

Wellbeing

MAKING SCOTLAND

THE BEST PLACE TO GROW UP

SPRING 2013



Inside:

Why children's rights matter



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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 Joined up working in practice with
 Denny High's school-based police officer

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Some of the articles in this magazine have been written for us by members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Andrew Deans and Lauren King. Our thanks to them for their hard work and thought-provoking articles.

Our guest writers



Lauren King



Andrew Deans

Welcome to Wellbeing

Why should you read this magazine? Well, because it tells you what the Scottish Government and others are doing to promote children's rights and support their wellbeing - and how we're encouraging everyone to look out for our children and young people so that they grow up to be responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors.

They are Scotland's present and our future - and it's one we should all want to invest in.

This Government's ambition for children is clear: we want Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. We want them to be loved and cherished, safe and healthy, and to enjoy being young - it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, after all.

We believe that joining up children's services - with children's wellbeing at the heart of that approach - will help us achieve that ambition. That's where our Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach comes in.



*** Aileen Campbell**
Minister for Children and Young People

GIRFEC isn't an extra thing people have to do. It's a way for those who support children to work differently, making sure they are all on the same page. Where needed, GIRFEC links day-to-day work in education, health, policing, social work and the voluntary sector - in fact any public or voluntary organisation whose staff come into contact with children. It makes it easier for those different organisations to communicate consistently with each other, and with children and young people.

I know parents, carers and families want to do the best they can for their children, and I know the professionals they turn to for their children's education, healthcare and other services want that too. I also know that when those professionals work together - across their organisational boundaries - it leads to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

There's a lot of great work already under way around the country - you'll read about some of it in this magazine. I'm delighted that we've got articles written by members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Lauren King and Andrew Deans. We've also tried to sum up our proposed children's legislation in one page - no mean feat, believe me... and we've been back to school with PC Chris Devlin, whose beat is Denny High School.

I hope this magazine gives you a flavour of what GIRFEC is, what wellbeing's all about, and why we believe they are so important.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aileen Campbell".

Aileen Campbell
Minister for Children and Young People

www.scotland.gov.uk/girfec



For children up to school age, the named person is likely to be the health visitor

GIRFEC for beginners

Every organisation and company has its own culture: its own way of working, its own methods, jargon and acronyms. Public sector organisations are no exception, but sometimes this can make things more challenging when they have to work together across their organisational or geographical boundaries in order to improve the services they provide for the public.

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is a Scottish Government-led initiative which aims to tackle this by showing how services for children and young people can work together better to meet the needs of those they support. All the main public bodies in Scotland support the GIRFEC principles.

GIRFEC provides common ground for everyone – from childcare providers, teachers and health visitors to the voluntary sector, police and social workers. The GIRFEC structure helps people to work in the same way, using the same terminology, and allows discussions with the child and their family to focus on what is good in a child's life, and what might need attention or support.

A simple example might be a child who is clean and dressed suitably for the time of year but has recently become withdrawn or started fighting with other children. All may not be quite as well in their world as it first appears – and it's up to everyone involved in that child's care to try and provide any extra, appropriate support if needed – whether that's direct help for the child or support for the child and their parents.

The whole picture

For GIRFEC to work, there needs to be a 'named person' for every child. This is not taking over the role of the child's parent or carer – they will always have the key role in bringing up their child. The named person is a professional point of contact – if needed – mainly for children and their families, but also for other professionals.

It's someone who sees the whole picture about how a child is getting on. For children up to school age, the named person would likely be the health visitor. Once the child starts school, the named person would be a professional at their school – most likely a guidance teacher, head or depute head. Some groups of children would have different arrangements in place – and it would be up to their local authority to set these up. The named person's day job will mean they are already in regular contact with children, young people and their families. They will be encouraged to work closely with the child and their family wherever possible and would, in most cases, get their consent to share information with other professionals if they felt that could help.



➤ *For children up to school age, the named person would likely be the health visitor.*

Parents can approach the named person themselves – for example for a bit of advice about the 'terrible twos', or managing relationships with teenagers.

And anyone working with a child could suggest to the child and their family that they contact the named person if they seem to be having any difficulties – the idea is that it's OK sometimes to seek a bit of help.

Every child matters

Most children and young people will never need to draw on this resource but the 'e' in GIRFEC stands for 'every': it's there for every child if they ever need it.

