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Getting it right for every child: Where are we now?

A report on the readiness of the
education system to fully implement
Getting it right for every child

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Getting it right for every child: Where are we now?

Introduction

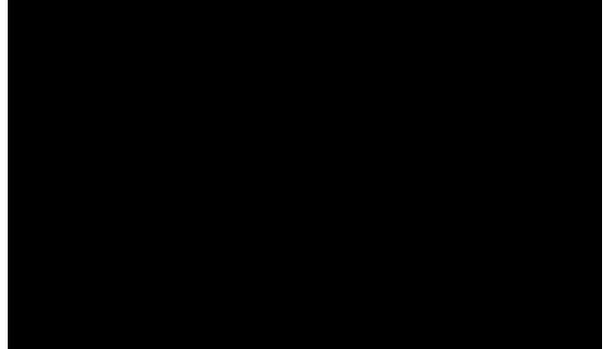
[‘Getting it right for every child’](#) is a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. It’s the bedrock for all children’s services and can also be used by practitioners in adult services who work with parents and carers. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and how they can act to deliver these improvements. **Getting it right for every child** is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and families.’

A Guide to **Getting it right for every child**: Scottish Government June 2012

In 2006, the then Scottish Executive, published its plan for the implementation of the *Getting it right for every child* approach. It acknowledged that it would take time to bring about a fundamental shift in how children and young people are helped and supported. It established a number of pathfinder projects, including multiagency working across children’s services in The Highland Council. Ensuing key Scottish Government policies and strategies relevant to children and young people, encompass the *Getting it right* approach. These include:

- The Early Years Framework
- Curriculum for Excellence
- We Can and Must Do Better
- Equally Well

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In 2011, Scottish Government announced its intention to introduce a Children and Young People Bill in the term of this current Parliament. Legislation will seek to embed the rights of children and young people across the public sector in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC). It wants to set out an approach to welfare that puts an understanding of wellbeing based on *Getting it right for every child* at the heart and design and delivery of services. As such, it proposes to place a duty on public bodies to work together to design, plan and deliver jointly their policies and services so they focus on improving children’s and young people’s wellbeing.

It is against this background that HM Inspectors carried out a programme of visits over the period from September 2011 to April 2012 to a sample of 11 education authorities across Scotland to look at the extent to which the education system is currently using *Getting it right for every child* approaches to help ensure that children and families get the right help at the right time. The task sought to identify how fully authorities and establishments have embedded the foundations of the *Getting it right for every child* approach i.e. the ten core components and the set of values and principles (Appendix 1). It also looked at progress in implementing key elements of

the approach. Our visits involved professional dialogue with strategic leaders and operational managers at education authority level. The team visited clusters of schools, including early years centres, primary, secondary and special schools. Team members engaged in professional dialogue with heads of establishments, practitioners and representatives from partner agencies. We interviewed parents and young people. There were also visits to a sample of colleges. The focus of the dialogue and discussions was around culture, practice and systems, informed by the ten core components of *Getting it right for every child*.

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Where are we now with the culture?

Core components

1. A focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and a sound understanding of wellbeing.
2. A common approach to gaining consent and sharing information where appropriate.
3. Integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention.

At Authority Level

At education authority level, senior officers show a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Overall, among senior officers, there is a sound understanding of the *Getting it right for every child* approach and of the importance of multi-agency working to ensure that the needs of children and their families are met effectively and successfully. Most of the education authorities visited view the implementation of the *Getting it right for every child* as a key strategic priority. A few have adopted fully a child-centred approach for the delivery of services, and in doing so, have reviewed joint working approaches with other services and agencies. In these authorities, there are increasingly high expectations for the quality of practice in responding to, and meeting the needs of, children and young people.

A few education authorities recognise that they need to give a stronger strategic lead in order to implement *Getting it right for every child* effectively. In some cases, it has been seen as mainly a social work agenda. In others, the education authorities feel that their practices are consistent with the *Getting it right for every child* approach though they are not using the National Practice Model and the associated common language.

Across the sample, education authorities feel that the corporate approach could be strengthened to provide greater challenge to bring about consistently high quality practices across services for children. Good attention is being given to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable, and in particular, children and young people who are looked after.

