child?
- Is there suspicion that an offence has been committed against the child?
- Is there a risk of significant harm?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', then you must **follow child protection procedures**.

If the answer to these is 'no', then involve the child and family in a discussion to **ask**:

1. What's getting in the way of this child or YP's well-being?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child/YP?
3. What can I do now to help this child or YP?
4. What can my organisation do to help this child or YP?

**Action Required:** Make a plan of action, in agreement with the family, to be taken by you/your organisation to improve outcomes for the child. Agree a review process and timescale.

Also with the family **ask**:

5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

**Seek agreement** with the child and parent to share the information with the Named Person. In most cases carers and children agree for information to be shared because it means the children will get help and most will be happy to give consent.

'Getting it right' is a consensual way of working, however, in certain circumstances information must be shared even if consent is not given. You can, in consideration of the child's best interest, also share information without consent to prevent or detect crime.

If there is not a child protection risk and the child/parent does not agree to information being shared, you should respect their wishes and not share information with others. However, you could encourage the child or parent to seek help themselves.

The Named Person may provide information or suggest strategies which will help to plan to meet the child's needs.

**Review the actions** taken in discussion with the child and/or parents considering whether things have improved, stayed the same or escalated. If any concerns remain, review the actions by asking again the 5 questions.

**Keep a record** (short note/bullet points) of each discussion, any actions planned and the outcome. This record, as with any other personal information, should be kept confidential and should only be kept as long as the child is in your care.

### **Concerned but not sure what to do?**

You can always discuss the situation without identifying the child and get advice. Speak to your manager or an appropriate professional in Highland Council or NHS Highland. They should be able to help you decide what course of action to take.

### **Partners to a Child's Plan (Appendix 2)**

A voluntary or independent organisation may be asked to be a partner to a Child's Plan.

This may involve being provided with strategies to enhance the support of a child already accessing the service.

Or a specific service might be requested from an organisation as part of a Child's Plan. The organisation should consider if they have the capacity to deliver this service.

Information may be requested from an organisation as part of the child's assessment or as part of the child's review, under the information sharing protocol.

As partners to a plan, **clarify** with the Lead Professional the desired outcomes, the suggested actions and the feedback and review process for your organisation.

**Carry out the actions** as described in the Child's Plan and contribute to review of the plan considering, "Are things better, the same or are difficulties escalating?"

**Feedback** to the Lead Professional as agreed, clarify any further suggested actions.

### **Deciding who takes the lead (Appendix 3)**


The Lead Professional for a multi-agency Child's Plan should be the person who is best placed to co-ordinate a Child's Plan, to arrange the review process and to provide confident leadership. The decision about who is best placed will be made in consideration of who has the core responsibilities in the plan, what kind of help is needed and who has previous contact or a good relationship with the child and family.

For professionals working in the voluntary or independent sector, the following should also be taken into consideration:

- Is the organisation funded publicly to provide a specific service, i.e. working to a service level agreement?
- Are protocols, procedures and infrastructure in place to share, record and store information in the Getting it right for every child framework?
- Has the individual got suitable levels of training, skills and experience for the role?
- Is there appropriate line management support?
- Is there the capacity to take on LP role?
- Is there a good relationship with child/YP and family?
- Are there any conflicts of interest (i.e. is person able to put child's best interest first without compromising a professional requirement to consider parental or other needs)

Organisations who may employ people who could become Lead Professionals, should establish a protocol, ensuring the above considerations are covered, to describe the process as part of their service level agreement.