We know that the majority of children and young people get all the love, support and encouragement they need from their parents and carers, and wider networks. But it is impossible to say which children (or families) may at some stage need some extra support and that's why the 'e' in GIRFEC is so important. GIRFEC works on the principle that everyone takes responsibility for nipping things in the bud. By tackling any concerns early on – sometimes with a relatively simple 'fix' – it is often possible to avert a major crisis later on. Examples might include directing a family to counselling services after a bereavement, or helping arrange for extended nursery hours to accommodate a change in parents' or carers' work patterns.

If difficulties do arise, the GIRFEC approach should mean a family only has to tell their story once – and where it's already in place, professionals and families have fewer meetings to attend.

Above all, GIRFEC ensures the child or young person and their family is at the very heart of things, allowing them, along with professionals, to think about how best a child or young person can be supported.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of children and young people is at the heart of the GIRFEC approach.

Wellbeing is about how things are going for children in their lives. The GIRFEC approach describes what it looks like when things are going well – in other words whether a child is:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

This helps children, young people, parents and carers and professionals to understand a child's wellbeing in the same way. They are sometimes known as 'SHANARRI' for short.

When Andrew met Aileen

Andrew Deans, a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament, reports on his interview with Aileen Campbell about GIRFEC, wellbeing and parenting.

Aileen Campbell MSP, the Minister for Children and Young People, has said that she wants Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. I got the chance to quiz her on this, and where GIRFEC fits in to making that a reality.



* Andrew Deans

'It is a lofty ambition', she admitted – but she was quick to point out that that's no reason not to have it as a target. Every parent wants to provide their child with the absolute best, so perhaps it's only right that those making the big decisions about Scotland's young people have the same mindset.

Reaching that goal, she explained, meant putting the rights of children at the heart of everything, particularly every child's right to support when they need it. And it applies to every child, too – no matter where in Scotland they live or who they are.

That's where GIRFEC comes in. If we want Scotland to be the best place for a child or young person to grow up, we have to get it right for every child.

GIRFEC, in the Minister's mind, is about making sure that all the services that affect young people – whether it's education, health or anything else – are focused on what the child needs. Not just any child, but what that particular child needs. And it isn't enough for this to happen in some places and not in others; the essence of GIRFEC is making it happen everywhere.



Andrew Deans quizzed Minister for Children and Young People, Aileen Campbell

I wondered where the Children and Young People Bill fitted in to that idea. When I asked about it, it struck me that the Bill has a very clear purpose: increasing the pace of change. It is a way of using the law to make sure that everyone across Scotland involved in children's services has to take the same approach. A way of doing that as quickly as possible in order to start getting it right as soon as we can.

➤ *The essence of GIRFEC is making it happen everywhere*

At the same time, however, the Bill is just part of the solution. The Minister spoke about other things that we need to be doing to make that ambition a reality. This includes our 'rights respecting' schools, where children are taught in depth about the rights that they have so that they know what they can expect from the services they get.

I asked the Minister about the idea of a 'named person' for every child, and whether people should be worried about it. Her response was that lots of children and families will never need to use their named person, but for those who do it would be a very positive thing.

Having a named person for every child meant having one person who should have all the information from all the different services that a child might access - one person who knows the whole story and can see the whole picture. Parents and children should be able to tell their story once and get any help and support they need, rather than going to each service individually and getting a service which isn't joined up.

Indeed, the Minister has a very good reason to want to achieve her ambition for Scotland. As a parent of a two-year-old boy herself, she has a personal interest in getting it right.

The Children & Young People Bill

We want to introduce a new law that we believe will help to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. We want the law to make sure the Scottish Government and public services keep encouraging and supporting children's rights. And we want to make the public services that support children even better.

A Bill is what an Act of Parliament is called before it has been finally agreed by the Scottish Parliament.

It sets out proposals for things that could become laws once the Act is passed by Parliament. Ours is called The Children and Young People Bill.

Three hundred people and organisations responded when we consulted about our proposals last year.

Almost 2,500 children and young people got involved as well. We listened to what they told us, and will reflect their thoughts in the final Bill.

Five things about the Bill...



1

Describing wellbeing

The new law will describe what it looks like when things are going well for a child or young person. It will do this using eight areas of 'wellbeing' - safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included. Most people who responded said they thought this covers all the different things that affect children's lives. They said it would help make sure that everyone understands children's wellbeing in the same way.



2

Better services

The new law will say that all public services supporting children must work together to make sure all children are doing well. For example, schools, hospitals, social work services and others will have to work together when they are designing a service for children, when they are planning how they will deliver that service, and when they are actually providing the service.



3

Early learning and care

The new law will increase the amount of pre-school education that three- and four-year-olds can get. This will increase to at least 600 hours per year. We will call this Early Learning and Childcare. At the moment, most three- and four-year-olds get two and a half hours a day. We will also increase the flexibility of how those hours are delivered to support parents.



