



# Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 1 – Using the National Practice Model – 2022



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## Contents

Practice Guidance – Using the National Practice Model	1
1. Background	2
2. Overview of key changes	3
3. Introduction	4
4. The Getting it right for every child National Practice Model	5
5. Using the National Practice Model	7
6. The Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI)	8
7. Undertaking an assessment using the My World Triangle	10
8. Using the My World Triangle	11
9. Analysing information using the Resilience Matrix	13
10. How can the Resilience Matrix be used in GIRFEC?	16
11. Developing a plan for support	18
Annex A – Glossary of terms	19

## Practice Guidance – Using the National Practice Model

This is the first Practice Guidance in a series to help and support practitioners and managers embed and implement **Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)** into their everyday practice. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Scottish Government's **GIRFEC Policy Statement**, which refreshes our GIRFEC Values and Principles, and the Core Components of the approach.

The Guidance series is designed to provide further information on the key roles of GIRFEC, **Assessment of Wellbeing**, on how to use the **National Practice Model** and to guide our practice and provide clarity and confidence in **Information sharing**.

### The Practice Guidance

Practice Guidance 1. Using the **National Practice Model**

- Improving outcomes using the **Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI)**
- Gathering information with the **My World Triangle**
- Analysing information with the **Resilience Matrix**

Practice Guidance 2. The role of the **named person**

Practice Guidance 3. The role of the **lead professional**

Practice Guidance 4. Information sharing

### The Statutory Guidance

Assessment of Wellbeing – Part 18 (Section 96) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

## 1. Background

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) (see [glossary](#)) is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and families (for definition of child or young person and family see [glossary](#)) with the right support at the right time – so that every child and young person in Scotland can reach their full potential.

This guidance on using the National Practice Model is intended for practitioners and service leads who work with children, young people and families and aims to provide practitioners with a deeper understanding of wellbeing.

The National Practice Model seeks to support practitioners to consider ways to improve wellbeing for a child or young person.

It seeks to reassure leaders, managers and practitioners about how GIRFEC should be delivered within the current legislative and policy framework of rights, information sharing, and delivery of supports and services to children, young people and their families.

Using the National Practice Model is part of a series of guidance documents and should be read alongside the following:

[Practice Guidance 2 - The role of the named person](#)

[Practice Guidance 3 - The role of the lead professional](#)

[Practice Guidance 4 - Information Sharing](#)

[Assessment of Wellbeing - Part 18 \(Section 96\) of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

## 2. Overview of key changes

The refreshed National Practice Model contains a number of key changes throughout the document:

- Greater emphasis on child-centred, rights-respecting, strengths-based practice and the inclusion of children, young people and their families at every stage of the process;
- Simpler language identified which can be used when working together with children, young people and families;
- A deeper understanding of the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in considering the My World Triangle; and
- Further detail provided on the Resilience Matrix.

### 3. Introduction

With the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) (see [glossary](#)) as its foundation, GIRFEC provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. GIRFEC is evidence-based, is internationally recognised and is an example of a child rights-based approach. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by practitioners across children's services, changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of children, young people and their families. However, more needs to be achieved as we work towards [Keeping The Promise](#) to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all children in Scotland.

