

PROJECT: Pathfinding ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ in Highland

General description of project

In a designated area of Highland, that includes both rural and urban populations, and where professionals have largely coterminous boundaries – which will be Inverness - develop more seamless response, assessment, planning and review processes for all children, as outlined in *Getting it Right for Every Child*.

The core message of *Getting it Right for Every Child* is that: *Everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing for each child and we must all work towards a unified approach, with less bureaucracy and more freedom to get on and respond to children. This will mean earlier help and the child getting the right help at the right time packaged for their particular needs.*

This will build on the existing structures and processes that support integrated children’s services, as detailed in *For Highland’s Children 2*. It will complement other strategic initiatives within the authority, and will involve a range of further measures to support services to work in partnership to make sure that a child receives a coordinated service which delivers help when needed, including:

- Being alert to Need
- Assessment
- Tiered Intervention
- Planning
- Review

This will be in line with the underpinning principles outlined in the Scottish Executive policy paper, including:

- ❑ All staff take responsibility for action to improve children’s lives.
- ❑ Further developing changes in culture with different ways of working to deliver effective children’s services within a unified approach; responses that deliver the vision for Scotland’s Children and strengthen children and families’ capacities to care for their children well and meet their needs.
- ❑ When there are concerns about a child, a proportionate, appropriate and timely response with a clear approach to staged intervention within Police, Health and Education services, and clear routes to multi-agency involvement and compulsory measures should that be necessary.
- ❑ Where more than one agency is or needs to be involved, one assessment and plan of action and a lead professional.
- ❑ Better information for children and families, about what is expected of them and from the professionals involved with them.
- ❑ Referral to the Reporter and the Children’s Hearings system is based on two tests - significant need and the likely need for compulsion.
- ❑ Working within existing legislation but identifying barriers to achieving the approach set out in *Getting it Right for Every Child* and exploring how they might be overcome
- ❑ Reduced bureaucracy.

The project will involve:

1. Further support for current activity and other developments that deliver the vision for children in Highland.

2. Undertaking a re-engineering exercise to streamline the existing response systems and processes in line with these principles.
3. Developing and implementing a plan to put these new processes into place in Inverness and subsequent areas of the authority.

Objectives & Principles

The objectives of this project over the next two years are:

- By September 2006: to consider, test and confirm the arrangements necessary to implement *Getting it Right for Every Child*
- To plan and effect the implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child* in one area of Highland between September 2006 and March 2007; and to plan and effect the roll-out in further areas from April 2007
- To identify barriers within existing legislation and guidance and to explore how best they may be overcome
- To develop practice tools, that include: the assessment framework; the child's action plan and review format within a child's record; and service processes and pathways
- To work with Scottish Executive colleagues to develop the necessary electronic tools, including for national use
- To develop training materials that can be used by other authorities.
- To describe how the process of implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child* can be achieved in other Scottish authorities, and to present this in appropriate formats as part of the dissemination.

Throughout the project, we will:

- aim to improve outcomes for all of Highland's children
- work in partnership with children and their families
- be child focused
- understand children in the context of their family and community
- promote inclusion and equality of opportunity, and respect diversity.

We will aim to develop single and multi-agency processes that are based on getting the right help to each child at the right time, and:

- are grounded in a partnership between parents and agencies; and provide clarity about family, agency and professional roles and responsibilities
- promote the early identification of need and the early prevention of difficulties
- achieve minimal necessary interventions to achieve effective and better outcomes, through a proportionate response
- involve straightforward and coherent pathways – but that are able to deal with complex issues
- are evidence based.

An explicit framework will be developed that enables local and strategic management of the needs of children as part of a unified approach. This means a co-ordinated system that:

1. supports current activity that delivers the vision for children in Highland;
2. responds to new concerns about children that are not currently involved with multi-agency services;
3. Realigns the response systems for children that are already involved with multi-agency services.

