

To: Children and Young People Thematic Board

On: 9 February 2017

Report by:

*Peter Macleod, Director Children's Services
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TITLE:

Statutory Guidance: Part 3 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 –
Children's Services Planning

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ('the Act') received Royal Assent on 27th March 2014. It sets out the legislative basis for ensuring that Scotland becomes the best place in the world for children to grow up.
- 1.2 Part 3 of the Act extends the statutory duty on local authorities and health boards to produce three yearly Children's Services Plans.
- 1.3 Statutory guidance for children's services planning was released on 23 December 2016. The Guidance seeks to further embed GIRFEC into all aspects of service planning, delivery and evaluation and to make joined-up, evidence-based, strategic planning the catalyst for transformational change of children's services. The Guidance can be found here: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/8683>
- 1.4 The Guidance includes extensive provisions which regulate the aims, processes for development, implementation and review of children's services plans. The new provisions present opportunities for Renfrewshire to further strengthen its strategic planning activity by drawing together related workstreams towards our shared objectives to improve the lives of children, young people and families.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board note the implications of the new Statutory Guidance for Renfrewshire's Children's Services Planning processes.
- 2.2 That the Board approves the following action plan:
 - *Review the progress and achievements of the current Children's Services Plan.*
 - *Undertake strategic commissioning approach to development of the new Children's Services Plan: Carry out strategic needs assessment including analysis of children's wellbeing data (due February 2017, along with the range of other data already available to partners), to identify priorities for next period.*
 - *Map out statutory and non-statutory planning and reporting activity and identify opportunities for improvement.*

- *Form a writing group to produce the new Plan – due to be completed by 31st march 2017.*

3. **Background**

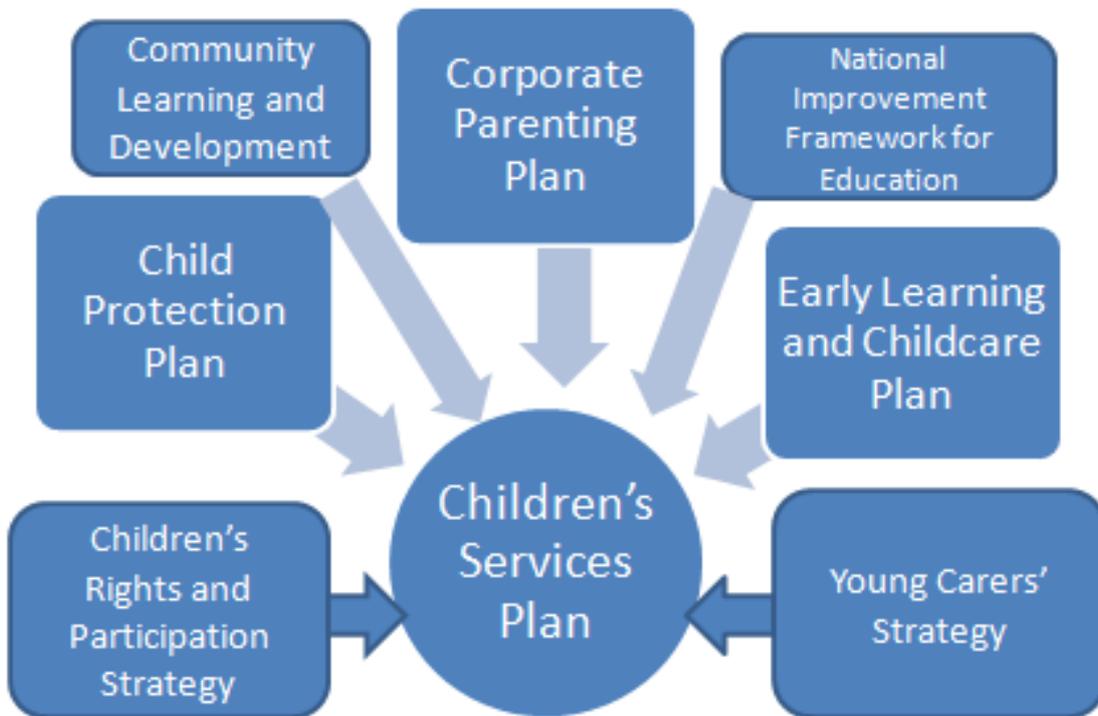
- 3.1 The Guidance includes extensive provisions which regulate the aims, processes for development, implementation and review of children's services plans. Children's Services Plans must cover all children's services and what is referred to as 'related services'. These include those services which are not principally for children but nonetheless are capable of having a 'significant impact' upon the safety and wellbeing of children: this would include Police, Fire, Court Services, Voluntary sector and a range of local authority services such as Housing and Community Resources. These 'related services' must be involved in planning processes and consulted in relation to the development of the Plan.
- 3.2 Children's Services Plans must be developed with the aim of ensuring children's services are delivered in a way that safeguards, supports and promotes wellbeing, with an emphasis upon preventative and early intervention approaches.
- 3.3 Services must also be integrated from the point of view of service users and constitute the best use of available resources. The Guidance draws on the recommendations of the Christie Commission and states that a more strategic approach to Children's Services Planning is the route to achieving Dr Christie's vision for effective and sustainable public services.
- 3.4 The Guidance emphasises the importance of consultation and accountability, and of collaboration and joint –working. It includes duties to provide an 'effective opportunity' for other service providers and person(s) to participate in or contribute to the preparation of Children's Services Plans. There is a particular requirement for those who already use or are likely to use services to be consulted.
- 3.5 The Guidance requires that the Children's Services Plan must be finalised before the first period of operation commences on 1st April 2017. The Plan must be published 'as soon as reasonably practicable' thereafter.
- 3.6 The Children's Services Plan must be kept under review and a report detailing the extent to which services were delivered in accordance with the Plan and the extent to which the aims of the Plan and outcomes for children were achieved must be published annually.
- 3.7 The Guidance encourages local authorities and health boards to locate children's services planning within the wider legal framework of local planning and reporting and suggests combining plans as well as their attendant reviewing and reporting functions, for example, incorporating the new responsibilities to report on Corporate Parenting duties.