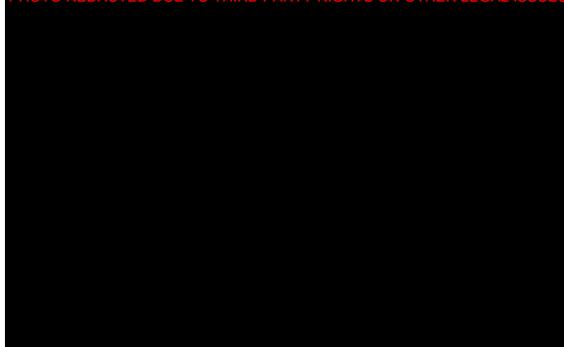
In Early Years Centres and Schools

Overall, senior managers have a good understanding of the *Getting it right for every child* approach. However, at class teacher and practitioner level, this understanding is not yet well-developed, particularly in the secondary school sector. There is limited knowledge about the *Getting it right for every child* National Practice Model. Across the sectors, establishments recognise that children, young people and families need to be fully involved in making decisions about support. There is considerable scope for establishing meaningful partnership working with parents and carers. Children and families are not always at the centre of a school's approach to planning and decision-making in relation to meeting the needs of children and young people.

Across the sectors, staff are aware of the importance of communicating and working with colleagues from other agencies, especially when a child or young person needs extra help. However, some schools view *Getting it right for every child* just as a process for accessing additional help for children and not as a way of working to ensure that all children and young people reach their full potential. In those authorities where the *Getting it right for every child* approach is being embedded successfully, staff are confident in sharing information appropriately with other agencies. There is a sound understanding of the benefits that accrue from using key information about a child's circumstances to safeguard the wellbeing of the young person and to secure support when it's required.

The evidence from our visits to early years centres and schools shows that the *Getting it right for every child* approach is not yet being used consistently within establishments and across authorities. There is not a shared understanding of wellbeing and staff do not always recognise their responsibilities in promoting and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

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In Colleges

The colleges visited provide a positive culture that is supportive of all learners. Overall, staff who are directly involved in managing, coordinating and delivering support have a sound understanding of the *Getting it right for every child* approach through their work with partner agencies, including schools and local authorities. On the part of other college staff, their awareness and understanding of the approach is variable.

The success of colleges in planning effective transitions for young people coming to college, relies heavily on partner agencies providing accurate information about learners in advance. Some colleges benefit from clear and direct lines of communication with key named staff in local authorities and schools. However, the

majority of colleges experience difficulties in obtaining sufficient information about learners from secondary schools.

The colleges have a person-centred approach to working with people of all ages and skills levels. Learners on college programmes have an individual learning plan which staff use to engage learners in identifying goals and aspirations and to chart their progress. Where appropriate, parents and carers are involved in the planning and review process.

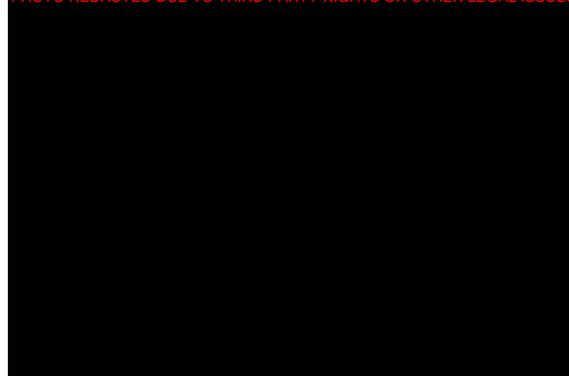
While college culture is consistent with *Getting it right for every child* values and principles, the core components and language of the *Getting it right for every child* approach are not being promoted routinely within the college sector.

For Parents, Children and Young People

The view of almost all parents interviewed, was that staff in establishments are open and approachable. They feel that staff are willing to listen to any concerns that they have about their child's wellbeing. Most feel that establishments keep them informed about what is happening for their child but that they are not fully enough involved in decision-making processes.

Children and young people feel that there are members of staff who know them well and to whom they can go with any concerns. Most young people reported that they are consulted about the types of support they might receive and are involved in meetings when decisions are being made. However, a few young people feel that they are told what is going to happen and that they do not have enough opportunities to give their views on what they think would help them most.

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Where are we now with practice?