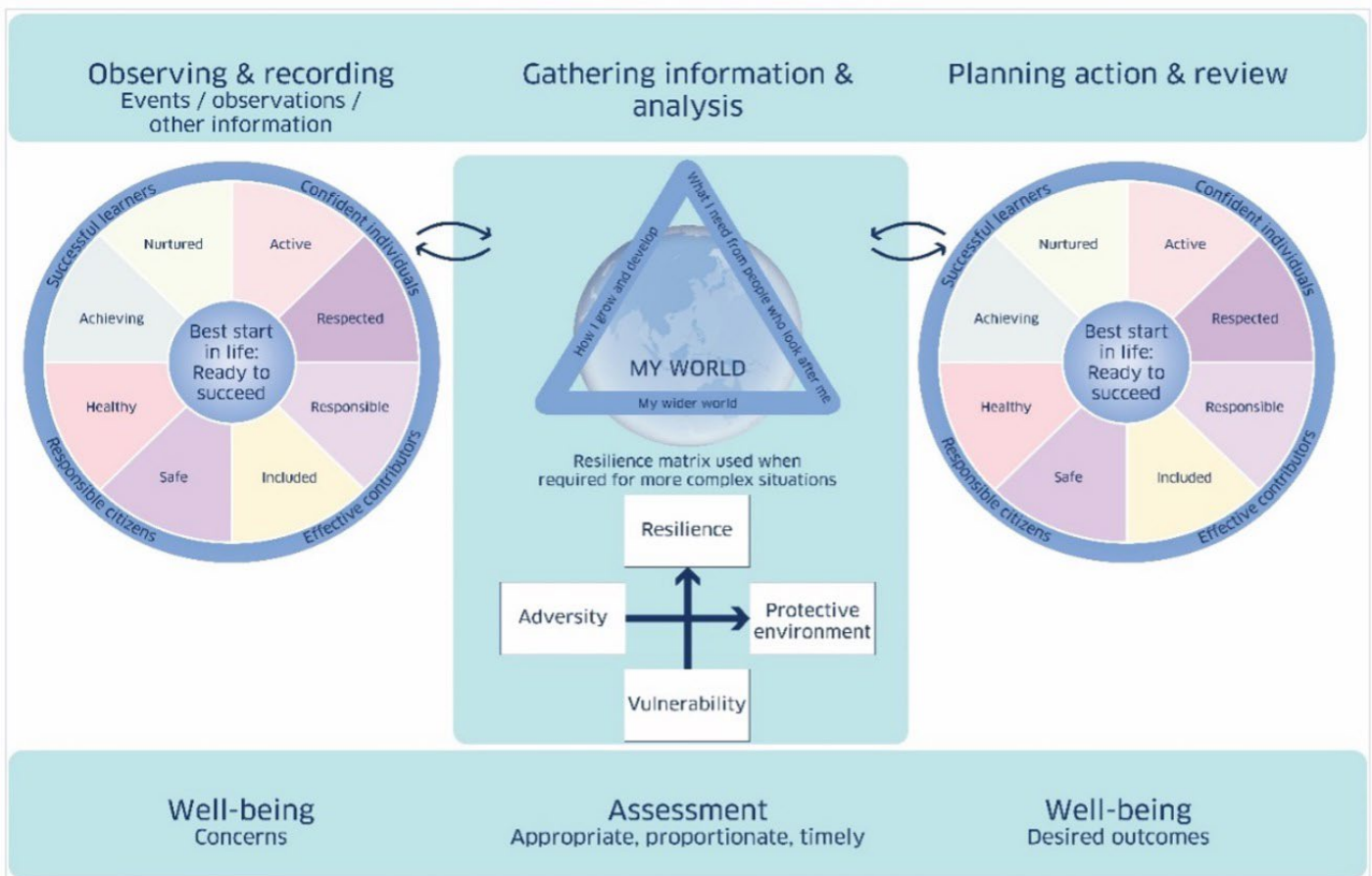
The refreshed values and principles of GIRFEC we want to fully embed and implement are:

- Placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them;
- Working together with families to enable a rights respecting, strengths-based, inclusive approach;
- Understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society;
- Valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly;
- Considering and addressing inequalities;
- Providing support for children, young people and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential; and
- Everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

## 4. The Getting it right for every child National Practice Model

The National Practice Model diagram summary below brings together the My World Triangle, Resilience Matrix, eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) (see [glossary](#)) and the four contexts for learning within [Curriculum for Excellence](#), to support overall assessment. It is intended to provide a structure to support practitioners, working together with children, young people and families, to make effective use of assessment information. This information will likely have been gathered from multiple sources, including regular information gathering processes on the progress of a child or young person with full participation from the child or young person.

### National practice model



Making sense of that information is a crucial next step before making a plan which supports a child or young person. A resilience-based approach fits closely with the aims of GIRFEC to build on the strengths in the child's whole world, always drawing on what the family, community and universal services can offer.

When assessment, planning and action are needed, the GIRFEC National Practice Model can be used in a single or multi-agency (see [glossary](#)) context:

- It provides a framework to structure and analyse information consistently to take account of the strengths, challenges faced by a child or young person, alongside their needs, and to consider the scaffolding of support that may be required; and
- It enables full participation of children, young people and their families in gathering information to assess what support they may need, and to make joint decisions to plan and deliver that support.