In particular, this will mean the development and implementation of integrated pathways within a locally organised structure, that brings together systems and processes for responding to concerns of children at different ages and stages, with:

- ❑ a shared understanding of children's development and needs across all agencies using the assessment framework as the means to record individual and multi-agency assessments
- ❑ for the child and family, seamless linkage with universal and additional needs assessments within health and education systems, that involves one pathway to address any health, education, behaviour and/or social needs and an assessment model that builds on the information about children and families that is already known
- ❑ where more than one agency is or should be involved, the identification of a lead professional to co-ordinate the assessment, identify the need for multi-agency response or services and lead the plan
- ❑ structures for collaboration, planning and review; with clarity about when and how agencies should plan and review together

This will involve the parallel implementation of health assessments into a unified assessment for all children and as part of the roll-out of *Health for All Children* (vol.4).

We will develop and work towards implementation of a unified and integrated approach that meets all children's needs and statutory requirements (across current ASL, LAC, Child protection, and Hearings systems).

These re-engineered systems and processes must ensure that:

- The assessment framework informs the understanding of all professionals working with children.
- All new concerns about young people are assessed within the Integrated Assessment Framework, involving the clear pathways that have been identified.
- Professionals are well supported with advice and expertise from their own and other agencies when they have concerns about a child.
- Children who need it, have an integrated family and multi-agency action plan that will improve their situation, support the achievement of good outcomes and reduce risk.
- These children will have an identified lead professional to co-ordinate the work of agencies and ensure the monitoring of the action plan.
- Professionals and agencies can, where ever possible, resolve concerns themselves and reduce the number and range of professionals involved in the life of a child.
- All children/families with a disability have an identified keyworker if they wish one.
- There are co-ordinated local delivery mechanisms, which ensures that action plans are resourced, delivered and achieve improved outcomes.
- Children and families have ready access to information about the services and support available to them.
- All agencies, including SCRA and the Children's Panel, make communities aware of the responsibilities of services, the nature and reasons for moving to a unified approach, and about how community concerns will be dealt with including the nature of decisions of the Children's Hearings system.

A significant further development of the project plan will involve the clarification and refinement of key aspects, such as:

- ❑ The role of the lead professional
- ❑ Process of seamless management between universal and targeted services
- ❑ Guidance on the criteria and requirement for multi-agency planning and working arrangements
- ❑ Definitions of ‘complexity’, ‘persistence’, ‘seriousness’ and ‘significant need’
- ❑ Clarification about grounds and processes of referral to the Children’s Hearings System.

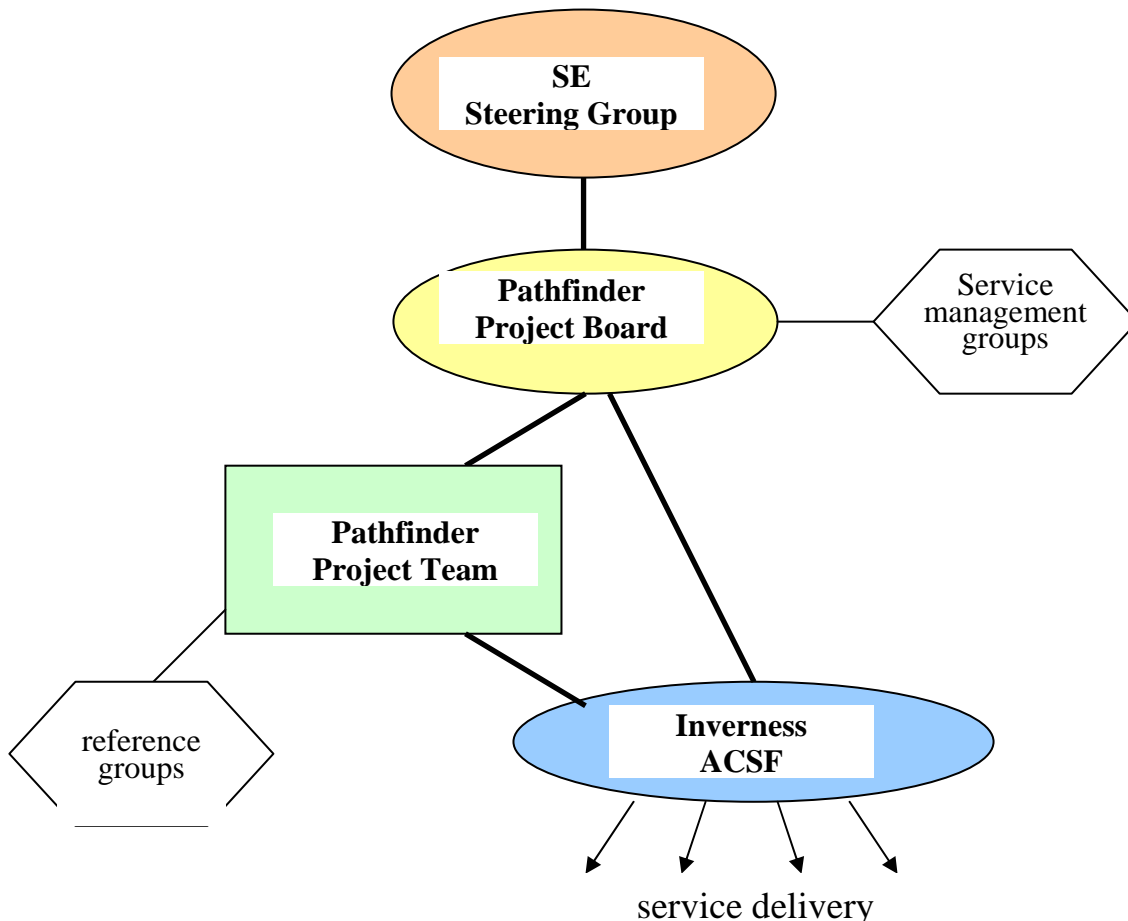
The project plan will also need to address the separate business process changes required for children coming new to the system, and those already within it.