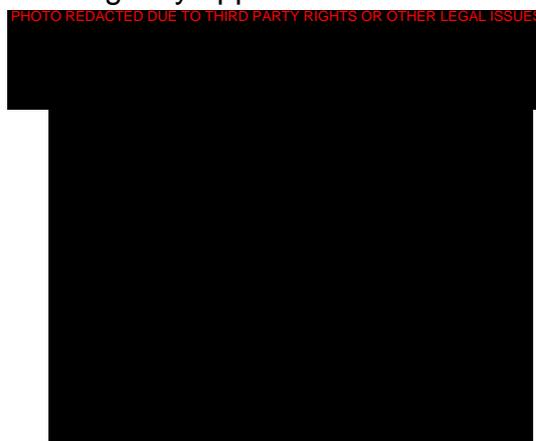
Core components

4. A co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, and agreeing actions and outcomes, based on Wellbeing Indicators.
5. Streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time.
6. Consistent high standards of cooperation, joint working and communication where more than one agency needs to be involved, locally and across Scotland.
7. A Named Person for every child and young person, and a Lead Professional (where necessary) to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity.

At Authority Level

While across education authorities there is a strong commitment to the values and principles of the *Getting it right for every child* approach, there is considerable variance in the extent to which those approaches are being implemented. A few authorities have a strong strategic vision for implementing *Getting it right* approaches. These authorities are driving this forward through a clear plan which uses multi-agency locality groups as a vehicle for delivering improved services and support to children and families. Senior managers are providing clear leadership, using and reinforcing the language of *Getting it right*. In one of these authorities, the council has taken the decision to put '*Getting it right for every child*' as a heading in its corporate documents as a visual reminder of services' responsibilities to use these approaches to better meet the needs of children and families. Across the sample, education is contributing to the strengthening of multiagency working. In the best examples, collaborative working across education, health, social work, police and voluntary agencies is helping to facilitate prompt contact between agencies, enabling more efficient sharing of information, faster responses and thus help for children and families at the right time. In a few authorities, there was a view that the key services did not all have a shared understanding of the *Getting it right for every child* approach. In all authorities visited, there is more work to be done to streamline planning and for the agencies to work within a single framework. As yet, none of the education authorities visited are using the National Practice Model consistently (Appendix 2). Authorities recognise the need to build more robust and outcome focussed approaches to self-evaluation to address variable practices in ensuring the wellbeing of all children and the delivery of effective multiagency approaches to meeting needs.

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In Early Years Centres and Schools

In a few education authorities, some establishments, in the main early years centres, are making good use of the wellbeing indicators to observe children and to record their progress. They are using the Wellbeing Wheel well to build up information on children's progress and to plan effectively. In these situations, staff are able to share information efficiently with colleagues in other agencies, such as social work and health, using a common language and structure for discussing any instances of concern that may arise for a child or young person. However, overall, staff in schools are making limited use of the wellbeing indicators to identify concerns and assess needs. In schools, staff use authorities' staged assessment and intervention arrangements, linked to the requirements of the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act, to address children's learning needs and access support for them. There is a lack of clarity and understanding of how staged intervention processes are complementary to the *Getting it right* approach. There is also a lack of clarity and

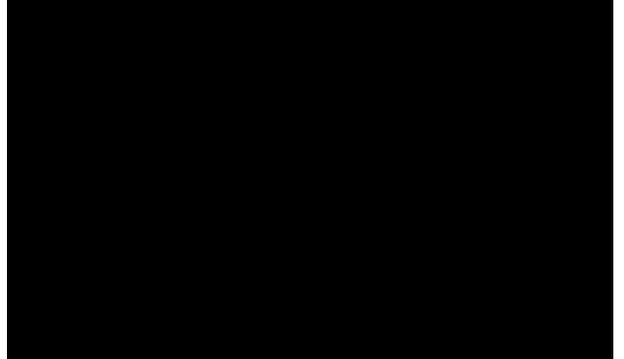
understanding about how the *Getting it right approach* is integral to the delivery of young people's entitlement to personal support within Curriculum for Excellence. There is still significant development required in authorities to put in place a single planning process that enables practitioners across all agencies to assess, action and review children's needs in a coordinated and integrated way. Staff in schools are expected to have a number of separate plans for children, for example, additional support plans, co-ordinated support plans, as well as making contributions to the planning processes of other agencies. In a number of cases, staff are not clear about the statutory requirements attached to the various types of plans. The majority of authorities are developing integrated assessment frameworks. Staff welcome the move to more uniform documentation that can be used by all agencies. However, there are reservations within establishments in a few education authorities about the number of forms that can be associated with Integrated Assessment Frameworks e.g child profile, family profile and initial assessment.

