

getting
it right
for every child

Changing Professional Practice and Culture to Get it Right for Every Child

Executive Summary

An Evaluation Overview of the Development and
Early Implementation Phases of
Getting it right for every child
in Highland: 2006-2009

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Implementation Phases of *Getting it right for every child*
in Highland: 2006-2009**

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Executive Summary

1. The national programme

Getting it right for every child is a national programme that aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland. It seeks to do this by providing a framework for all services and agencies working with children and families to deliver a co-ordinated approach which is appropriate, proportionate and timely. While the Core Components of *Getting it right* reflect and build on existing good practice across the country, it is also recognised that developments of this breadth and magnitude will necessitate a long-term commitment to changes in systems, practices and professional cultures.

The development Implementation Plan for *Getting it right* was published in June 2006. It outlined a development strategy for streamlining children's records, assessments and action plans, the development of national practice tools, training materials and guidance, the development and pilot testing of a prototype electronic solution to facilitate information sharing across children's services and a communication strategy for keeping managers and staff working in children's services informed of developments. In addition, two pathfinder projects were established to help shape, develop and test the practice tools and training materials and to inform the development of national guidance for *Getting it right*.

2. The pathfinder projects

The Highland pathfinder, located in Inverness and its hinterland, was formally launched in September 2006 with a remit to address all aspects of children's and young people's needs from birth through to eighteen and encompassing not only all children's services but also those other services and agencies whose work significantly affects the lives of children and their families. The development phase focused on awareness raising for stakeholders and operational managers and staff, streamlining the governance and strategic planning structures and developing and trialling an appropriate practice model with supporting tools and guidance, training materials and mechanisms for sharing information within and across children's services. The implementation phase began in January 2008 with multi-agency training for operational managers and Lead Professionals. The roll-out across Highland began in the spring of 2009, although some aspects of the practice model had been rolled out earlier.

The second pathfinder project became operational in 2007 and was designed to test the implementation of the *Getting it right* approach in response to a single issue or theme: meeting the needs of children and young people living with or affected by domestic abuse. Pathfinder areas were identified in four local authorities: Dumfries and Galloway, Edinburgh City, Falkirk and West Dunbartonshire.

3. Structure of the *Executive Summary*

This summary is based on the overview report on the development and implementation phases of the Highland pathfinder. A later report will focus on the development and implementation phases in the single issue pathfinder areas.

It does not summarise the main report section by section, instead integrating the emerging common patterns by:

- highlighting the signs of progress that have been identified over the course of the development and implementation phases;
- identifying key learning points for mainstreaming *Getting it right* across Highland and in other parts of Scotland; and
- outlining some of the ongoing challenges and areas for development that still need to be addressed.

Consequently this summary does not sequentially follow the chapters in the main report.

4. Sources of data

The findings summarised here are drawn primarily from:

- Interviews and focus group discussions with strategic and operational managers and frontline staff working in the universal and specialist services for children and families.
- Follow-up surveys across a larger response staff base.
- Observations of a sample of meetings where children’s needs were assessed and plans developed.
- Observations of a sample of training sessions for managers, Lead Professionals and Named Persons.
- Interviews and case study analysis of a sample of children, young people and families.
- Analysis of samples of completed Records and Plans for children and young people with a diversity of needs and concerns.