The National Practice Model is based on an understanding of a child or young person's world based on an ecological model (see [glossary](#)) that considers the child or young person to be at the heart of their family and community. It is a dynamic and evolving process of assessment, analysis, action and review, and a way to identify outcomes and solutions together with children or young people.

Using the National Practice Model in this consistent way allows practitioners, together with children, young people and families, to undertake an assessment, construct a plan and provide appropriate support. It also allows for regular and consistent review of the plan.



## 5. Using the National Practice Model

It is important to note that there will be occasions when, through the professional judgement of practitioners, emergency procedures must be instigated to address an immediate need for the child or young person to be 'safe'.

The wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) can be used to structure the recording of routine information about a child or young person. This will allow proportionate and relevant information to be shared lawfully ([Practice Guidance 4: Information sharing](#)).

The National Practice Model has four steps outlined below. The voice of the child or young person should be evident at all stages; their opinions and perspectives need to be taken into account in accordance with age (see [glossary](#)) and maturity of the child (UNCRC, Article 12) in a developmentally appropriate way:

- [The Wellbeing Indicators](#): Using the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) in the 'Wellbeing Wheel' to observe, discuss and record information which may indicate the scaffolding of support needed for a child or young person.
- [The 'My World' Triangle](#): Helps to understand a child or young person's whole world. It can be used to explore their experience at every stage, recognising there are connections between the different parts of their world. In the assessment process, it can be used to explore strengths, needs and risks.
- [The Resilience Matrix](#): Used in more complex situations, the Resilience Matrix helps organise and analyse information when there is a perceived risk to a child or young person.
- [Planning, action and review using the 'Wellbeing Wheel'](#): When the child or young person's needs are clear, they can be summarised using the Wellbeing Wheel to develop an individual plan to provide support.

## 6. The Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI)

Wellbeing is considered and assessed across the aspects of children and young people being Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These are the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) as referred to within section 96(2) in Part 18 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Under the [Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#), parents (see definition in [glossary](#)) have the responsibility to safeguard and promote the health, development and welfare of their children (see section 1(1)(a) on the parental responsibility to safeguard and promote a child's health, development and welfare. This is subject to section 3(1)(b), (d) and (3) of the Act). Where parents and families require support to do this, the GIRFEC approach aims to ensure that early offers of support are made available.

The core components of GIRFEC (please see the [Policy Statement](#)) provide a framework, using common language across a range of sectors.

The eight indicators in the 'Wellbeing Wheel' identify the areas in which an Assessment of Wellbeing is demonstrated, in order to enable all children and young people to reach their full potential. They allow practitioners, together with children and young people, to discuss, consider and record observations, events, strengths and needs, and to plan support. The 'My World Triangle' and the 'Resilience Matrix' are used in conjunction to gather, structure and assist in the analysis of information. In some cases, recording progress using the wellbeing indicators will allow the identification of needs that only become apparent from cumulative information or collated single-agency or multi-agency records.

There are five key GIRFEC questions that practitioners should ask themselves when considering a child or young person's wellbeing needs, whilst maintaining a focus on the rights of the child. The child or young person should fully participate in discussions when considering these questions:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now that is needed and appropriate to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency or organisation do now to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

**Safe** – growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect.

**Healthy** – having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.

**Achieving** – being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

**Nurtured** – growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity.

**Active** – having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

**Respected** – being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.

**Responsible** – having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.

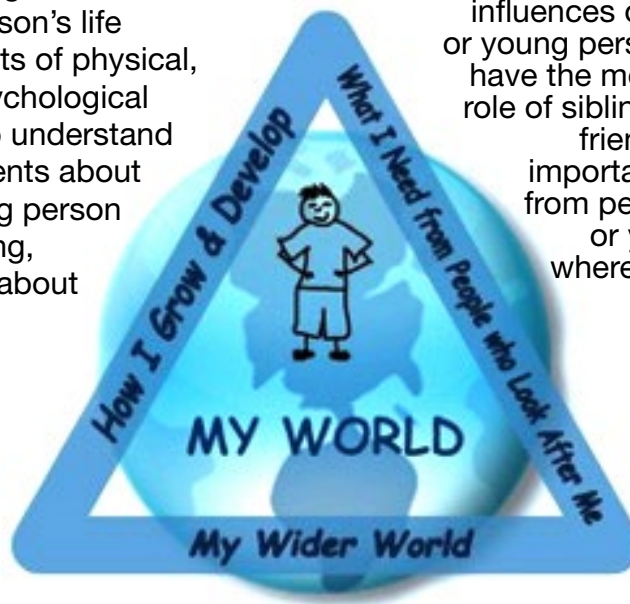
**Included** – having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community.

