

# Involving children, young people, parents and carers in planning to meet children's wellbeing needs

Embedding our Getting it Right for Every  
Child Approach

March 2018



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## Introduction

This guidance provides information on inclusive communication to ensure children, young people, their parents and carers are involved in identifying their support needs. It should inform and guide discussion with each child, young person and parent or carer to ensure their individual needs and circumstances can be met and accommodated.

It is not a template but is designed to help in situations where formal, coordinated planning for children is being considered. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Plans to meet additional education support needs;
- Coordination within and across agencies or organisations working with disabled children or those living with long term conditions;
- Plans to support the transition of disabled young people and those living with long term conditions from children's services to adult service provision;
- Considering the needs of young carers, the content of a young carer's statement and in assessing the needs of those cared for; and
- The Child's Plan as set out in Part 5 of the Children and Young Person (Scotland) Act 2014.

It also aims to inform good communication in all interactions between services and families in routine planning for children or young people.

## Getting it right for every child

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is our approach in Scotland that supports the strengths and capacity of children, young people and parents, to meet their own needs.

To achieve this, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) promotes partnership working with children, young people and their parents or carers. It sets the rights of children, young people, and parents or carers at the centre of decisions that affect them, including the design and delivery of support services and the assessment of children's wellbeing needs. This approach is core and must be respected.

Staff must ensure that the child and parent or carer is involved in discussions about the child's wellbeing needs, the content of the plan and how it should be managed. Where this is not possible, it will be useful to say why.

Children, young people and their parents and carers are supported by universal services, such as Health and Education which offer support to all. It is essential that every opportunity is taken to ensure children, young people and their

parents or carers are as involved as they can and want to be; to secure and shape the additional support needed to promote, support and safeguard a child's or young person's wellbeing.

Ensuring good relationships, based on inclusive communication between families and services, is central to enable children and young people and their parents or carers to fully participate. It also allows their lived experience to inform wellbeing assessments and support decisions about how children's needs can be met.

Throughout children, young people and parents must be involved in the discussions that affect them. This is achieved by ensuring all communication is inclusive.



# Inclusive communication

Inclusive communication means sharing information in a way that everybody can understand. For service providers, it means making sure that you recognise that people understand and express themselves in different ways. For people who use services, it means getting information and expressing themselves in ways that meet their needs. It includes British Sign Language, other language translation and interpretation communication, plain English and all good practice in relation to formats, font size and type.

All children and young people have rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrcarticles](http://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrcarticles)

These include Article 12 - 'the right to be listened to and taken seriously'. To ensure children and young people and their parents can communicate their needs and be involved in the decisions that affect them, communication needs must be met.

In children's services practitioners already use creative and inclusive communication skills and resources to involve children and young people, and their parents or carers in talking about wellbeing and in planning for children. There are many examples of good practice available and resources in use. These include the use of pictures, photos, signing, symbols, word boards, communication boards and books, as well as Voice Output

Communication Aids (VOCAs) and written material in easy read formats and in different languages.

Inclusive communication relates to all modes of communication:

- Written information;
- Online information;
- Telephone;
- Face to face.

Inclusive communication makes services accessible for everyone. It helps achieve successful outcomes for children and young people. It helps them and their parents or carers to access services as part of the community. It enables children and young people to live more independently and to participate in public life.



# Resources

The resource, "Principles of Inclusive Communication", sets out six key aspects of inclusive communication [www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/357865/0120931.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/357865/0120931.pdf). The document brings together the knowledge and experience of people with communication support needs and service providers to offer a practical approach to delivering inclusive communication.

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) has published the following resources:

- Easy read factsheets on the Lead Professional and the child's plan and a guide to wellbeing
- A practical resource to support practitioners discuss a child's wellbeing with the parents
- British Sign Language video clips to explain the provision of parts 4 and 5 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

These and other easy read resources can be accessed here:

[www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/policy-into-practice/getting-to-know-getting-it-right-for-every-child/resources/](http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/policy-into-practice/getting-to-know-getting-it-right-for-every-child/resources/)

Further information can be found at Communication Matters – Serving Scotland information on Augmentative Alternative Communication.

Additional Resources can be found through the following links:

- [www.includeusall.org.uk](http://www.includeusall.org.uk)
- [www.scod.org.uk/inclusive-communication-and-accessible-information/](http://www.scod.org.uk/inclusive-communication-and-accessible-information/)
- [www.partnersincommunication.info/component/tags/tag/22-inclusive-communication](http://www.partnersincommunication.info/component/tags/tag/22-inclusive-communication)
- [www.dbscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/services/accessible-information/](http://www.dbscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/services/accessible-information/)

Tip: Be prepared and know how to put in place translation and interpretation services and how to work with an interpreter, as well as where, who or how to prepare different formats.