4

Named person

The new law will say that every child must have a 'named person' from the moment they are born to when they leave school. The named person is the child's (and their family's) first point of contact if they want any information, advice, or if they want to talk about any worries. (See pages 4 and 5 for more about the role of the named person.)



5

Children who are looked after by their local authority

The new law will give young people who are looked after by their local authority the right to ask for help from the council until they are 25 years old. At the moment they can only do this until they are 21.

There's a lot more in the Bill - visit our website to get the full picture: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation

What children's rights mean to me

The new law will help make sure children's rights are at the centre of everything we do. These are the rights described in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Here, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Mike Russell explains what children's rights mean to him.

It is an exciting time for the rights agenda in Scotland. The Children and Young People Bill is fast approaching, and we'll shortly be contributing to the next UK review on how we're implementing the recommendations of the UNCRC.

There is no 'silver bullet' when it comes to implementing the UNCRC – while there's a role for legislation so Ministers can set the overall direction of travel, that is only one part of the puzzle, albeit an important one.



★ Mike Russell
Cabinet Secretary for
Education and Lifelong Learning

We are supportive of the UNCRC – it's a strong and relevant description of what we want children's lives to be like in Scotland. Our approach to its implementation has to focus on practical changes to the ways in which we work – after all, it's only by changing children's day-to-day experiences that we can make their rights real.

Personally, I think we need to make it easier for people to understand the idea of children's rights. We've got to improve awareness and understanding of how those rights should shape our lives. And we can't do this without education:

- We need to increase awareness amongst professionals, making sure that a recognition of rights is central to the common core of skills, knowledge and values which exist in the children's workforce.

- We need to increase awareness for children and young people through their schools. Education Scotland is working closely with UNICEF and the Children's Commissioner to deliver a three-year programme which will do just that.

We all have a key role to play in ensuring all children and young people in Scotland have the best outcomes – and making their rights real for them will go a long way towards this.

Above all, we need to make sure that children and young people are placed at the centre of everything we do – so that they are heard, and that we respond quickly and effectively to their needs. This is exactly what Getting it right for every child is all about.

www.scotland.gov.uk/girfec



Lauren King talked to other young carers

Benefits of GIRFEC for young carers

Lauren King - a young carer and member of the Scottish Youth Parliament - went to South Lanarkshire to report on a project that is supporting other young carers.

Emotional support, physical help, moving and handling, personal care, administering medication, shopping, cleaning, cooking, attending appointments and paying bills are only some of the tasks that a young carer does on a daily basis. Whether for a sibling, parent or grandparent, a young carer takes on a tremendous burden each and every day. From day to day these precious young people take on an adult's role, to look after their family and juggle the additional roles and pressures of being a young person.

The underlying question is, how do they cope? The help young carers receive from young carers' support services is vital to help them manage. I met with a group from South Lanarkshire's Young Carers' Forum to let them explain how the support they have received has benefited them...

After meeting with South Lanarkshire Young Carers Forum, it was clear to see the many benefits and impacts GIRFEC has had to help make sure young carers are supported in every possible way.

Making sure young carers were directed to the correct support is one of the main issues. Schools and social workers are increasingly referring people to the appropriate young carers' service for them, making sure that as many young carers are identified as quickly as possible.

When the young carers were asked what kind of support they had received at school and how did it benefit you, they told of how their teachers would extend deadlines, email them work so they could keep up to speed, gave flexible supported study

and in some cases they were provided with active breaks – where they could go to take a break from class if they were struggling to cope. The young carers spoke fondly of the support their school gave them, one said, “It gave me a chance to actually pass my exams.”

The young carers said it is important that schools know early on if a young person has a caring role – otherwise things can get very tough for them at school, especially the pressure of keeping up with deadlines and grades.

“You get a sense of community, belonging, a sense of purpose and you learn that you’re not the only one.” This was the feeling of one young carer when asked about the benefits of being a carer and being involved in the Forum. Others said that being involved had improved their confidence, self-esteem, and even their health. This was because they got a chance to talk, a chance to meet new people and ultimately this led to them being less stressed and happier.

Some said they felt more mature and that they had learned to use their experience as a young carer to their advantage. Some had helped identify other young carers and got them involved with appropriate services – leaving them with a sense of achievement and pride as they acknowledged that they had helped someone in a similar situation to themselves.