## 7. Undertaking an assessment using the My World Triangle

The main tool for assessing the current circumstances in a child or young person's whole world is the My World Triangle. The fundamental importance of supportive and trusted relationships can be explored using the Triangle, which is especially relevant considering our ambition of all children and young people growing up loved, safe and respected. The Triangle has been developed from a knowledge and research base in relation to children's development and its use helps to support the realisation of children's rights.

### My World Triangle

**How I grow and develop** is where consideration should be given to factors in the child or young person's life relating to various aspects of physical, cognitive, social and psychological development. In order to understand and reach sound judgments about how well a child or young person is growing and developing, practitioners must think about many different aspects of their lives including: learning and achieving, positive relationships with family and friends, self-confidence, independence and communication.



**What I need from the people who look after me** accounts for the critical influences of other people in the child or young person's life. Parents normally have the most significant role, but the role of siblings, wider family, teachers, friends and community is also important. Considering the inputs from people surrounding the child or young person can indicate where there are strong supports and where other supports are required. Practitioners must think about a range of factors including: every day care and support, positive adult role models, knowing what is going to happen and when, and an understanding of family background, beliefs and culture.

**My wider world** reflects how the communities where children and young people grow up can have a significant impact on their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families. The level of support available from a child or young person's wider family, social networks and within their neighbourhood can have differing effects. Practitioners must think about the local context including: employment, education, healthcare, housing and sense of belonging and safety.

**The whole child or young person: Physical, Social, Educational, Emotional, Spiritual & Psychological development**

## 8. Using the My World Triangle

Practitioners should support children, young people and families to fully participate in discussions about what is happening in a child or young person's world. Using the 'My World Triangle' allows practitioners, together with children, young people and families, to consider:

- How the child or young person is growing and developing;
- What the child or young person needs and has a right to from the people who look after them; and
- The impact of the child or young person's wider world of family, friends, community and society.

If practitioners are concerned about harm or significant harm related to a child or young person, refer to the [Child Protection Guidance \(2021\)](#).

In all cases, information should be divided into strengths and challenges faced by a child or young person and family. Practitioners should consider all sides of the Triangle in relation to a child or young person, but it may not be necessary to gather detailed information on all sides of the Triangle if this is not proportionate to the issues identified.

Many factors shape children and young people's development from before birth, throughout childhood, adolescence and beyond. These include a mixture of genetic and individual factors (nature) and the child or young person's experiences (nurture) in their family environment, learning settings and communities. This includes impacts of poverty, inequality and discrimination. Secure attachments to adult caregivers are crucial for healthy childhood development, future relationships and emotional wellbeing into adulthood. Adverse or traumatic experiences can impact on children's healthy development and wellbeing. Children and young people can be more vulnerable to the impacts of adversity and trauma (compared to adults) because their brains are still developing.

Studies of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) show that early, effective support is important to support resilience and mitigate the impact of adversity and trauma. Brain adaptability in childhood means children and young people are particularly responsive to healing interventions at this life-stage.

The My World Triangle examines key aspects of the child or young person's wellbeing across the three sides of the Triangle. These enable practitioners, together with children and young people, to think about what is happening in a child or young person's whole world.

**Using the information to assess a child or young person's needs:** Practitioners routinely gather some of the information across the sides of the My World Triangle through their work with children, young people and families. The information gathered, alongside any assessments undertaken, should determine the need for and right to additional support. It is important to consider that what is happening on one side of the Triangle may have a significant impact on another side. There may be overlap between the different sides of the Triangle. Use of The My World Triangle should be proportionate to the need identified.