The Carer's Charter can be found here; [www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533199.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00533199.pdf)



# Helping Children, Young People and Parents/Carers participate and express their views

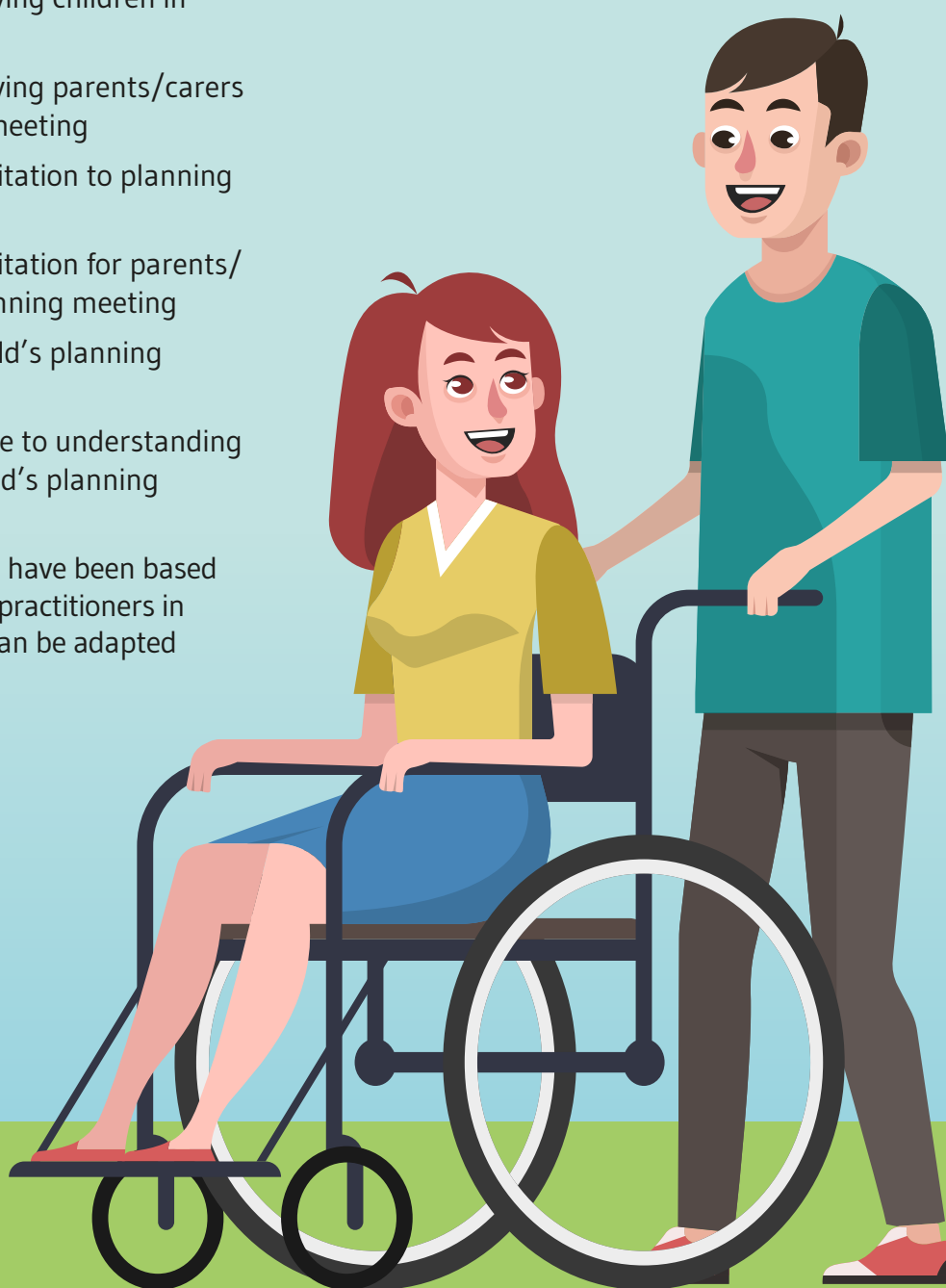
Practitioners must respond to the communication needs of the children, young people and parents/carers. This section sets out prompts and accompanying resources to guide service providers in this task.

They include:

- Prompt 1, Guide for involving children in their planning meeting
- Prompt 2, Guide for involving parents/carers in their child's planning meeting
- Resource 1, Easy read invitation to planning meetings for a child
- Resource 2, Easy read invitation for parents/carers to their child's planning meeting
- Resource 3, Easy read child's planning meeting agenda
- Resource 4, Easy read aide to understanding of the outcome of the child's planning meeting.