Resources

The proposals set out in *Getting it Right for Every Child* are intended to reduce bureaucracy and paper work – a unified approach with a single child record, involving the empowerment of front line staff. Additional reports (for referrals, hearings, reviews) will cease as the assessment and plan will be the child’s record of needs and action to be taken.

It is assumed that successful implementation cannot be predicated on additional professional staff. There is though, a requirement for additional administrative and developmental capacity, to operate a new system in Highland, in addition to other existing processes. In particular, the process of change will have to be supported and carefully managed to ensure the safety and welfare of children, in both the pathfinder area, and in all other parts of the authority.

The change process requires to be supported by an explicit change and management infrastructure, as shown below.



The Project Board will determine the change processes to be undertaken as part of the pathfinding project, within the framework provided by the ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ proposals and the terms of this Project Plan. Appendix 1 sets out the role and remit.

The Board will not agree actions deemed to be outwith the GIRFEC framework by the Scottish Executive or actions that Highland’s Chief Officers are unable to put into effect.

Membership of the Project Board and associated forums will be as below:

Project Board:	<p>Director of Community Care (NHSH) Director of Education, Culture & Sport (THC) Director of Social Work (THC) Head of Operations (Northern Constabulary) Regional Reporter Manager (SCRA) Joint Head of Service Project Manager SE representation, to be confirmed, but is expected to include Stella Perrott, SEED, Youth Justice and Children’s Hearings Maureen Verrall, SEED, Children, Young People and Social Care Mike Gibson, SEED, Support for Learning Rosie Ilett, SEHD, Child and Maternal Health Unit Boyd McAdam, SEED, Youth Justice and Children’s Hearings Murray McVicar, SEFCS Data Sharing & Standards Representatives from Social Work, Schools, and Police may also attend National representative of Voluntary organisations</p>
Project Team:	<p>Project Manager Assessment Co-ordinator Secondments from Education, Health, Police & Social Work Project Administrator 3 x Administrative Officers (from June) 2 x external advisors</p>
Inverness Area Children’s Services Forum	<p>Inverness Area Service Managers and Integration Manager with appropriate co-opted officers</p>
Other Support:	<p>SE Pilot Co-ordinator Data Sharing & Standards: Children’s Services Co-ordinator</p>
Evaluation Team:	<p>University of Edinburgh SEED Researchers</p>

This infrastructure can be supported by existing staff with management and developmental remits, with dedicated additional support from the Scottish Executive, as indicated in the budget that is attached as appendix 2.

The infrastructure will be complemented by the Scottish Executive Pilot Co-ordinator and Data Sharing & Standards: Children's Services Co-ordinator, who will link with the Executive's dedicated infrastructure and all pilot authorities.