Some critical questions for practitioners to consider during the assessment:

- What are the views of the child, young person and their family?
- What are the strengths, talents and needs of this child or young person?
- Which aspects of family relationships promote the child or young person's development and wellbeing?
- How can the parent-child relationship be strengthened?
- What other factors are influencing the child or young person's wellbeing and development?
- What would help the parents to support the child or young person to reach their full potential?

A child or young person's age and stage of development should have a bearing on the assessment of their needs and the planning and actions taken to support them.

Children, young people and families should be supported to fully participate in discussions as the assessment of need is made, and be involved in decision-making, including receiving accessible information on the decisions reached and why.

All children and young people are likely to have strengths and also to face challenges in their lives. The balance between these is important, as is considering the strengths to be built upon and what can be changed to reduce challenges.

Practitioners should take account of factors that may enhance a family's support, such as the availability of good relationships with extended family, friends or community, and factors promoting personal resilience. When adult services are working with an individual, they should consider how their help can positively impact upon children and young people.

To supplement an assessment of the child or young person's needs or to explore specific areas of the 'My World Triangle' in more depth, practitioners may wish to make use of specialist reports from other professionals, including the third sector. These specialist reports may be made available through the family, or the practitioner may need to discuss with the child, young person and their family the benefits of securing these from specialists.

## 9. Analysing information using the Resilience Matrix

The Resilience Matrix enables practitioners, together with children, young people and families, to consider characteristics that may cause vulnerability and factors that can contribute to adversity, alongside factors that create a protective environment and resilience within the child or young person.

The aim of this process is to consider the actions needed to support the child or young person by strengthening protective factors and resilience and reducing adversity and vulnerability.

The Resilience Matrix allows the practitioner, child, young person and their family to take the strengths and challenges identified from gathering information using the My World Triangle, along with any specialist assessments, and to group that information within the four headings of resilience, vulnerability, adversity and the protective environment.

The concept of resilience is fundamental to children and young people's wellbeing and is used in assessments by practitioners from many agencies. Resilience in this context is understood as the process of children and young people adapting well in the face of adversity, stress and trauma. A focus on resilience is not to suggest that adversity can be overcome by individual effort or that children and young people should be able to be resilient in the face of severe abuse and neglect, or multiple adversities; it is rather to recognise children and young people's achievements despite such experiences.

Evidence shows that a resilience approach should look beyond individual coping characteristics and should focus on changing environmental hazards and stressors, as well as enhancing individual, family and services responses and support. Research has identified a range of protective factors which support resilience, which include: support from a trusted adult, education, safe schools and neighbourhoods, financial security, participation in sports and community activities, and supportive social networks and communities.

### Resilience Matrix

With the right support at the right time, every child and young person can reach their full potential.

#### Resilience

Characteristics that contribute to the child or young person's resilience, such as positive self-esteem, secure attachment, problem-solving skills.

#### Adversity

Factors in the child or young person's environment that can contribute to their vulnerability, such as poverty, parental substance use, domestic abuse.

Resilient child

High adversity

Resilient child

Protective environment

#### Protective environment

Factors in the child or young person's environment that protect from or mitigate against adversity, such as positive school experience, at least one supportive adult, community networks, leisure activities, family support.

Vulnerable child

High adversity

Vulnerable child

Protective environment

#### Vulnerability

Characteristics that can contribute to their vulnerability, such as poor attachment, minority status, disability, negative care experience, childhood trauma, inconsistent/neglectful care, experience of abuse.

'Resilience' as described above, is the process of children and young people adapting well in the face of adversity, stress and trauma.

The terms 'adversity' and 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)' encompass various types of challenging and sometimes harmful experiences that can threaten healthy physical and psychological development for a child or young person. However, each child and young person's response can vary. Trauma is one potential response; it is when a child experiences this adversity as extremely harmful or threatening. Multiple factors influence how children and young people respond, including the type and severity of the event, their existing attachment to trusted



adults, available support, and wider systems.

Some children and young people require additional support to reach their full potential. This may be due to challenges they face as a result of poverty, health or other inequalities. Support may be needed to access resources (financial security, participation in community activities, and social networks of support): these are called protective factors.

