

Interim Practice Note: October 2014

Role of Named Person and Lead Professional



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This interim guidance sets out information in relation to the Named Person and Lead Professional. It will be reviewed once the statutory guidance has been issued in respect of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

It seeks to support practitioners to understand the role of Named Person and Lead Professional

2.0 THE NAMED PERSON

The role of the Named Person in health or education, depending on the age of the child, is to act as the first point of contact for children and families. Every pregnant woman will have a named midwife from confirmation of pregnancy until the child reaches day 10 and the health visitor will be the named person if they are over 10 days old until they start school. This is an essential feature of a child centered approach. Access to help is easier, if children and their families know who to contact. Once a child starts school the Named Person will be a senior member of staff in the school.

It is the Named Person's role to take initial action if a child needs extra help. This formalises the activities universal services are undertaking routinely in their day-to-day work. The Named Person will use the GIRFEC Practice Model to help decide what actions to take in consultation with others as appropriate. If a child's Assessment and Plan is required it should be completed and uploaded on AYRshare with the appropriate contacts. All significant events should be included in the Child's Chronology on AYRshare.

The Named Person is responsible for ensuring core information is up to date, assess if a child is not meeting their developmental milestones including emotional or physical milestones or once started school, benefitting fully from education and determine what extra help may be required from within their agency or from other agencies if appropriate. They will contribute information to other agencies completing an assessment and contribute to planning for the child at transition points and passing on information to a new Named Person.

The Named Person is critical for working with children, young people of any age and their families and supporting early intervention. Strategic managers within health and education need to give special attention to appointing a Named Person for specific groups of children, such as those who are being home educated, are from travelling families or are young people not in mainstream education.

Any concerns passed to the Named Person should be actioned appropriately. This of course does not preclude others taking action in line with child protection guidelines. This may mean:

- carrying out an assessment;
- adding to an existing assessment;
- including the information in the Child's Single Agency Chronology of Significant Events and if appropriate their Integrated Chronology of Significant Events on AYRshare.

3.0 THE LEAD PROFESSIONAL

One of the core components of *Getting It Right For Every Child* is 'A *Lead Professional* to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity where necessary'.

3.1 The Lead Professional Role

There are some circumstances where children's needs involve two or more agencies working together delivering services to the child and family. In all cases where this happens a Lead Professional requires to be identified. The Lead Professional has a crucial coordinating role within the network of practitioners supporting the child and family. The Lead Professional will make sure that each of the different agencies act as a team, and that the help offered fits together to provide support for the child and family in line with the identified and agreed outcomes.

The Lead Professional role is a key element of effective frontline delivery of integrated children's services. It ensures that professional involvement is effective, co-ordinated and communicated effectively.

The role of the *Lead Professional* is:

- to ensure that the child or young person and their family understand what is happening at each point so that they can participate in the decisions that affect them and that their views are listened to
- where there is multi-agency involvement, to be the main point of contact for children, young people, practitioners and family members, coordinating help to them and minimising the need for them to repeat their story several times
- to promote teamwork between agencies and with the child or young person and family
- to ensure an assessment of risk and need is completed and shared with the appropriate contacts on AYRshare
- to ensure that the child has an integrated chronology of significant events on AYRshare and this is kept up to date. *Individual professionals have a responsibility to ensure that they are not duplicating a significant event.*
- to ensure the child's action plan is implemented and reviewed
- to be familiar with the remit of other agencies
- to co-ordinate workers who have specific roles or who are carrying out direct work or specialist assessments and reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received
- to ensure the child or young person is supported through key transition points, particularly any transfer to a new Lead Professional
- to ensure the information contained in the child record is accurate and up-to-date

The role of the *Lead Professional* is **not**:

- to chase up assessment team members for contributions
- to take full responsibility of the assessment or action plan as it is the responsibility of the team of people assessing
- to take responsibility or be accountable for the actions of others

Lead Professionals ensure that children, young people and their families receive a more coherent, child-centered and effective service. Children and families who require support from a number of professionals tell us they often receive fragmented and sometimes contradictory services such as:

- children and young people falling below an agencies threshold for support and failing to get the input of that agency as part of a joined-up approach, even when the agency has staff with the relevant training and expertise to meet their needs
- children and young people receiving short term, inconsistent or conflicting support from different professionals and therefore losing trust and confidence in services or failing to receive the right support at the right time
- children and parents having too many professionals involved with them, sometimes giving the same service/support or giving conflicting and confusing advice on how best to meet the child's needs

Practitioners working in universal services may find it difficult or are unsure how to access more specialist help and are concerned that children and young people's needs will increase before any support is made available. Practitioners with a remit to provide more targeted support tell us that the information received is often not specific or detailed enough to assist in appropriate assessment and decision making.

