



Fife Child's Plan

Guidance for Practitioners
April 2024

getting
it right
for every child



Fife Partnership Creating a Fairer Fife

Fife child's plan guidance for practitioners

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the refreshed Child Wellbeing Pathway guidance as well as supporting guidance relating to other planning meetings such as, Looked After Child (LAC) Reviews, Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM), Co-Ordinated Support Plan (CSP) Meetings, etc. The child's plan template is the agreed partnership tool, report and minute templates will vary depending on the nature of the meeting.

As outlined in the refreshed Getting It Right guidance materials published in September 2022, the child's plan remains a core component of the GIRFEC approach to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people.

A child's plan is a non-statutory plan which should be considered if a child or young person needs a range of extra support. This may be provided by a single agency, or co-ordinated across several agencies.

National guidance confirms a child's plan should offer children, young people, and their families/carers a simple planning, assessment and decision-making process which leads to the right help, at the right time. Central to this is ensuring the voice of the child or young person is considered at every stage and that there is a clear explanation as to why the plan has been created, detail of the actions to be taken and the expected improvement for the child or young person.

The national guidance also states,

Acceptance of a child's plan within GIRFEC along with the advice, information and support which are offered is **voluntary**: Unless compulsory measures are justified, if the intervention requires co-operation from children, young people, and their families, they can reject any proposed interventions. The lead professional should ensure that children, young people and their families are aware of this.

Getting it right for every child Practice Statement – GIRFEC Child's Plan 2023

Where support is required, the relevant practitioner within a single agency planning context or the lead professional in a multi-agency planning context should work with the child/young person and their family/carers, and all of those involved in the child's plan to ensure that the support provided is regularly reviewed and evaluated to improve outcomes for the child or young person. The child's plan should be clear on which services or people will provide support, who is accountable for that support, and the way in which that support will be provided. This will help to empower children, young people and families and will support forward planning.

Decision-making regarding a child's plan within GIRFEC should seek and consider the views of the child or young person and their family. Professionals are required to respect their rights, in accordance with the principles of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and foundations of The Promise.

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) [change programme one](#)

In Fife the Getting it Right in Fife Framework and the Child Wellbeing Pathway (CWP) guidance outlines the single and multi-agency assessment and planning process where there are identified wellbeing concerns. The CWP guidance confirms the named person as a key point of contact to ensure coordinated support is available. A guiding principle is the importance of collaboration which includes partner agencies, children/young people, parents and carers.

When should a child's plan be considered?

All children and young people have the right to appropriate support from their families/carers and communities to enable them to reach their full potential across all aspects of wellbeing. If a wellbeing need has been identified, practitioners working with the child, young person, family member or carer should consider the 5 GIRFEC questions and liaise with the named person to agree and plan how best to support this identified wellbeing need.

If additional support is required for the child or young person and this can be provided by the agency that has identified the wellbeing need, a single agency child's plan can be initiated.

If it is assessed that additional support is required that involves a referral to agencies offering additional or intensive support and wellbeing continues to be a concern it will be important to arrange a **Team Around the Child Meeting (TAC)** meeting involving the child, young person, family or carer. Consideration at this point should be given as to whether a lead professional is required to coordinate and review a child's plan.

Who should be involved in the development and review of a child's plan?

If a multi-agency child's plan is agreed at a TAC, a lead professional should be identified. Consideration needs to be given to the skills, experience, and ability to coordinate and review the child's plan.

A lead professional could include those working in:

- universal services such as health and education.
- Specialist services such as CAMHS and social work.
- or in third sector organisations, for example, those supporting family wellbeing in community settings or offering support for children with complex conditions.

If a child or young person is supported by the Children & Families Social Work Service, is Looked After, or their name is placed on the child protection register, the lead professional will be a social worker.

Children/young people who require a multi-agency child's plan supported by a lead professional will include those who:

- are Looked After Children.
- are named on the child protection register.
- have significant additional support needs.
- have complex health needs.
- are in crisis and requiring considerable support from several agencies.

Statutory plans such as a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP) for education, Adoption Support plan, or Young Carers Statement can be part of the child's plan, where a child's plan within GIRFEC is accepted. This can ensure everyone working with a child or young person and their families/carers are able to consider the full range of support respective agencies can offer to help promote the child or young person's wellbeing and reduce repetition. If the support of a child's plan within GIRFEC is not accepted, these statutory plans may still need to be considered.

How does a chronology support a child's plan?

Chronologies are a critical part of a child's plan. A single-agency chronology highlights significant events, both strengths and concerns, in a child or young person's life to date. It provides a summary of information which can support discussion with a child/young person, their family/carers and practitioners working with them to develop a better understanding of how these events may impact the child or young person's wellbeing.