**Making sense of information:** In beginning to use the Resilience Matrix, practitioners should understand that any assessment is likely to require information from several sources and a lot of information may be gathered for this purpose. Making sense of that information is a crucial next step before making a plan for action. Analysis can often be missed out in assessments, but it is a critical part of understanding what all the information means. Careful analysis and interpretation of information is essential to enable practitioners:

- To identify challenges or difficulties;
- To explain why these have arisen;
- To understand the impact of strengths and pressures on an individual child or young person;
- To consider the needs of the child and young person;
- To consider how these needs relate to the child or young person's rights;
- To help children, young people and families to discuss and agree with them what support they can access;
- To describe desired outcomes and the impact of proposed support, with measurements in place to review over time; and
- To construct the child's plan (see [glossary](#)).

Many children and young people who need additional help are experiencing difficult conditions. This may relate to their health, their progress at school or what is happening in their family or community. A resilience-based approach fits closely with the aim of GIRFEC to build on the strengths in the child or young person's whole world, always drawing on what the family, community and universal services can offer.

## 10. How can the Resilience Matrix be used in GIRFEC?

In some cases, it can be helpful to use the Resilience Matrix as a mind map to help practitioners, together with children, young people and their families, make sense of the information they have gathered and to plan what needs to happen next to improve a child or young person's wellbeing. It is important to see every child or young person in a family as an individual because they may experience the same conditions in a very different way. For other children or young people who are experiencing more complex difficulties, practitioners have often found it helpful to make sense of information to identify characteristics associated with both resilience and vulnerability, as well as adverse and protective factors by placing particular details of the information gathered in each heading of the matrix.

**Assessing resilience and vulnerability:** Practitioners generally find that the individual characteristics that enable a child or young person to grow up to be resilient (e.g. self-worth, problem-solving skills, self-esteem), are so intertwined with their experiences of parents, families (e.g. attachments, harmony, consistency) and wider environments (e.g. schools, neighbourhoods and friendships) that it is difficult to disentangle these.

**Assessing adversity and protective factors/environment:** It is emphasised that a resilience approach should look beyond individual coping characteristics and should focus on changing environmental hazards and stressors, as well as enhancing individual and family responses to adversities (Dodds, S. *Health and early years, children and young people, a GCPH synthesis*, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2016, URL: [https://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5914/Health\\_and\\_Early\\_Years\\_web.pdf](https://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/5914/Health_and_Early_Years_web.pdf)).

Therefore, practitioners should explore the extent to which the environment is adverse or protective for the child or young person; assessing the factors that can be located from the My World Triangle that are concerned with wider family, school and community.

**Children and family centred strengths-based approach:** Focusing on the positives and the strengths in a child or young person's life is likely to help to improve outcomes by building a protective network (Daniel, B and Wassell, S. *Assessing and Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children Vols. 1, 2 & 3*, London & Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd., 2002). The information gathered and categorised under the four matrix headings by the practitioner can be dynamic and will change over time. For example, children and young people's resilience will be affected by the situations faced by the adults with whom they live. It will, therefore, be important to try to predict how changes affecting caregiving adults may affect a child or young person. Predicting possible trajectories for a child or young person will help to make sure contingencies are built in to preserve their protective environment. If these contingencies are not considered, a child or young person's resilience could be weakened by subsequent adverse events.

Daniel and Wassell (2002) point out that resilience is a complex issue and that nothing can be taken for granted when assessing the resilience of a child or young person. It is not always possible to gauge how well a child or young person is coping when faced with difficult experiences (Hill, M, Stafford, A, Seaman, P, Ross, N and Daniel, B, *Parenting and resilience*, 2007, URL: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/parenting-resilience-children.pdf>). A child or young person who appears to be coping well outwardly may be suffering internal distress and developing unhelpful coping strategies and defences. This has been termed 'apparent resilience'. Lifespan research has emphasised that there is always the potential for developmental change and, therefore, an 'outcome' is an ongoing process rather than an end point.