The Lead Professional model within *Getting It Right For Every Child* aims to support:

- professionals working with children and families having the confidence and knowledge to recognise when a child may require additional help, whether they have the skills to provide that additional support and if not, be able to work with other more specialist professionals to deliver this
- professionals being able to carry out an integrated assessment involving all relevant agencies and professionals
- multi-agency services being developed and linked to universal services, bringing together professionals from different agencies to meet the needs of children and families
- different ways of establishing the need for a Lead Professional

The skills, competence and knowledge required to carry out the role of the Lead Professional are the same regardless of professional background or role. They need the knowledge, competence and confidence to:

- develop a successful and productive relationship with the child and family
- organise meetings and discussions with different practitioners
- use the National Practice Model to assess and develop action plans
- work in partnership with other practitioners to deliver the action plan

There are three ways in which the need for a Lead Professional may arise:

- Where those working with the child and family in the universal services of health and education have evidence that suggests a plan involving two or more agencies will be necessary, then an integrated assessment should be undertaken. The need for this

may have arisen out of a growing concern over time, or it may have been triggered by a particular change in the child or an event or behaviour of the child or family. If it is possible and appropriate, the practitioner in the universal services who has been working with the child will coordinate help. This supports the GIRFEC principles of help being provided in a way that avoids children and families being passed from one agency to another. Agencies will have their own mechanisms for triggering and coordinating action. In some cases, a plan and action may be progressed without a formal meeting. Allowing for a more informal coordination of assistance between agencies without formal meetings supports the principle of timely and proportionate help. In many cases, health and education practitioners are already coordinating help for children as part of their day-to-day practice. The Lead Professional role in *Getting It Right For Every Child* reinforces what is already happening.

- In some circumstances, it becomes clear that the child needs more complex and specialist help but still primarily from universal services. However, in such cases, it may be more appropriate for another, perhaps more specialist, practitioner from the universal services to become the Lead Professional. This could be, for example, a practitioner who can co-ordinate a plan for a child with complex health needs with the help of other services. It might be that the child needs a plan that is focused on additional support for learning or a co-ordinated support plan where this may include some health and social work services.
- In a small number of cases it may be appropriate for a practitioner from another agency outwith health and education to take on the role of Lead Professional. Cases where there are significant concerns about a child's safety or where there is statutory social work involvement the Lead Professional will be from Social Work Services. In cases where there is uncertainty about Lead Professional responsibility this should be agreed at a formal meeting. It is important that children and families are fully involved in any decisions about who is to be the Lead Professional and they understand why this person is the best practitioner to co-ordinate help for them. It is also crucial that help is not delayed while arrangements are being put in place.

When the Child's Integrated Assessment has been agreed, the Lead Professional will:

- usually be the point of contact with the child and family for the purpose of discussing the plan and how it is working, as well as any changes in circumstances that may affect the plan
- be a main point of contact for all practitioners who are delivering help to the child to feedback progress on the plan or raise any issues
- make sure that the help provided is consistent with the Child's Action Plan, that services are not duplicated and that the plan is working and improving the child's situation
- work with the child and family and the practitioner network to make sure that the child's and family's views and wishes are heard and properly taken into account and, when necessary, link the child and family with available advocacy services such as 'Who Cares?'
- support the child and family to make use of help from practitioners and agencies
- co-ordinate the provision of other help or specialist assessments which may be needed, with advice from other practitioners where necessary, and make arrangements for these to take place

- arrange for the agencies to review together their involvement and amend the Action Plan when necessary
- make sure the child is supported through key transition points and ensure a careful and planned transfer of responsibility for these roles when another practitioner becomes the Lead Professional, for example if the child's needs change or the family moves away, or the named person resumes responsibility for the child when an integrated assessment is no longer needed.