So what could have been done to make sure their lives were easier? The forum thought it was vital that more young carers were recognised at a younger age, and they felt doctors or

Most of the young carers wanted to highlight that being in the young carers’ project had opened up so many new avenues for them. Getting to go to events such as The Scottish

➤ *“You get a sense of community, belonging, a sense of purpose and you learn that you’re not the only one.”*

social workers could help with this. They also felt that more awareness and understanding about the term ‘young carer’ was needed. Not only that, they felt a better explanation needed to be given to a young carer, not just titling them ‘young carer’ but giving them a basic understanding of what that means.

However, the young carers also felt they have had so many benefits from the project. Getting time out from caring was crucial for their survival. Having someone to talk to in confidence; knowing that they weren’t being judged was a pivotal factor for many.

Young Carers Festival, respite residential breaks and even getting to try new things such as driving, golf and skiing lessons. Many of the young carers wouldn’t even dream of having these opportunities – in many cases, once in a lifetime adventures.

After meeting with South Lanarkshire Young Carers Forum, it was very clear that they treasured their service and the staff, as I’m sure most other young carers would too. The services provided for young carers do on the whole help to get it right for as many young carers as possible.





PC Chris takes a full part in all the school's activities

Back to school with PC Chris

PC Chris Devlin is preparing to talk to a class of first-years at Denny High School about internet safety.

One of the boys has to show him how to get his PowerPoint started but once he gets going, there's no doubt his presentation hits home. For a generation that thinks nothing of spending three hours every evening networking and gaming on-line, Chris's messages are perfectly pitched and get everyone talking about how they can keep themselves safe in cyberspace.

PC Chris, as he is known in the school, has been Denny High's campus-based police officer for three years. The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach promotes and encourages 'multi-agency' working and that's what Chris's role is all about. In fact, if you want to see what multi-agency working looks like in real life, you just need to spend a day with Chris as he goes about his duties in the school.

In the office Chris shares with the school's family support unit, the eight GIRFEC wellbeing indicators are clear to see - in big stickers on the back of the door. Chris is steeped in the GIRFEC approach and structures his work on whether the children and young people at the school are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. "I don't even think about it any more - it's just what I do," he explains. This is obvious on his lunchtime walkabouts around the school and in the local community,

where is he clearly well-known and well-respected. One boy – just back after being excluded from school – makes a bee-line for Chris and asks if they can meet for a chat to help him stay on track.

Chris takes a full part in all the school's activities. As well as giving presentations about subjects like internet safety, community safety, domestic violence and alcohol, he takes after-school swimming club two evenings a week and gets involved in other school activities like Duke of Edinburgh's Award and basketball.

Safer

When the school recently asked the pupils what they think of their very own police officer, one response said simply: "We love PC Chris." Another said: "I think PC Chris is a very good idea to have around the school. My opinion is that he has reduced the amount of fights and I feel safer than before."

But PC Chris isn't just there to stop skirmishes in the school refectory – although he has been very successful in doing so. His role is to support the school's guidance teachers in working with the pupils to identify any potential difficulties early on. This means they are more likely to work out solutions that help improve outcomes for the individual children and young people at the school.

During school holidays, he runs 'nurture' groups for some of the children, and he also supports children coming through from primary, who may be finding the prospect of the 1,300-pupil high school rather daunting. In other words, it's all about the wellbeing of every child at the school.

Home visits

Chris is also closely involved in managing truancy, which often involves home visits. "Most parents welcome the fact that I can have a chat and support them and their children," says Chris. He reckons he's never had to visit the same family twice.

"Home visits help me understand what some of the kids are up against – if your home life is chaotic, being at school's hard. You're tired, stressed, you've maybe not had any breakfast. Now what I'm finding is that if they get fed up in school, they will come and have a chat with me when things get a bit much."

Gaining the trust of the school community also allows Chris to act as a valuable bridge between the school and the police out in the local community – and this has had a positive knock-on effect on anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. There has been a 30 per cent reduction in youth disorder in the local community since Chris joined the school.

➤ "I think PC Chris is a very good idea... My opinion is that he has reduced the amount of fights and I feel safer than before."

An unexpected side effect of PC Chris's role has been the upsurge in interest among the pupils in joining the police themselves. As the school's Rector, Stephen Miller, says: "My pupils have been so impressed with the positive role model of PC Devlin that many have seriously considered joining the service themselves."

Inter-agency work

Stephen Miller continues: "This is one of the most vivid illustrations of effective inter-agency working that I have experienced in my teaching career. The real-life input that only a serving police officer can have to aspects of personal and social education speaks persuasively of the need for such co-operation to continue."