This is why it is essential to get to know a child or young person during the process of assessment. There are many factors associated with resilience, but Gilligan (1997) suggests that there are three fundamental building blocks of resilience (Gilligan, R. 'Beyond Permanence? The importance of resilience in child placement practice and planning', *Adoption and Fostering*, 2,1,12-20, 1997):

- A secure base whereby the child feels a sense of belonging and security.
- Good self-esteem – that is, an internal sense of worth and competence.
- A sense of self efficacy – that is, a sense of mastery and control, along with an accurate understanding of personal strengths and limitations.

**Using professional judgement and curiosity:** There are some factors which may be both protective and also contribute to vulnerability or adversity. Practitioners need to exercise their professional judgement about how to make sense of these different aspects of information and weigh the competing influences. It will also be helpful to look at the interactions between factors because this may also influence whether the impact is negative or positive.

Attention to and curiosity about the experience of the child or young person and family from their perspective is also essential to this consideration. Practitioners will be supported by professional standards and line management structures in reaching decisions which rely on the combination of curiosity and judgement. Once an assessment has been made, it will be possible to consider what scaffolding of support should be put in place for the child or young person and family in order to strengthen protective factors and resilience, and reduce adversity and vulnerabilities.

Together with the child or young person, information should be positioned under the four headings of the matrix and thought given to the child or young person's needs and the desired outcomes. These details should then be considered against the eight wellbeing indicators of safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Action may be needed against only some or against every indicator and it is crucial to ensure these actions are proportionate to the issues identified.

This analysis then forms the basis for decision-making with the child or young person and family and other practitioners on whether a child's plan is needed. If it is agreed that compiling a plan is appropriate, there should be a discussion about what should go in it, including consideration of what actions need to take place to improve protective factors and resilience, what needs to happen to reduce adversity and vulnerability and who is going to carry out those actions.

## 11. Developing a plan for support

**Summarising needs against the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI):** When the child or young person's needs are clear they can be summarised using the wellbeing indicators to develop a plan for action. Wellbeing indicators can be used to identify priorities, describe what needs to change to improve the child or young person's wellbeing and identify the expected outcomes.

**Planning, taking action and reviewing:** In the GIRFEC approach, any child or young person who requires additional support should have a plan to address their needs and improve their wellbeing. This could be a single-agency plan or a multi-agency plan co-ordinated by a lead professional (see [glossary](#)).

GIRFEC promotes an integrated and co-ordinated approach to multi-agency planning. It looks to practitioners to work in accordance with legislation and guidance but also expects agencies to think beyond their immediate remit, drawing on the skills and knowledge of others as necessary and thinking in a broad, holistic way. For example, a care plan for a child or young person looked after by the local authority, a health care plan, or an individualised education plan should be incorporated within the child's plan where the child or young person's circumstances require this.

Every plan, whether it is single- or multi-agency, should include and record:

- the views of the child or young person and their family;
- reasons for the plan;
- partners to the plan;
- a summary of the child or young person's needs;
- what is to be done to improve a child or young person's wellbeing;
- details of action to be taken;
- resources to be provided;
- timescales for action and for change;
- contingency plans;
- arrangements for reviewing the plan;
- lead professional arrangements where they are appropriate; and
- details of any compulsory measures if required.

Reviewing a child or young person's progress should be an essential part of a child's plan. It will be useful to revisit the Resilience Matrix as part of the review, while also revisiting the five key GIRFEC questions in considering a child or young person's wellbeing needs. Ensuring the full use of the National Practice Model leads to the action required to improve wellbeing for the child or young person and their family:

- What is getting in the way of this child or young person's wellbeing?
- Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
- What can I do now that is needed and appropriate to help this child or young person?
- What can my agency or organisation do now to help this child or young person?
- What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

## Annex A – Glossary of terms

### Agency/agencies

In this suite of documents the term 'agency/agencies' means an organisation or business providing a particular service.

### Age of a child

GIRFEC and the UNCRC (which Scottish Government intends to incorporate into Scots law to the maximum extent possible) applies to everyone under 18. Before birth, midwives and maternity professionals can apply the values and principles of GIRFEC and support to the parents in considering their wellbeing, and that of the unborn baby. During a child's life, GIRFEC then continues to apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18, or older if still at school, including young people who have left school but are not yet 18. Where young adults have specific needs, other legislation ensures ongoing support for them beyond 18 years of age, including Section 29 of the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), where the definition of a young person refers to those having attained the age of 16 and are still at school. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 extends continuing care for eligible young adults up to the age of 21 and after care for young adults who have care experience, up to the age of 26. These Acts ensure ongoing support for these young adults beyond the ages defined above in the GIRFEC framework.