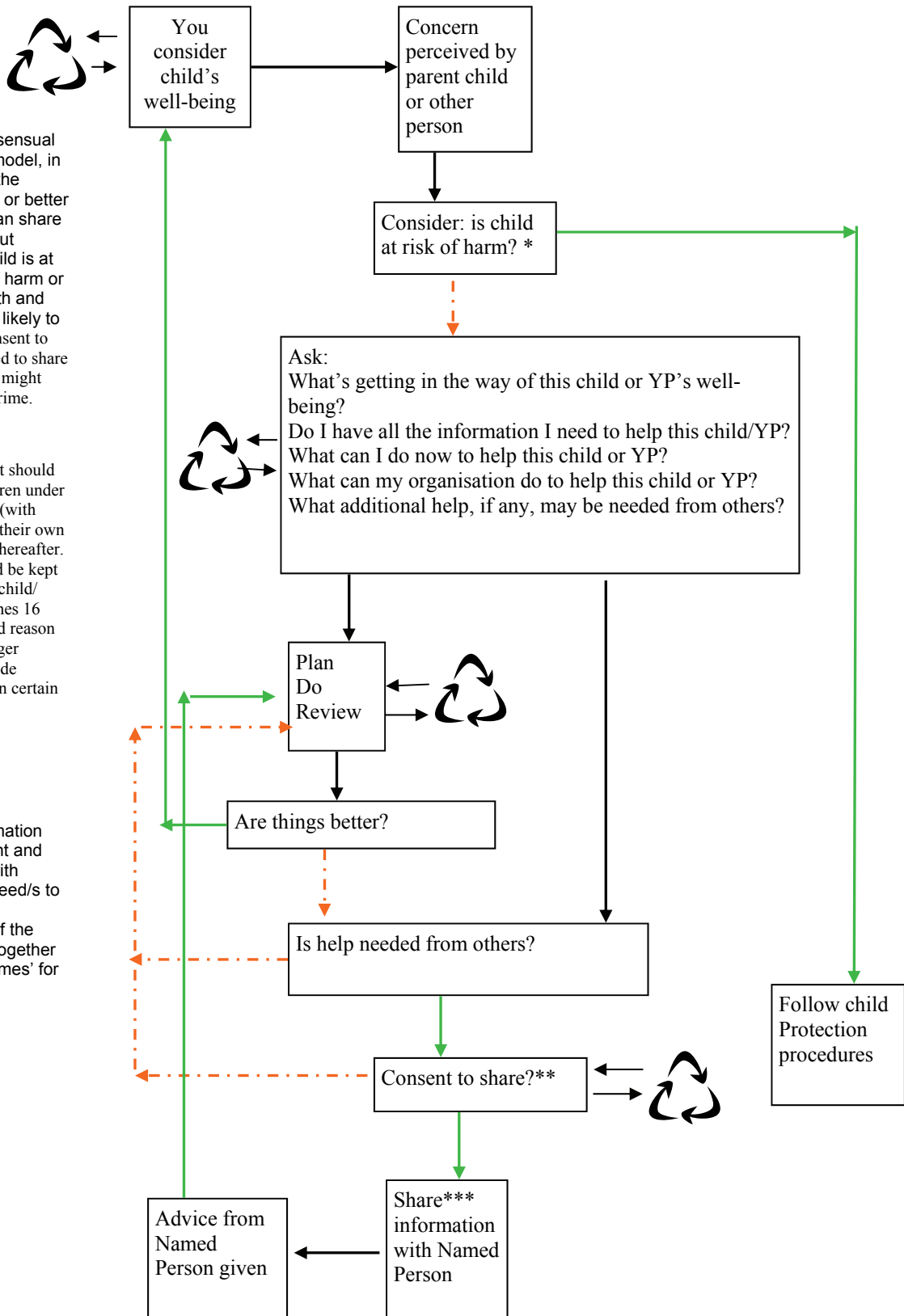
Appendix 1  
 Getting it right for every child  
 Voluntary/Independent Sector Provider  
 (VSP) Business Processes  
 Stage 1— concern raised

Key:  = dialogue with child and family  
 —————> = next action  
 —————> (green) = yes  
 - - - - -> (orange) = no