And that's echoed by another pupil, responding to the survey about the school's very own policeman. They simply said: "PC Chris has made a big change in the grounds of Denny High. I strongly recommend this approach to all schools in Scotland."



Alex Horne wants his experience in care to have had a positive impact

Nurturing a caring attitude

Alex and Sharon know what it's like to be in care. Here, they share some of their experiences and explain how some of the adults in their lives helped get it right for them.

“The experience of being in care changes everything. It could send you down different paths in your life but it can open doors as well. And once you open one door, you open so many more.” That’s how Alex Horne sums things up, and his words are echoed by Sharon Smith.

Both Alex and Sharon were looked after away from home when they were teenagers. At 13, Alex was fostered before spending time in a residential unit and finally settling in a residential school, which he says worked best for him. He moved into supported accommodation at 16 and now lives with his partner and baby daughter in their own home in Ayr.

Sharon went into residential care when she was 15, followed at 16 by two years in supported accommodation. She’s now doing up her own place with her partner, having recently completed a modern apprenticeship.

Both speak with quiet determination about how they want their experiences in care to have a positive impact – not just on their lives but on the

➤ *The experience of being in care changes everything. It could send you down different paths in your life but it can open doors as well. And once you open one door, you open so many more.*



Alex with Sharon Smith, who now wants to qualify as a residential support worker

lives of future generations of children and young people who may find themselves being fostered or looked after in residential schools or units.

Sharon says she loved her time in residential care and supported accommodation. She returns regularly to the unit as informal mentor and friend to other young people, and hopes to get the HNC she'll need to go back as a qualified residential support worker. Sharon may not have heard the phrase, 'Getting it right for every child' but it's clear that the professionals who supported her certainly had. "I felt loved and supported. It changed my perspective, opened my eyes and changed my career ideas," she says.

A turning point for Alex came early on when he was invited to join a group of young people in care who were helping train social workers at Robert Gordon University.

"We started with simple things," explains Alex. "It was about meeting and greeting us with respect - keeping eye contact and shaking hands." The young people also did an exercise to 'design' their ideal social worker. "We drew around one of the students and filled in the outline with words describing someone who knew how to treat us with respect, trust and understanding," he recalls. He felt it was somewhere his views were listened to, and that made a big difference.

For Alex, this early experience made him determined to do more. He's currently working with voluntary organisation, Who Cares? Scotland, helping them deliver corporate parenting training to local authorities, bringing GIRFEC vividly to life by sharing his own experiences. "GIRFEC means everyone takes responsibility for the child or young person - and discusses

the big decisions with them." For Alex, a good example would be finding children or young people foster placements in or near their home town - and involving them in the decisions that affect their outcomes in life.

Meanwhile, Sharon is working with Young Voice in South Lanarkshire, speaking to children in care about what to expect and what they're entitled to in terms of training and benefits, and helping them overcome some of the barriers life has put in their way.

Alex has also been working as a young inspector with the Care Inspectorate, giving him a chance to see all aspects of children's services in different local authorities. "I'm getting the chance to speak to young people about GIRFEC and hear from them how it's making a difference - because that's what really matters."

Getting it right for Ryan



Pictures speak louder than words, so it's said – which is why we're telling 'Ryan's story'. It's a series of powerful images with a short narrative that shows how the Getting it right for every child approach can help young people and their families get back on track.

We have plenty of case studies on our website but we wanted to bring them to life more vividly to help people understand what GIRFEC is all about. Ryan's story is based on several of these case studies.

Ryan tells how his school and the police work together to make sure that he is safe, healthy and included. It's about how relatively small changes make a big difference for the whole family. Because we've told it from Ryan's point of view, there isn't a lot of detail about how the process works – if you're interested in that, there's plenty on our website.

Ryan might not know about the processes behind the GIRFEC approach, but he does know that he is fully involved in decisions that affect him – and that, with a little help from his named person – he and his dad are back on track.

We developed our script in collaboration with young actors from Edinburgh theatre group, Strangetown, which also provided actors Daniel Crawford and Michael Ivackovic to play Ryan and his younger brother Scott.

Strangetown is a Leith-based theatre company for 5-25 year-olds, offering classes and courses and running drama projects across Edinburgh. A group of young actors aged from 10-17 tested out scenes for us, and gave us feedback on the language and what kind of approach they thought would resonate with young people. Many of their suggestions are included in the final production.

If you aren't familiar with GIRFEC, we hope Ryan's story will help you understand it. It could also be used for training and awareness-raising and above all we hope it will help demonstrate our commitment to getting it right for every child and young person in Scotland.

Hear Ryan's story...

www.scotland.gov.uk/girfec