### Child or young person

An individual who has not yet attained the age of 18 years.

### Child protection

The processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of harm from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

### Children's human rights and UNCRC

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms which we all have in order to live with dignity, equality and fairness, and to develop and reach our potential. Human rights are a list of things that all people – including children and young people – need in order to live a safe, healthy and happy life.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has been incorporated into UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA). Everyone, including children and young people, has these rights, no matter what their circumstances. Under international law, States/Governments are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Those delivering public services should respect human rights when they make decisions, plan services and make policies.

Children's human rights span the entire spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. Children and young people also have additional rights that recognise that childhood is a special, protected time, in which children and young people must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity. Specific human rights for children are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community. By recognising children's rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the child as a whole and multi-faceted person. It is important to be clear that all rights are equal, there is no hierarchy of human rights.

We know that children and young people face unique barriers to realising their rights. Their future often depends on the action taken by adults to implement their rights in practice. As children their voices can be unheard, or more easily dismissed. For that reason, the UNCRC recognises that children and young people are human beings with fundamental rights that are written into international law. It also makes clear that special action needs to be taken to ensure those rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. As one of the core United Nations (UN) human rights treaties, the UNCRC helps to safeguard the dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all children and young people. It does this by making sure that important rights set out in other international human rights treaties are applied in a way that is relevant and appropriate to the needs of all children and young people.

### **Child's Plan**

A personalised child's plan is developed when those working with the child or young person and family identify that a child or young person needs a range of extra support planned, delivered and co-ordinated. The child's plan should reflect the child or young person's voice and explain what should be improved for the child or young person, the actions to be taken and why the plan has been created.

### **Ecological Model**

This is a model that is based on the idea that children's development is influenced by the relationships they have with their parents, then by school and community environment, then by wider society and culture. These layers of relationships and environments influence and interact with each another as well as the child's development and resilience. This theory was originally developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner and Stephen J. Ceci in 1994.

### **Family/families**

Not all family units look the same. In this suite of documents the term 'families/family' can mean adoptive, biological, foster, kinship, extended, composite and others; for example, settings and homes that have felt like family. Some children and young people may belong to more than one family.

### **Getting it right for every child**

This is Scotland's national approach to promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. It provides a consistent framework, shared language and common understanding of wellbeing. GIRFEC puts the child or young person at the heart and helps children and young people get the right support from the right people at the right time.

### **Lead professional**

When children, young people and families require the help and support of a child's plan, a lead professional will be needed. The lead professional is an agreed, identified person within the network of practitioners who is working alongside the child or young person and family. In most cases, the professional who has the greatest responsibility in coordinating and reviewing the child's plan will undertake this role.

### **Named person**

This is a clear point of contact for times when children, young people and families require information, advice or help. The named person is mainly provided by health and education services and is usually someone who is known to the child, young person and family and who is well placed to develop a supportive relationship with them. Local arrangements and the term used to describe this role or function may vary from area to area. A named person can help children, young people and families access relevant support for a child or young person's wellbeing. Where there is a child's plan in place, the named person will work alongside the lead professional, continuing to provide general advice or support, while the lead professional will be the point of contact in relation to the plan. In some cases the named person will also be the lead professional.

### **Parent**

This document uses the term 'parent' within the meaning of section 15 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The term 'parent' includes a person who is a genetic parent of a child, a parent by adoption, and those who are parents by virtue of Human Fertilisation and Embryology legislation. In this document, the term also embraces a person who has parental responsibilities in relation to the child or young person, who has care of the child or young person, or who is a guardian of the child or young person whether appointed by parents or the court.

### **Wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI)**

Any assessment of a child or young person's wellbeing should be founded on the 8 wellbeing indicators: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible, Included, sometimes referred to as SHANARRI. The wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) are informed by the UNCRC. They are overlapping and connecting areas that are fundamental to understanding what children and young people need in order to grow, develop and thrive.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80435-771-2 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, September 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS1127302 (09/22)

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