Completion of the Integrated Assessment will be coordinated in conjunction with the team around the child and their family by the Lead Professional. This assessment and the outcomes identified require to be shared via AYRshare, initially in draft form and then with the appropriate contacts as required final format.

Those involved with the child and their family are required to provide information pertinent to the assessment and plan by updating the Lead Professional's host system and send to AYRshare. Once all the information has been shared the Lead Professional requires to arrange for the assessment team to meet and complete the analysis, action plan, outcomes and review date. The completed integrated Assessment requires to be shared via AYRshare with the appropriate contacts added, depending on which forum requires to review the plan.

At the review stage the Lead Professional will coordinate the production of materials for the review, which will normally take place in a meeting. Materials will be circulated to everyone involved, especially children and families. Following the review the updated/new version of the child's assessment and plan requires to be shared on AYRshare with the appropriate contacts. Throughout the initial and review process consideration should be given to the child's and their family's views.

The Lead Professional will not do all the work with the child and family, neither do they replace other practitioners who have specific roles or who are carrying out direct work or specialist assessments. The Lead Professional's primary task is to make sure that all the support provided is working well, fits with involvement of other practitioners and agencies and is achieving the outcomes specified in the Child's Action Plan. The team of people assessing are equally responsible and accountable for the assessment and action plan.

Pointers to choosing the most appropriate Lead Professional

A Lead Professional requires to be identified when the child's needs involve two or more agencies working together to deliver services to the child and family. The Lead Professional should be the person best placed to co-ordinate the help agreed in the Child's Action Plan. A Lead Professional should be able to provide confident leadership and should be familiar with the remit of different agencies. In all cases, the child's and family's views on who they would see as best placed to be the Lead Professional should be taken into account in the decision-making processes.

Choosing the Lead Professional will also be influenced by:

- the kind of help which the child or family needs
- previous contact or a good relationship with the child
- any statutory responsibility to co-ordinate work with the child or family

In some cases, to make sure the child and family get the best possible help, because the child has identifiable complex needs, or there is a statutory obligation defined in law towards a child, the Lead Professional will need to come from a particular agency.

Examples where statutory requirements need to be accounted for are:

- where a child needs a Co-ordinated Support Plan for children's additional support for learning (educational services)
- a child is formally looked after which includes the child being subject to a requirement from a children's hearing or where a child is voluntarily looked after and accommodated (social work services)

There will also be other administrative categories where compliance with procedures will help ensure a child's safety, for example, for a child whose name is on the child protection register.

The relationship between Lead Professionals and others in contact with the child and family.

It is the Lead Professional's responsibility to make sure everyone is clear about the different roles they have and the contributions they have to implement the Child's Action Plan. In some cases, although much of the day-to-day work with the child or family may be carried out by practitioners other than the Lead Professional, the Lead Professional should at least have sufficient direct contact with the family to ensure that they are well informed and that the Child's Action Plan is working properly and to good effect. All professionals carry individual responsibility to ensure they have the most up to date information and plan. There will be limited occasions when only the Lead Professional will have this information and therefore should ensure the named person has up to date information. An Integrated Child's Assessment and Plan should be shared on AYRshare with the Named Person and appropriate others as contacts.

All professionals require to ensure the child's Integrated Chronology of Significant Events is kept up to date on AYRshare and has no duplication of entries. The Lead Professional will oversee this and monitor the information. They should ensure that the assessment team analyse the Integrated Chronology when the Integrated Assessment is being reviewed.

Over time, circumstances may change and it may be appropriate for a different practitioner to take over the role of Lead Professional. Whenever this happens, as at any other time, the child and family need to be fully involved in any decisions and changes that affect them.

The Role of the Lead Professional's Supervisor/Manager

The Lead Professional's supervisor is responsible for quality assuring completed assessments on behalf of the lead agency. If the supervisor is not satisfied that the assessment meets the standards then they provide the Lead Professional with written detail of the additional work required by the assessment team. When they are satisfied

that the completed assessments meet the standards then they sign off the assessment and it can be distributed.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF EAST AYRSHIRE OFFICER LOCALITY GROUP:
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**