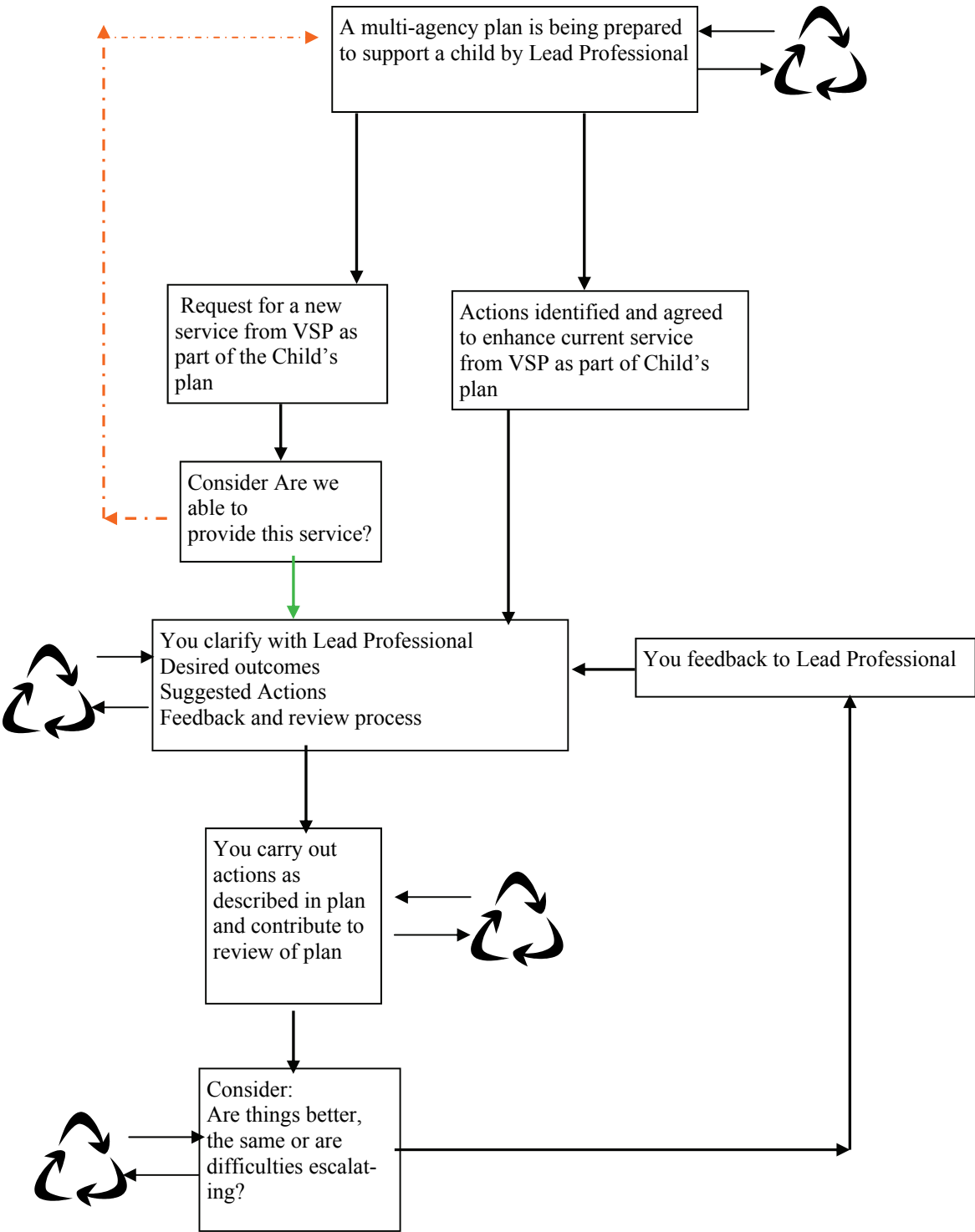
\* Although a consensual dialogue based model, in consideration of the child's well-being or better outcomes, you can share information without consent if the child is at immediate risk of harm or if the child's health and development are likely to be impaired. Consent to share is not required to share information which might prevent or detect crime.

\*\* Parental consent should be gained for children under 12, young persons (with capacity) can give their own informed consent thereafter. Both parties should be kept informed until the child/young person reaches 16 unless there is good reason not to share. Younger children may provide informed consent in certain circumstances

\*\*\* Share information which is relevant and proportionate with person/s who need/s to know within the confidentiality of the team 'working together for better outcomes' for the child



Appendix 2  
 Getting it right for every child  
 Voluntary/Independent Sector Provider  
 (VSP) Business Processes  
 Stage 2—Partner to a plan



Appendix 3  
 Getting it right for every child  
 Voluntary/Independent Sector Provider  
 (VSP) Business Processes  
 Stage 3—Deciding who takes the lead