Across the sample of authorities visited, staff feel that interagency working continues to improve, helping children and families to get the right types of support more efficiently. At local levels, practitioners have established good relationships with colleagues in other agencies. A significant number of staff interviewed felt that the quality of interagency working was very much dependent on the practice of individual workers rather than council strategies and policies. Most staff in establishments do not have a sound understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the *Named Person* or *Lead Professional*. Correspondingly, these roles are not being used consistently, either within or across education authorities.

In Colleges

Colleges report that the actions being taken by local authorities in implementing *Getting it right* approaches, along with Curriculum for Excellence and Post 16 Learning Choices, are providing a more collaborative focus for communicating and coordinating appropriate types of support for young people. There are good examples of services now involving college staff more actively and fully in identifying suitable progression pathways for young people.

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For Parents, Children and Young People

Most parents interviewed were not aware of the *Getting it right for every child* approach. Overall, they feel that staff in establishments know their children well as individuals, particularly in early years centres and primary schools. Their perception is that the different agencies do not always work well together to support their children. A significant number were frustrated at the number of meetings that they had to attend where they had to provide the same information over and over again. A few spoke of having to fight to get help for their child. Very few have heard of the

terminology of *Named Person* or *Lead Professional*. In the main, parents spoke positively about the quality of support given by the various agencies working together to support children move on from early years centres to primary school.

Children and young people value having support from staff in schools. Young people in secondary schools feel well-supported by staff with pastoral care responsibilities. They appreciate having a nominated member of staff to whom they can go to discuss personal and/or learning issues. Where relevant, young people like it when they can see the links between school staff and their social worker in working together to get help for them, in and out of school. A few spoke of how adults could do more to make them feel more comfortable in review and planning meetings and help them to be more confident in participating in discussions about their future.

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Where are we now with systems?

Core components

8. Maximising the skilled workforce within universal services to address needs and risks as early as possible.
9. A confident and competent workforce across all services for children, young people and their families.
10. The capacity to share demographic, assessment, and planning information electronically within and across agency boundaries.

At Authority Level

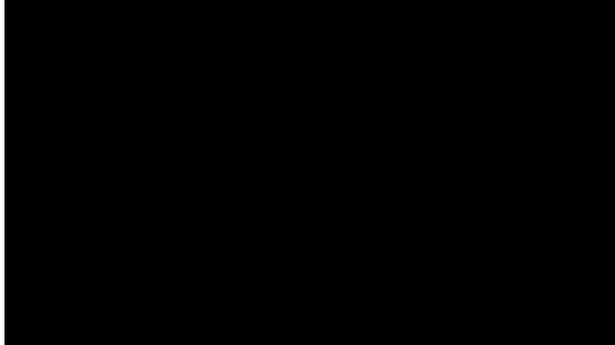
All of the education authorities visited identified the training of staff as a key issue for the successful implementation of *Getting it right*. In one authority, there is a continuing programme of multi-agency training for staff at all levels. However, in almost all authorities in the sample, there is no systematic, on-going training and development opportunities for education staff to help them understand and use the *Getting it right* approach. Overall, across the sample of council areas that were involved in the task, there is a clear expectation that information about children and young people is to be shared with other services. The incompatibility of the different information systems used by the various services, means that there are significant restrictions on the electronic access to, and transfer of, information between and across agencies.

In Early Years Centres and Schools

In a few authorities, heads of establishments and early years centres have undertaken some training but this has not yet impacted significantly on practice. In almost all establishments visited, apart from head teachers and depute head teachers, staff have undertaken little or no training on the *Getting it right* approach. In a few authorities, staff have been issued with folders containing information on

Getting it right and the National Practice Model. Overall, staff are not sufficiently confident in using the four main steps that make up the Model. They feel that they need to improve their understanding of the functions of other agencies and the roles and responsibilities of colleagues working in them. In one authority with a strong commitment to multi-agency training, staff who have attended the training, spoke of the significant impact that this is having on joint working practices. Practitioners from each agency now have more understanding of the contexts in which they work.

