

The Scottish Government

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/what-is-girfec>

GIRFEC:

Lead Professional

Where it has been agreed that a Child's Plan should be prepared there will be a Lead Professional to make sure that the Child's Plan is managed properly and to co-ordinate the support described in the Plan.

What is a Lead Professional?

The Lead Professional:

- makes sure that the child or young person and family understand what is happening at each point so that they can be involved in the decisions that affect them
- acts as the main point of contact for children, parents and practitioners, in relation to the Plan
- promotes partnership working between agencies and with the child and family
- ensures the Child's Plan is accurate, up-to-date, implemented and reviewed
- consults and work with the child's Named Person
- ensures the child or young person is supported through key transition points, particularly if the Child's Plan needs to be transferred to a new Lead Professional

Who can be a Lead Professional?

The Lead Professional will be someone employed by one of the services involved in supporting the child and family. When a Child's Plan is prepared the partners to the plan, including the child and parents where appropriate, will need to consider who is the right person to take on the role of Lead Professional. In making that decision they will need to choose the practitioner who has the right skills and experience, and who can work with the child, the parents, the Named Person and the other services who support the child.

Named Person

Access to a Named Person is an entitlement for children and young people from birth to 18 years, or beyond if still in school. A form of the Named Person service is already operating across much of Scotland and is planned to be available nationally by 31 August 2016.

What is a Named Person?

Health visitors or promoted teachers will be the Named Person for most children and young people. Integrating this role into their current practice will be very similar to what they already do in providing support and help, but it formalises their role as the main contact for children and families.

Identifying these professionals as a Named Person means that their organisations will have a duty to make sure they have the skills and support to enable them to consistently provide advice, information and help when it's needed.

Some children and young people may have short-term difficulties, as a result of illness, bereavement or moving school, and some may live with challenges such as the effects of disability, or long-term conditions. While most will get all the help and support they need from their parents, wider family and community, sometimes they and their families may seek extra support.

What will a Named Person do?

The Named Person will be available to listen, advise and help a child or young person and their family, providing direct support or helping them to access other services. They can help families address their concerns early and prevent them becoming more serious.

They can also respond to requests for assistance from other services in situations where this may support the child's or young person's wellbeing.

Top ten Named Person facts

1. A Named Person does not replace or change the role of a parent or carer, or undermine families

The rights and responsibilities of parents to raise their children and provide for their wellbeing needs stay the same. The Named Person's role is to respond to requests for help from a child, young person or parent, and those who work with them where they have concerns for a child's wellbeing. They will not interfere in things like how a child's room is decorated, the TV programmes they watch, or in their religious or political beliefs.

2. The Named Person approach is not new

A form of the Named Person service is already operating across much of Scotland and builds on the supportive role teachers and health visitors have long offered to children and parents. The new legislation simply makes good practice the standard across Scotland so that support is available to all if they need it.

3. Children and parents have no obligation to use the service or take up the advice or help offered

Access to a Named Person is an entitlement. This ensures a child, young person, parent, family member or someone who works with them, knows who they can approach for help or advice if they need it. A Named Person has a duty to respond to a worry about a child's or young person's wellbeing, but there is no requirement for families to take up the offer of help. The Act does not however change the existing responsibility of the police or social work to act in cases where a child may be at risk of significant harm.

4. A Named Person will not directly access personal information

The Named Person will work with families, as health visitors and teachers already do, to understand individual circumstances. They will only receive information from other services or professionals if it's relevant to the wellbeing of the child or young person, and it will help the Named Person carry out their role in supporting the child and their family. In most cases, the child or young person and parent will know what is being shared, with whom and for what purpose, and their views will be taken into

account. Only in exceptional cases, such as where there is a concern for a child's safety, will this not happen.

5. The creation of the Named Person service does not change privacy laws or infringe on human rights

Existing laws already permit information sharing when it is necessary to prevent or address a risk to wellbeing. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out that sharing information with, and by, a child's Named Person should take place in line with current legislation as confirmed by the Scottish Court's ruling in September 2015. Lord Justice Clerk Lord Carloway, stated: "*It has no effect whatsoever on the legal, moral or social relationships within the family.*"

6. The Named Person will not be a social worker

They will typically be a health visitor for pre-school children and a head teacher, deputy head teacher or guidance teacher for school age children.

7. The Named Person service does not waste resources or jeopardise child safety

In fact, the GIRFEC approach has been found to reduce the amount of time teachers, health professionals, social workers, parents, and children and young people spend in meetings, and reduce caseloads for Social Work because support was given before problems turned into crises. Delivered by health and education services, the Named Person service will support specialist services, such as social work, as they continue to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families. It does not change or overrule current child protection procedures and the police and or social work should continue to be contacted immediately if a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm.

8. The Named Person role will not overburden teachers or health staff

Health visitors, promoted teachers, and others who will be a Named Person already have responsibilities for providing advice and support to children, young people, and families. The Scottish Government, local authorities, and health boards will provide guidance, training, and resources to assist them to carry out this role. It is the organisations providing the Named Person service, not individual Named Persons, who have legal responsibilities for the duties in the Act.

9. The Named Person is not a State Guardian

Parents and carers are, with very few exceptions, the best people to raise their children. The Named Person will have no duty to monitor family life. GIRFEC provides a common approach to thinking about wellbeing but does not introduce or impose a uniform set of wellbeing standards. The service recognises that each child and family situation is unique.

10. The Act does not give the Named Person a monitoring role

The Named Person will respond to information about wellbeing needs raised by the child, young person, parents or those who work with them. The Named Person will help put children, young people and families in control of getting help and support to overcome difficulties at the right time.

A wide range of children's charities and professionals working daily to support families across the country support the Named Person service.