Initial summary of timescales

Task	Oct 05	Nov 05	Dec 05	Jan 06	Feb 06	Mar 06	April 06	May 06	Jun 06	July 06	Aug 06	Sep 06	Oct 06
1 Develop Project Plan	█	█	█	█									
2 Continue development of IAF	█	█	█	█	█	█							
3 Enhance and agree full detail of Project Plan		█	█	█	█								
4 Development of working tools						█	█	█	█	█			
5 Development of child's record						█	█	█	█	█			
6 Develop and complete communications strategy				█	█	█							
7 Identify core Project Team				█	█								
8 Highland stakeholders conference				█									
9 Development of linked Hall4 tools & processes					█	█	█	█	█	█			
10 Confirm all new business processes						█	█	█	█				
11 Develop training materials						█	█	█	█	█	█		
12 Undertake risk assessment						█	█	█	█				
13 Recruit Administrative Officers									█				
14 Training for senior staff											█		
15 Training for all staff											█	█	
16 Implementation*												█	█

* Implementation in Inverness: September 2006 – March 2007
Subsequent Areas: from April 2007

How risks will be managed

The full scope of business process and system change across all agencies and professional groups is as yet unknown. A dedicated risk assessment of the implications of the change process will be undertaken as an early priority exercise.

The potential risk factors include:

Strategic

- Lack of senior management and political 'buy in' to a significant change programme with far-reaching implications.
- Inadequate assessment and planning for the changes needed.
- Lack of integration with other linked initiatives.
- Insufficient resources (for the change process).
- Limited or ineffective partnership between the authority and Executive.

- Lack of clarity about objectives and success criteria.
- Lack of technology to support integration.

Operational

- Lack of team/professional 'buy in' to effect the necessary changes, including the continued operation of parallel or duplicate systems.
- Insufficient resources for the new way of working.
- Lack of tools, and/or inadequate training to implement new processes
- Children falling between two systems during transition phase, or transferring in or out of Pathfinder area.

Each of these, and all other, risk factors will be allowed for in a full assessment. The modelling of the impact and implications of change processes, through case scenarios, will enable a more comprehensive look at how children and families may be affected.

Considerable attention will be given to ensuring that case management does not fall between gaps created by changing systems. Accordingly, many new business processes will need to be developed in addition to and ahead of changes to existing pan-Highland systems.

Within the designated area and subsequent areas, an Integration Manager will be dedicated to the management of the unified approach, ensuring that all children in need are tracked, have an action plan and lead professional other core staff are identified. This will be supported by a dedicated administrative process.

The revised business process will be based around a clearly documented framework, involving explicit pathways for children with different levels of need, through universal services and if necessary into specialist services. It will be informed by a holistic assessment model, with full involvement from children and families.

Communication strategy

Some key elements of a communications strategy have already been established as part of the existing work on the development of an Integrated Assessment Framework. These include an existing Reference Group, consideration at agency management meetings and multi-agency seminars.

While these elements will be retained, it is necessary to review the strategy to take account of the larger scope of this project. This would be undertaken as an early priority.

Evaluating Success

For Children, families and communities

- Children get the help they need it when they need it. Help is proportionate, timely and appropriate.
- Action improves each child's situation and reduces risk.
- The approach supports the achievement of good outcomes, demonstrated through Children's Plan targets, for all children.

- Children and families experience a co-ordinated and unified approach to having their needs met.
- Children and families say they know about the services and support available to them, have confidence in using them; believe their needs are being address and their views heard.
- Communities are engaged in activities that support children.
- Communities are more confident about the responsibilities of services and how community concerns are being dealt with.

For Staff

- Staff (at all levels) have more time to spend on activities that will improve outcomes for children, and less in duplication and overlap (including fewer reports, meetings and discrete records).
- Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child, the response pathways are clear, and they can be confident of the response of others in the child's network.
- Staff are supported by their agency and other professionals and have the skills, knowledge and tools to improve children's lives.

For the agency

- There are effective polices, processes, structures and tools for the delivery of good outcomes. These are integrated into practice all levels and are sustainable beyond the efforts of individuals.
- Agencies individually and collectively know how well they are doing, can account for their agencies performance and there are mechanisms in place to resolve difficulties, improve performance.

Review mechanisms

We will evaluate

- Did we do what we set out to do?
- Did it change practice in the way we hoped?
- Are outcomes for children and their experiences better?