These prompts and resources have been based on materials already used by practitioners in some areas of Scotland and can be adapted

to fit local practice and the circumstances and needs of the child, young person or parent/carer. Services and practitioners may, for example, wish to make these available to minority ethnic groups and consider the needs of people who communicate through British Sign Language (BSL).



# Prompt 1

## Involving Children and Young People in meetings: Good Practice Suggestions

### Before the meeting

Practitioners should help the child to be fully informed and prepared for meetings. In doing so, practitioners should take account of the child's age, level of understanding, communication preferences and needs, and general circumstances. Where required the practitioner and parent/carer will work together to inform the child.

- It is important to discuss with the child/young person what the meeting is for, and what the meeting will try to achieve.
- Consider the venue, time and length of the meeting and the potential impact of that on the child.
- Where the child or young person is travelling to the meeting venue, provide information about how to get there and arrange travel for them where possible.
- Ensure that information about the meeting is given to the child/young person in a format that is accessible to them.
- Be aware that children or young people might worry about aspects of the meeting that are not obvious to you. Listen carefully to any concerns expressed by the child, including nonverbal cues, and respond sensitively and appropriately. Clarify, ask questions and clarify again.
- Previous plans and any papers or assessment/reports to be considered at the meeting should be sent out in good time in a format that is accessible to the child or young person who has capacity. Be aware that a child or young person may need time to go through reports with an independent advocate prior to the meeting. Send out or email in good time to ensure time to prepare.
- Talk to the child/young person about their information which may be shared at the meeting and consider with them their choices and rights in this regard.
- Support the child/young person to make an informed choice about whether they will attend the meeting.
- Advise the child/young person that they can bring a parent/carer, advocate or meetings buddy to the meeting.
- Consider whether the child/young person may choose only to attend for part of their meeting.
- Give the child/young person information about what will happen at the meeting and who else will be attending. They need to know what support is available to enable them to attend their meeting. Information on where to find independent advocacy could be provided.
- Adults should acknowledge that the meeting is the child or young person's meeting. The expectation is wherever possible the child/young person should attend.
- Adults should be informed in advance of the planned agenda and made aware if the child/young person will be attending.
- Remember that some children/young people find discussing personal matters more difficult in large groups. It can be helpful to limit the numbers of professionals attending to those who need to be there.

## Expressing Views

A key adult (who may be the Lead Professional) usually meets with the child/young person to discuss how they want to express their views prior to and during the meeting. Methods of participation need to be flexible and take account of the child/young person's age, abilities, and preferred style of communication.

The My World triangle and the Wellbeing Wheel (see ALLIANCE Getting to Know GIRFEC resources) are tools that can be used to help structure a discussion with the child, about their wellbeing and explore their views on what is important to them and what might help.

It is important children and young people are supported and have a choice about how they

wish to give their views. For example;

- Consider whether an adult may need to write for the child/young person.
- It may be helpful for some children or young people to complete a form on a computer.
- A child/young person may prefer to draw their responses to the questions.
- For a child/young person with significant learning/communication needs, it may be helpful to use photographs and symbols; e.g. Talking Mats, Board Maker.
- A child/young person may request that a parent, an advocate or a "meetings buddy" support them to express their views.



## At the meeting

Children's and young people's participation at meetings should be meaningful and appropriate to their needs and wishes.

- Ensure you have allowed adequate time to accommodate the child/young person's preferred way of communicating.
- The meeting should go at the pace of the child/young person.
- Everyone should be welcomed and introduced.
- The meeting agenda should be explained and outlined to everyone present at the start of the meeting.
- Meetings should be run in a 'solution focused' format taking into account what is going well for the child and family alongside any needs or concerns.
- Language needs to be clear and simple, avoid jargon and acronyms
- The child/young person should bring and/or present their prepared information. But they should also be free to express views that have not been prepared in advance. They may have identified a key adult to support them with this before the meeting.
- The child/young person should be consulted about and actively involved in developing their plan and any decisions that are made during the meeting, proportionate to their capacity to do so.
- The child's/young person's and parent's views should be recorded.
- Give time for checking back with the child/young person that they understand what is being talked about and to answer any questions they have.
- The meeting should take breaks as required by the child/young person.
- The meeting should be recorded in formats that suit the child/young person and other participants. This could include the use of flip charts, wall freezes, pictures and other innovative solutions as well as the traditional typed note.