Decisions to complete a multi-agency chronology needs to take account of the wellbeing needs and range of services in place and will be a decision at a TAC meeting.

The lead professional will consolidate a multi-agency child chronology (MACC) for Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM) including an initial CPPM. Single agencies must quality assure their own chronologies for submission and share them with the child and family prior to the meeting along with any report being submitted. A MACC will include a statement noting that the lead professional collated the information and the format used details the source of the information.

How does a child's plan support transitions?

Well-planned transitions are a vital element of planning processes, changes, or transitions, include starting pre-school for the first time, moving through primary and secondary school, and preparing to leave school. Transitions also include moving from one local authority to another, for example because of a change of address or care setting. For children and young people with additional support needs for education, any additional support required for transitions should be identified and implemented by health visitors, family nurses and school leaders in line with statutory guidance.

The child's plan should be used to support good transitions by enabling those involved to sufficiently plan for changes together, and in time, to ensure co-ordination and continuity of support. Named person's or lead professionals should support a child or young person's wellbeing by working alongside them and their family and other practitioners involved in transition planning. They should ensure that the views of the child/young person and family/carer remain at the heart of the plan.

TAC meeting and agreeing a child's plan.

When a TAC meeting is arranged it is crucial that the reason for arranging the meeting is clear on the invite to the child/young person, family/carers and professionals invited. The agreed Wellbeing Assessment template should also be included for professionals to complete to submit alongside their single agency chronology.

The reports, chronologies and any existing plans should be submitted to the chair of the meeting within 3 working days of the meeting. The wellbeing assessment and chronologies should be shared with the parents/carers and the child/young person by the relevant agencies prior to the meeting, unless there is an exceptional circumstance which may increase risk to the child/young person.

At the TAC meeting each practitioner will contribute the information they are aware of and together an assessment of the needs, challenges and strengths will be developed. The chair will lead discussions to enable all involved - including the child/young person and their parent(s)/carer(s) - to highlight the identified strengths and challenges that are influencing the current situation.

This discussion and analysis should help to:

- Clarify the balance between strengths and challenges in the child's/young person's life.
- Evaluate the impact of the child's/young person's current situation on their wellbeing.
- Clarify any immediate and emerging risks to the child/young person and the strengths/protective factors which could manage/reduce risks.
- Highlight any differences of opinion between professionals or parents/carers in their understanding of the child's needs.

The shared discussion should be succinctly recorded on the agreed template for a TAC meeting and will be used to inform and create a child's plan.



TAC Minute
Template FINAL 1504



Child's Plan
Template FINAL Apri

Formulating a child's plan

The child's plan is a key document for the child/young person and family/carer. Using the **SMART** principles, **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-limited**, to develop the plan makes sure identified wellbeing needs are clear for the child/young person, parent/carers, and other professionals in the Team Around the Child.

A successful SMART child's plan will clearly set out expected tasks, relating to the desired outcomes identified, and specify the support and actions being put in place to help the child/young person and family/carer achieve

their goals. The child's plan should be used as a working document to effect change through the Team Around the Child to positively impact on a child/young person's wellbeing.

Specific: 'Meet parent once a week at home to do 1:1 work on routines is specific', whereas 'monitor parents' routines' is unclear and not specific.

Measurable: If you can't measure progress of actions or articulate how you will know when an outcome is achieved, they may have to be rewritten more clearly.

Achievable: Avoid setting people up to fail with unachievable expectations as overwhelmed people become discouraged and disengage. It is unrealistic to expect people to make several big changes simultaneously.

Realistic: The child's plan creates steppingstones which makes reaching goals realistic for a family.

Time-limited: Timescales should be realistic but also have primary consideration of a child/young person's wellbeing. This means basic needs must not be left unmet and fundamental parenting requirements should be fulfilled. If we have been providing support to the same family for a year with no changes being seen, is it reasonable to set another few months to review progress, or should we be doing something different now?

Outcomes and Actions:

When thinking about outcomes think about what you are trying to achieve – what needs to be different for the child/young person. Once outcomes have been identified you can then think clearly about and identify what needs to be done as well as who the best person is to do it, including the child/young person and their family/carers.

[Sharing and reviewing the child's plan](#)

Following the TAC meeting the child's plan should be shared with the child/young person, parents/carers and those professionals involved within 10 working days. They should be asked to respond with any comments or amendments within 10 working days and the lead professional should then finalise the plan and share with all involved.

The frequency of the review will be determined by the content within the plan and agreed by the TAC which includes child, young person, family and carer.