The first two elements will be undertaken on a continuous basis in order to inform the pilot as it develops. The first element will be achieved by regular report to the Project Board and the Scottish Executive Steering Group. The second will be achieved through monitoring by both the external advisors and by the formal evaluation.

The third element will involve evaluation using the success measures incorporated from the outset into the information gathering mechanisms.

We will also evaluate the costs of GIRFEC in comparison with current practice and advise the Scottish Executive and others of those costs, where they fall and the implications for future budget setting.

As well as evaluating the impact on children and their families we will also evaluate the impact on professionals and agency practice.

An evaluation format will be agreed between the Project Board, the existing researchers contracted to evaluate children's services in Highland, and researchers based at the Scottish Executive. This is likely to involve the use of targets outlined above, tracking mechanisms, and baseline comparisons with existing business processes.

The evaluation will require clear start and finish dates, albeit it is acknowledged that there will be a rolling programme of implementation.

A scheme and process for the dissemination of the findings of the project to other authorities will require to be established, and this will involve a commitment from Highland to provide reasonable support to share the learning experiences.

Appendix 1

Getting it Right for Every Child – Highland Board

Roles and Remit

Background

The Scottish Executive issued 'Getting it Right for Every Child' in June 2005. The proposals seek to ensure that all children in Scotland get the help they need when they need it and that they are supported by a range of agencies in an integrated way.

National implementation will be through

- legislation;
- the development of practice tools; and
- changing of structures, funding and governance arrangements where these are shown to be a barrier to change.

The Scottish Executive and Highland (the local authority, the police service and health board and voluntary sector partners) will develop the single assessment plan and record and guidance for and training on its delivery. The partnership will also assist agencies to develop the structures, approaches and mechanisms needed to improve responses to children who need help.

In order to take this work forward there will be a joint project Board consisting of

- Chief Officers from the relevant agencies.
- Representatives from the Scottish Executive to include education health and integrated children's services.
- A national representative of the voluntary sector

Remit

The remit of the Board is:

- To agree the work plan and allocation of responsibilities for delivery;
- To monitor, evaluate and report to agencies, elected Members and Ministers on the delivery of the work plan;
- [To contribute to the national dissemination of findings]
- To act as a sounding board for, and give advice to, the Scottish Executive in the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child;
- To agree the communication strategy for keeping stakeholders informed and involved in the project and for the group to contribute to that process; and
- To ensure the project maintains a clear focus on ensuring good outcomes for children and meeting their needs. To ensure the views of families and communities are incorporated into new approaches and practices.

Members of the Board will not agree actions deemed to be outwith the GIRFEC framework or which agencies and originations represented on the Board are not able to put into effect.

In addition to the project board there will be a joint management group to take forward the project on a day to day basis. The Scottish Executive is forming a National Steering Group on children's services and Highland will be represented on that group.

Annex 1 provides further details of how the Board meeting might be structured

Annex 2 provides an outline project management reporting structure.

It is proposed that the Board will meet every 6 weeks in the initial stages of the project and this will be reviewed at 6 months and a year after the start of the project (March 2006).

Suggested standing agenda

Introductions and welcome

Minutes of the last Board meeting

National overview/update

Progress report (listed below are the areas that might need to be covered by way of project management reports with the Board focussing on exceptions, new proposals or areas of particular importance).

- Communication, awareness and understanding of the project by stakeholders
- The development of the Assessment Plan and Record
- Technology and information systems
- Changing practices
- Staff training and development
- Feedback from evaluation and outcomes
- Progress and overview

Identification of management issues to be addressed by board (budget/resources, structures and governance).

Progress with other pathfinder projects.

Theme			
Reporting Period	Week beginning	Lead Officer	

TASKS	DESCRIPTION	STATUS

1. ACHIEVEMENTS THIS PERIOD

2. PLANS FOR NEXT PERIOD:	
New Plans	Previous Plans

3. MATTERS FOR MANAGEMENT ACTION / AWARENESS

4. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY PROGRESS

5. OVERALL "RAG" ASSESSMENT

KEY RISK LOG

RISK	LIKELIHOOD /IMPACT	RESPONSE	ACTION	WHO	WHEN