



Named Person

Supporting children,
young people and parents

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is about improving the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. The Act is wide ranging and includes key parts of the *Getting it right for every child* approach, commonly known as GIRFEC.

Most children and young people get all the help and support they need from their parent(s), wider family and community, but sometimes they may need a bit of extra support. The Act gives all children and young people from birth to 18, or beyond if still in school, access to a Named Person to help support their wellbeing.

A Named Person will be a central point of contact if a child, young person or their parent(s) want information or advice, or if they want to talk about any worries and seek support. They can also, when appropriate, reach out to different services who can help.

Access to a Named Person is part of the GIRFEC approach to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people.

Public services in many areas of Scotland already offer this service, which is planned to be available nationally from 31 August 2016.

Who will be a Named Person?

A Named Person will normally be the health visitor for a pre-school child and a promoted teacher - such as a headteacher, or guidance teacher or other promoted member of staff - for a school age child.

The Named Person duties are integrated into their current role and strengthen the support they currently provide, formalising their role as a central contact for children, parents and other people working with them.



What will a Named Person do?

A Named Person will be available to listen, advise and help a child or young person and their parent(s), provide direct support or help them access other services.

For example, a health visitor might ask for help from a speech and language therapist, or a guidance teacher may put parents in touch with a local bereavement counselling service.

They will also be a point of contact for other services if they have any concerns about a child's or young person's wellbeing.

What happens when a concern is raised?

When the child or young person, their parent(s), or someone who works with them raises a concern, a Named Person will carefully consider the situation by asking five questions:

1. What is getting in the way of this child's or young person's wellbeing?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child or young person?
3. What can I do now to help this child or young person?
4. What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

Once they have considered the situation, a Named Person will discuss this with the child or young person and their parent(s), and other appropriate professionals if required, to assess what needs to be done to improve their wellbeing.

They will then plan what action(s) will be taken with the child or young person and their parent(s) and arrange appropriate review dates for the plan. Each situation and concern will be unique to the child or young person, and the way they are supported will be tailored to their individual needs.

A Named Person will only offer advice or support in response to a request from a child or parent, or when a wellbeing need is identified. They can help a child, young person or their parent(s) address their concerns early and in some cases avoid bigger concerns or problems developing.

There is no obligation to accept the offer of advice or support from a Named Person.

Who will provide and support Named Persons?

Local authorities and health boards are the main organisations that have a duty to make sure a Named Person is available to children and young people wherever they live or learn. They will make sure children, young people and parents know about their local Named Person service and what it means for them.

Other organisations, like independent or grant-aided schools, secure accommodation services and the Scottish Prison Service (for the small number of young people held in custody), have a duty to make sure a Named Person is available to the children and young people in their care.

Information about a child's needs, specific circumstances and the help they have already received may be shared with a Named Person and other services if asked to provide additional support.

In most circumstances, the child or young person and parent(s) will know what information is being shared, with whom and for what purpose, and their views will be taken into account. This may not happen in exceptional cases, such as where there is a concern for the safety of a child or someone else.

The Act and supporting guidance sets out a clear set of steps for practitioners to follow to make sure the right information is shared at the right time, so that the right help is offered to support the wellbeing of the child or young person.

Key facts about the Named Person role

1. A Named Person will be available to children and young people across Scotland from birth to age 18, or beyond if still in school. This means a child, young person, parent, or someone who works with them, knows who they can approach for help or advice if they need it. A Named Person will normally be a health visitor for pre-school children and a head teacher, guidance teacher or other promoted member of staff for school aged children and young people.

2. The Named Person will work with children, young people and their parent(s) to get the help they need, when they need it. A Named Person has a responsibility to respond to a concern about a child's or young person's wellbeing but there is no requirement to take up the offer of advice or support. A Named Person does not replace or change the role of a parent or carer. The rights and responsibilities of parents to raise their children and provide for their wellbeing needs stay the same.

3. The Named Person service will help families and the services that support them to work in partnership. A Named Person will be a single point of contact available to parents, children and young people by law to make getting help and advice more straightforward and joined up. There is no obligation to take up the offer of advice or support. Named Persons have no new legal powers to compel parents, children or young people to accept advice, support or help.

4. Effective communication, including sharing relevant information where appropriate, is essential to ensure children, young people and families get the right help at the right time. Every child's needs and circumstances are unique and a Named Person will work with a child or young person and their parent(s) to offer the right advice and support. Information about their needs and circumstances may be shared with a Named Person if it's relevant to understanding what help they may need and it supports their wellbeing, this will be done in discussion with the child and their parent(s), unless there is a child protection concern. They will not directly access personal information held by other services.

5. The new law makes good practice the national standard across Scotland to ensure that support is available to all if they need it. The GIRFEC approach and the Named Person approach already operates in many parts of Scotland. The Named Person service builds on the supportive role teachers and health visitors have long offered to children and parents.

6. The Named Person is mainly provided by health and education services. A Named Person will support specialist services, such as social work and mental health services, as they continue to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families. A Named Person does not remove the responsibilities of others working with children, young people and families or change current child protection procedures. The police and or social work will continue to be contacted immediately if a child is believed to be at risk of significant harm.

7. The GIRFEC approach makes better use of available resources. GIRFEC provides a common approach to thinking about wellbeing and co-ordinated planning. This helps to ensure that targeted support is provided where it's required to help a child or young person.

Further information

Other information leaflets in this series include **Understanding Wellbeing, Child's Plan** and **Getting it right for every child**.



For more information on Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) visit: www.gov.scot/girfec

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