

getting
it right
for every child

In South Ayrshire

Good Practice Guidance

Appendix 1

Role of Named Person and Lead Professional

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. Through children and families knowing who to contact, their access to help is made easier. This is an essential feature of a child centered approach.

It is the Named Person's role to take initial action if a child needs extra help, formalizing 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 and work more efficiently with others.

The Named Person is responsible for ensuring core information is up to date, assess if a child is not meeting their developmental milestones or benefitting fully from education and determine what extra help may be required from within their agency or outwith 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 secondary education, whether or not they are subjects of compulsory measures of care. This might be someone from a youth service or the voluntary and private sector.

Please go to Page 7 for details of the 'Named Person' in South Ayrshire. This is kept up to date on the South Ayrshire Webpage www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/getting-it-right-for-every-child and on Glow.

Please notify Kirsty.ramsay@south-ayrshire.gov.uk with any changes as they happen.

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'.

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. Where this happens, in all cases, a lead professional will be needed. The lead professional becomes the person within the network of practitioners supporting the child and family who will make sure that the different agencies act as a team and the help they are all offering fits together seamlessly to provide appropriate support for the child and family.

Evidence from practice suggests that the lead professional role is a key element of effective frontline delivery of integrated children's services. It ensures that professional involvement is rationalised, co-ordinated and communicated effectively.

The role of the *Lead Professional* is:

- to make sure that the child or young person and family understand what is happening at each point so that they can participate in the decisions that affect them
- to be the main point of contact for children, young people, practitioners and family members, bringing help to them and minimising the need for them to tell their story several times
- to promote teamwork between agencies and with the child or young person and family
- 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 assessment team
- 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. Evidence from practice shows that children and families who require support from a number of professionals 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 experience frustration at receiving sometimes inadequate, misleading or inappropriate referral information, encounter barriers to information sharing and communication problems with other practitioners and

can find it hard to access more specialist services. Practitioners have to take part in too many over large and bureaucratic review meetings and case conferences to the detriment of delivering early intervention support. Such fragmentation can cause delay in children receiving the support they need and lead to less effective outcomes for children and young people.

The lead professional model within Getting it right for every child offers a solution to this fragmentation:

- 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 Integrated Assessment Framework 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 co-ordinated 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 behavior 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 co-ordinate help. This supports the Getting it right for every child 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 co-ordinating action. In some cases, a plan and action may be progressed without a formal meeting. Allowing for a more informal co-ordination of assistance between agencies without formal meetings supports the principle of timely and proportionate help. In many cases, health and education practitioners are already co-ordinating 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
- There will be cases where children's safety is the primary issue, or there is a statutory requirement for a lead professional, such as when a child is looked after. In such cases, co-ordinating help from the universal services may not be appropriate. A worker from another agency will need to take the lead. In many cases this is likely to be social work. If a practitioner

from another agency outwith health and education is to take on the role of lead professional, it is more likely that this would happen through a formal meeting, but this will depend on the individual circumstances. 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 important 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 and family's views and wishes are heard and properly taken into account and, when necessary, link the child and family with specialist advocacy
- 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

The lead professional will be responsible for ensuring an integrated assessment is produced. The plan will identify when a review is needed and the lead professional will arrange for the production of materials for the review if this is to take place at a meeting. Materials will be circulated to everyone involved, especially children and families.

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 Assessment Team is 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
- 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
- a child is the subject of an Anti-Social Behavior Order

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. The lead professional must ensure that the named person has the most up to date information and plan.

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

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.

NAMED PERSON IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE

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Named Person

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