Implications for current Children's Services Planning Process

- 3.8 Renfrewshire is well placed to adapt to the new requirements of the Act, particularly as regards our strategic commissioning activity and implementation of the GIRFEC approach to services. We had foreseen the operational implications of the Act and have already made changes to frontline practice which will ensure we meet requirements in terms of reducing duplication and providing a more joined-up service from the perspective of service users.
- 3.9 Renfrewshire has a robust approach to the design, delivery and evaluation of children's services. We were the first local authority in Scotland to use children's wellbeing data to inform service planning and resource allocation when we partnered with the Dartington Social Research Unit to gather information about children's outcomes in 2013. The outcomes data enabled us to produce a truly evidence-based Children's Services Plan. We

are currently repeating the data collection process and will use the new data to inform development of the new Plan.

- 3.10 The robustness of our current children's planning process enables us to rapidly and seamlessly adapt to the new requirements of the Act and Guidance. We have well rehearsed strategic commissioning processes in place underpinned by best quality needs analysis information.
- 3.11 Over the past several years, Renfrewshire has used evidence-based commissioning to inform its children's services planning. Our provision of evidence-based services such as Functional Family Therapy, Family Nurse Partnership, Incredible Years, Triple P and PaTHS will help us in our new duty to demonstrate the best use of our available resources and the delivery of preventative, early intervention and effective support services. The Families First teams are an embodiment of this approach.
- 3.12 Renfrewshire's Tackling Poverty programme, with its strategic emphasis upon early intervention and prevention, is well aligned to the new requirements of Children's Services Planning. Moreover, the outcomes-focussed action plan and the manner in which it is embedded across the Community Planning Partnership serves as a useful model for the design, delivery and evaluation of our new Children's Services Plan.
- 3.13 The revised Child's Plan and single shared assessment, along with our preparations for the new Named Person Service (due to commence in August 2017), mean that agencies are mapping out procedures and process to further strengthen our multi-agency working and to more seamlessly meet the needs of children and families.
- 3.14 Renfrewshire is already compliant with the new duties around participation and consultation of service users. We have robust participation and engagement activities embedded across our services. Our 'Taking Children and Young People Seriously' participation strategy sets out our objectives and these are reflected in activities such as the Champions' Board, the Voluntary Sector Forum, the Young Carers' Forum and the STV – 'Communities that Care' project, along with the Life Changes Trust project. Moreover, the 2015 Joint Inspection of our children's services scored our performance in children and young people's engagement and participation as 'very good'.
- 3.15 The Guidance presents an opportunity for us to embed a common focus across children's services planning activity and to further strengthen our robust strategic commissioning approach to the deployment of resources. The Guidance serves as a valuable prompt for us to identify and clarify the relationships between related planning and reporting processes.
- 3.16 These opportunities were signalled in the Act and as such we have already embarked upon work to align related children's workstreams into a single Plan and coterminous review and reporting framework. We aim to bring together the HSCP Strategic Plan, Corporate Parenting, Children's Rights, Participation and Young Carers activity under the umbrella of GIRFEC and the new Children's Services Plan. We will scope the feasibility of aligning the Children's Plan with wider children's services activities of the Early Learning and Childcare Plan, the National Improvement Framework for Education, the Community Learning and Development and the Child Protection Plan.
- 3.17 The harmonisation of various related children's services planning activities is an opportunity for us to be more efficient in our processes and to present more coherent plans to service users and partners. Doing so will enable us to better satisfy the new requirement to review and report progress in a way which is meaningful and facilitates greater accountability.



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