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Getting it right, now

Overall, practice in authorities and educational establishments reflects well the values and principles that underpin the *Getting it right for every child* approach. Across the sample of education authorities visited, progress is being made in implementing the ten core components. However, the rate of progress across authorities varies significantly and there is considerable scope for the ten core components to be applied more rigorously and consistently. Staff in educational establishments know the importance of giving attention to children's care and welfare needs and that, at times, they will need to access support from other agencies to ensure that those needs are met. Education authorities demonstrate a firm commitment to joint working approaches with other services and agencies. However, the differences in the ways that services operate means that children, young people and their families do not always experience the quality of support that they need to enable them to be the best that they can be. For example, the different ways that services are designed and the different approaches they use to plan and assess young people's needs, to record and share information and the different language and processes they use, can result in children and families experiencing disjointed and poorly coordinated responses to their needs. Across the universal services and other agencies working with children, there is no clear shared interpretation of wellbeing.

Scottish Government believe that consistent and full implementation of the *Getting it right for every child* approach across Scotland will have huge benefits for children and young people. The proposed Children and Young People Bill will put in place legislation that ensures:

- all children and young people from birth up to 18 years have access to a Named Person;
- all relevant services cooperate with the Named person in ensuring that a child's and young person's wellbeing is at the front of their actions; and

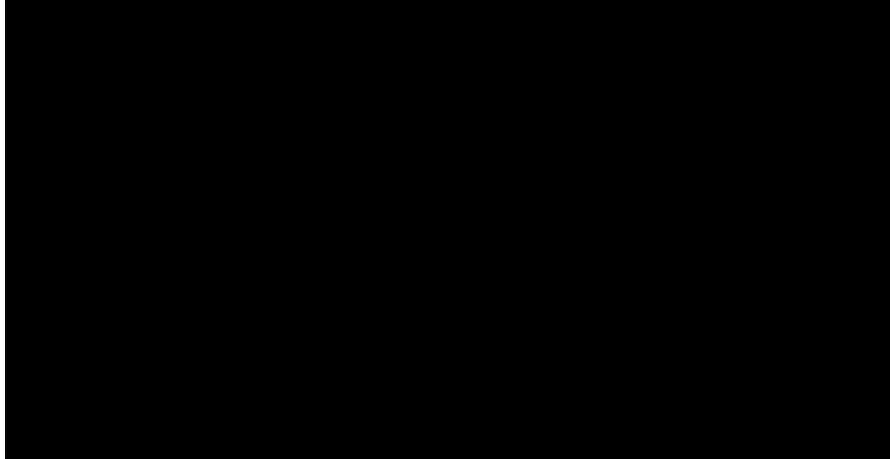
- a single planning process should be in place to support those children and young people needing the involvement of a range of services, through a single Child's Plan.

It is proposed that the Bill will enshrine the definition of wellbeing in statute. Scottish Government also propose to provide guidance to support the Bill in order to help secure the overall aim of full and consistent implementation of the *Getting it right for every child* approach.

In order to ensure that education continues to move forward with full implementation of *Getting it right for every child* approaches, authorities and establishments need to continue to work closely with other services and take action to:

- Develop a shared understanding of wellbeing and that it is everyone's responsibility to promote and support the wellbeing of every child and young person.
- Facilitate training for all staff to support effective delivery of the roles of Named Person and Lead Professional and the use of the National Practice Model.
- Agree and implement a single planning process.
- Establish more meaningful partnership working with parents including helping them to know about the *Getting it right* approach.
- Actively promote and demonstrate *Getting it right* approaches across their council area.