## After the meeting

- The child/young person should be given a copy of the full plan within an agreed and reasonable timescale. This should be provided in the child/young persons preferred format.
- The key practitioner should take time to discuss the meeting notes with the child or young person to check they understand the plan and agree with it.
- The child or young person's feedback of the meeting process and plan should also be sought. This will contribute to service improvement.



## Prompt 2

### Involving Parents/Carers in their Child's or Young Person's planning meeting: Good Practice Suggestions

Trust, openness and effective communication form the foundation of successful relationships. Parents/carers should be encouraged, and supported to be involved in the planning meeting.

Key practitioners (who can include Lead Professionals) should help the parent or carer to be fully informed and prepared for meetings.

It would be usual for practitioners to discuss with children and young people and seek agreement on communication arrangements with parents/carers. Exceptions to this could be where there is evidence that the child or young person lacks capacity to make decisions about communication or where doing so may pose a significant risk to the child or young person.

### Before the meeting

The key practitioner should help the parent/carer to participate effectively in the meeting:

- Explain the purpose of the meeting in a format that the parent understands.
- Consult parent/carer about the most suitable time and venue for a meeting to take account of any access needs or family responsibilities.
- Parents or carers should be involved in agreeing who will attend the meeting and understand their role and the roles of others.
- Parents or carers should be made fully aware of the assessment and planning process. This will include their involvement in discussions about their child's wellbeing needs.
- Use a 'solution focused' approach to the meeting and familiarise parents or carers with the format of the meeting. Invite parents to add points to the agenda.
- Previous plans and any papers or assessment/reports to be considered at the meeting should be sent out in good time before the meeting in a format that

is accessible to the parents. Parents with limited/no access to emails and printers should be offered the opportunity to have these sent by post. Be aware that parents may need time to go through reports with an independent advocate prior to the meeting.

- Ask how parents or carers would prefer to give their views. Parents or carers should be offered the opportunity to verbally pass on views to a lead person prior to the meeting if they do not wish to write down their views.
- Parents or carers should be advised of their right to have an advocate or supporter accompany them to the meeting.
- Parents should understand that the child's opinions may differ from their own and this is to be respected. (UNCRC)

Consider parent and carer communication requirements too. Appropriate support should be provided to ensure they understand what will happen, the aim of the meeting and to ensure that their views are provided and recorded. Information before, during and after the meeting should be presented in ways that are accessible to each parent/carer.

## At the meeting

Practitioners should keep in mind that although meetings are designed to help meet children's wellbeing needs, they can often be intimidating, anxiety provoking and stressful for parents, carers and children. The format of the meeting should take this into account and help parents/carers feel at ease in order that they can contribute as fully as they would wish.

- Everyone should be welcomed and introduced.
- The meeting agenda should be explained and outlined to everyone present at the start of the meeting.
- Meetings should be run in a 'solution focused' format considering what is going well for the child and family alongside any needs or concerns that have been identified.
- Language needs to be clear and simple, with jargon and acronyms avoided.

- The meeting needs to be run at a pace that works for the parents/carers.
- Parents or carers should be given the opportunity to contribute during the meeting and be actively involved in the planning process.
- The child's and parent's/carer's views should be recorded. Check that this is an accurate record.
- Time should be given to allow full discussion of the issues and ensure decisions are not rushed.
- Arrangements for future communication to support the implementation and monitoring of the plan should be agreed.
- The meeting should take breaks as required by the parent.

## After the meeting

- Parents or carers should be given a copy of the full plan within an agreed and reasonable timescale, in the best format for the parent.
- The plan should be clear, understandable and avoid jargon.
- Parents or carers should be offered the

opportunity to feedback and discuss any area of the plan.

- Time should be taken to explore any disagreements and agree a way forward.
- Parents or carers feedback on the meeting process and content should be sought to help improve practice.

## On-going communication







The planning meeting should provide a good opportunity for discussion. It also provides an opportunity to establish and maintain channels of communication with the child, young person and parents/carers to meet the outcomes agreed. Key practitioners will usually maintain communication between all those involved to ensure that any action plan created at the

meeting is implemented. The parents/carers should leave the meeting knowing who to contact about the plan for their child.

A review meeting should take place within an agreed timescale. This meeting will review the plan with the child, young person and parent/carer and changes made as necessary.

# Resource 1

## Invitation to your planning meeting

<p>Date</p>	
<p>Dear [child's first name]</p>	
<p>Invitation to your planning meeting</p>	
<p>There will be a child's planning meeting to talk about your future On [date] e.g. 19 June</p>	
<p>At 10 am</p>	
<p>At [venue] e.g. Happy Days Family Centre Map/Bus numbers 1 and 21 go past the centre.</p>	

We will talk about how you are getting on and make plans for the future



It is important that you come so your views are heard.