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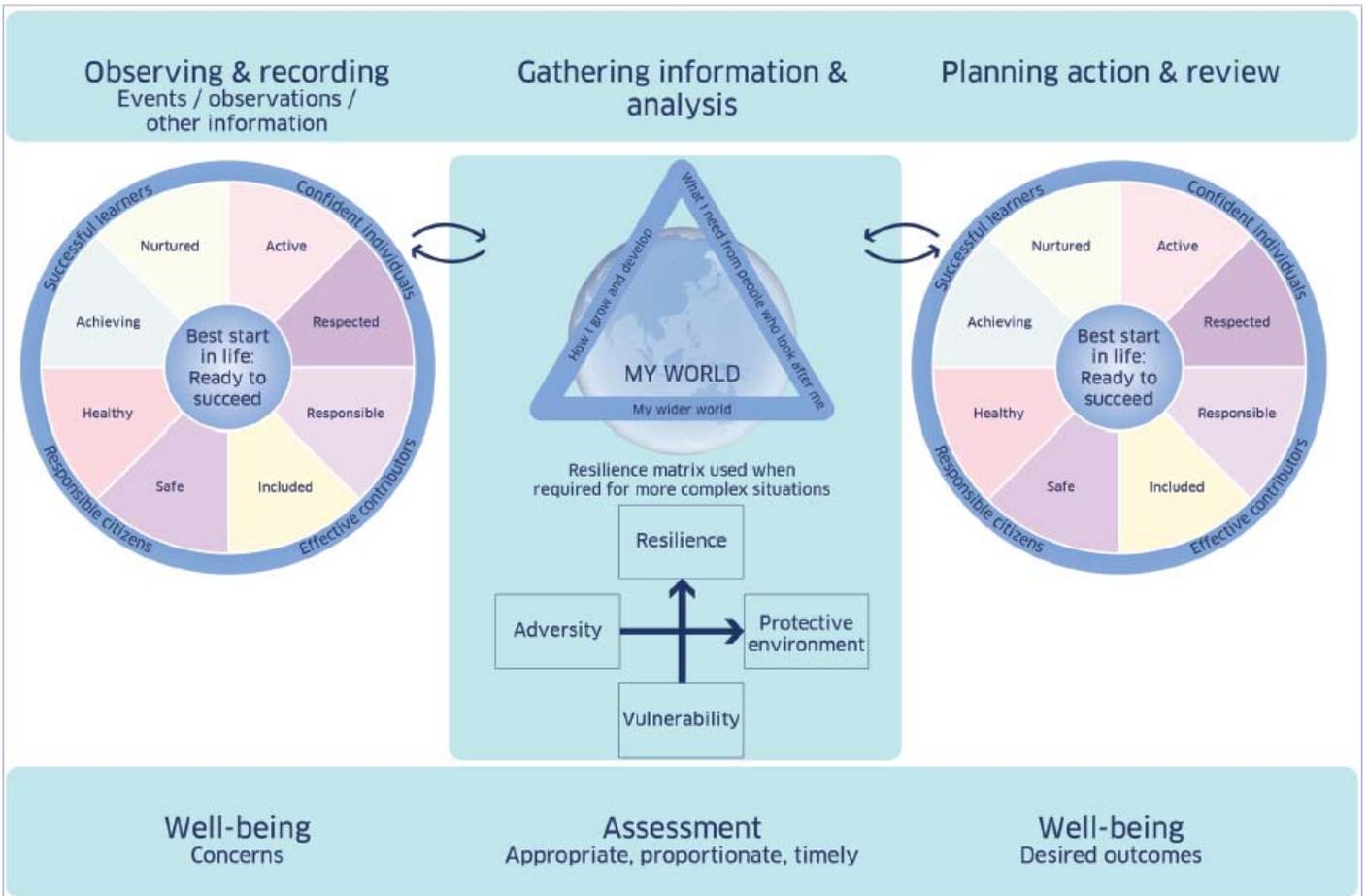
Appendix 1

Getting it right for every child core components

1. A focus on improving outcomes for children and young people, based on shared understanding of wellbeing.
2. A common approach to gaining consent and sharing information where appropriate.
3. Integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention.
4. A co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, and agreeing actions and outcomes, based on Wellbeing Indicators.
5. Streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time.
6. Consistent high standards of cooperation, joint working and communication where more than one agency needs to be involved, locally and across Scotland.
7. A Named Person for every child and young person, and a Lead Professional (where necessary) to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity.
8. Maximising the skilled workforce within universal services to address needs and risks as early as possible.
9. A confident and competent workforce across all services for children, young people and their families.
10. The capacity to share demographic, assessment, and planning information electronically within and across agency boundaries.

Appendix 2

The *Getting it right for every child* National Practice Model



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