[Name of the relevant practitioner] will help you to take part and share your views



Or

If you want to write your views you can fill in the ‘My Views’ form and bring it with you or give it to [name of the relevant practitioner]. [Name] can help with this.



Your parents have also been asked to come to the meeting [this may not be the case depending on the views of the child or the particular circumstances/ your professional judgement of situation. Delete as appropriate]



At the meeting, we will talk about:

- What is going well for you
- Your wellbeing needs
- Are you getting the right support?
- What else could support you
- Anything else
- The next meeting









Yours,

[Name of person sending the invitation]



# Resource 2

## Invitation to the planning meeting for your child

<p>Date</p>	
<p>Dear [name of parent/carer]</p>	
<p>You are invited to a planning meeting to talk about [child's name]'s wellbeing</p>	
<p>On [date] e.g. 19 June</p>	
<p>At [time] e.g. 10 am</p>	
<p>At [venue] e.g. Happy Days Family Centre Map/Bus numbers 1 and 21 go past the centre.</p>	

We will talk about how [child's name] is getting on and make plans for the future.



It is important that you come so your views can be heard [name of child]



Please fill in the parents' form and send it back or bring it with you. An independent advocate could help you do this.



Let us know if you need help to take part and share your views:

e.g. 0131 1112222 / 07777888999



At the meeting we will talk about:

- What is going well for [child's name]
- [child's name] support needs
- What have we done already to support [child's name]
- What else could be done to help [child's name]
- Anything else
- Next meeting









Yours,

[Name of person sending the invitation]



# Resource 3

## What we will talk about at the meeting

<p>Child's planning meeting for [Name of Child or Young Person]</p>	
<p>Date:[insert date]</p>	
<p>1. Who is here and who can't come</p>	
<p>2. What is going well for [child's name]</p>	
<p>3. What are [child's name]'s wellbeing needs now</p>	
<p>4. What support is already helping [child's name]</p>	

5. What else can we do to help [child's name]'s wellbeing



6. Anything else









7. Next meeting










# Resource 4

## Summary of the plan

<p>[Name of Child or Young Person]</p>	<p>[Could insert picture of child if appropriate]</p> 
<p>When the plan was agreed [Date e.g. 19 June]</p>	
<p>Where the plan was agreed [Venue]</p>	
<p>Who took part in the planning meeting</p>	
<p>What's going well?</p>	
<p>What we agreed to do to help [child's names]'s wellbeing</p>	

<p>Summary of what is to be done now to help [child's names]'s wellbeing</p>	 <p>A spiral-bound notebook with the word "Meeting" written on the cover. Below the text is a photograph of a group of diverse people sitting around a table in a meeting room.</p>
<p>[child's name] views about the plan</p>	 <p>Two young girls are shaking hands. The girl on the left is wearing a striped tank top, and the girl on the right is wearing a maroon polo shirt. There are two empty speech bubbles between them, one pointing to each girl.</p>
<p>[Parent/Carers name] views about the plan</p>	 <p>A man wearing a grey cap and a dark jacket is shown in profile, looking to the right. A large, empty speech bubble is positioned next to his mouth.</p>
<p>Date plan is to be reviewed</p>	 <p>A stack of several spiral-bound desk calendars. The visible months include December, August, September, May, and June. The dates on the calendars are partially visible.</p>
<p>Name, address and phone number of person who wrote the note of the plan.</p>	 <p>A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a dark grey cardigan over a light-colored top, is standing and smiling at the camera. Her hands are clasped in front of her.</p>

# Helping Children, Young People and Parents/Carers participate and express their views

This guide was produced on behalf of the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE), in partnership with People First.

The ALLIANCE has been funded by the Scottish Government to run a project to help parents, carers and children understand Getting it right for every child. The project is called "Getting to Know GIRFEC: what Getting It Right For Every Child means for children and young people who are disabled or who live with long term conditions".

This practice guide forms part of the project and the guide and prompts have been designed to be accessible to practitioners. The four resources contained in the guide are designed to be accessible children, young people and parents or carers who may have learning difficulties. The content of this guide is the responsibility of the ALLIANCE. It is not a full explanation of the law or GIRFEC Policy.

## Download this Resource for Use

Please visit <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/policy-into-practice/getting-to-know-getting-it-right-for-every-child/resources/> to download PDF and word versions of the resources. You are free to adapt and use these resources to facilitate inclusive communication with children, young people and parents or carers.



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Embedding our Getting it Right for Every Child Approach | March 2018

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