5. Signs of progress and key learning points for improving outcomes for children and families

Improving outcomes for children and families: Outcomes are results and within the context of the *Getting it right* approach we would expect to see them manifested in terms of the changes that take place in children and young people’s lives as a direct result of the actions taken by the relevant services and agencies; the longer-term consequences in terms of their life chances and choices when they are older; and the level of service-user satisfaction experienced by those children and young people and their families as a result of the ways in which they were helped and supported. The report drew on data collated by the different services in Highland for statistical returns to the Scottish Government and for measuring the impact of their Children’s Services Plan. It also draws on an analysis of the experiences of just under 100 children and young people who were tracked through the system.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS	LEARNING POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate per 1000 of children (0-15) on the Child Protection Register has fallen from 3.0 to 1.5 since 2005. • The rate of registrations per 1000 has fallen from 2.5 to 0.8 over the same period. 	<p>These trends primarily reflect the raised awareness following child protection inspections undertaken in Highland over the last four years.</p> <p>However, more recently it was agreed in Highland that the <i>Getting it right</i> approach</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of child protection referrals has also been falling over that time scale. • The proportion of case conferences leading to registration is considerably higher than in Scotland as a whole. • The proportion of children on the Register with repeat registrations has fluctuated over the last four years but began to fall in 2008. 	<p>should also be followed in Child Protection cases and, although it is too soon to measure the impact of this, it would be anticipated that this would lead to a more holistic approach to assessment and planning which addressed not only the child's safety but also his or her other unmet needs.</p>
<p>Other indications of child safety, including provision for child protection, looked after children, accident prevention and anti-bullying policies in schools indicate that children and young people in Highland are safer than they were four years ago.</p>	<p>The reliability of the mechanisms for monitoring incidents of bullying in schools and when travelling to schools varies from school to school and more could be done to identify and disseminate examples of good practice.</p>
<p>An analysis of three tranches of non-offence referrals by police in the pathfinder area to the Reporter's Office and to social work and the universal services indicates that non-offence referrals from this source have been reduced by between 70% and 75% in the last two years.</p> <p>Over the same time period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of reports requested by the Reporter which were submitted within the target time has increased; • The number of new supervision requirements has increased; • The proportion of children seen by supervising officers within 15 days is now 100% 	<p>The main consequences of these trends for children and young people have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more proportionate response by police and social work to concerns; • Social work, schools and health are producing fewer reports for the Children's Reporter; • An assessment and plan is put in place more quickly for those who are not referred to the Reporter but for whom concerns still exist that may require additional or multi-agency support.
<p>The length of time looked after children have been waiting for permanent and adoptive placements has been falling over the last four years.</p> <p>The proportion of children in kinship care placements has increased slightly.</p> <p>The number of children and young people with a history of offending who have residential school placements has been falling.</p> <p>The length of time that children are accommodated away from home is now beginning to fall.</p>	<p>These trends are a result of changes put in place over the last five years or more. The significant added value of the <i>Getting it right</i> approach here has been in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better integrated and more holistic planning to meet a wider range of unmet needs; • a greater emphasis on engaging the young people in the planning process; • a greater emphasis on helping the young people to take ownership of that plan; • greater help with handling the transition from care to adult life.
<p>The health targets for 0-5 year-olds will be met by 2010 with the possible exception of reducing the number of expectant mothers who smoke.</p>	<p>Essentially these are population measures and while they give a good indication of the extent to which Highland has met its priority targets for its last Children's Services Plan, they are less effective in terms of measuring the specific impact that the <i>Getting it right</i> approach has on individual children and young people.</p>
<p>The performance of the lowest attaining 20% has been consistently above the average for Scotland as a whole.</p>	

Significant progress has been made in terms of improving access to respite care, Sure Start support (or equivalent) and support for young carers.	
There has been a significant decrease in exclusions from secondary schools as alternatives have been increasingly employed, although exclusions from primary schools are increasing.	
The attainment levels of looked after children, particularly those living away from home, and children from ethnic minorities are improving.	

Service User Outcomes: A clearer picture of whether the new processes and procedures are improving the circumstances of children and young people can be obtained from tracking them through the system. Work is still ongoing with case studies of children, young people and families receiving support from a wide range of services and agencies and at varying levels of need.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS	LEARNING POINTS
<p>The analysis of the records, plans, reviews and experiences of 97 children and young people showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was evidence of clear progress towards their intended outcomes in two-thirds of the cases analysed. • In a further 20% of cases there was evidence that situations involving children and young people that had previously been escalating had now been stabilized but their needs were so complex and multiple that more time was needed before evidence of significant changes in their Well-being Indicators could emerge. 	<p>There is a cumulative impact here of many changes that have taken place in recent years in terms of professional practice in children's services and in terms of the resourcing of a range of different interventions for addressing many of the concerns and unmet needs confronting children and young people.</p> <p>Nevertheless it is also clear that the gradual shift to an outcomes-led approach, the greater clarity in specifying the intended outcomes and the fact that review meetings increasingly focus on progress and not just on whether the actions in the plan have been carried out, are making an important contribution to ensuring improved outcomes for children and young people.</p>

6. Signs of progress and key learning points for changing professional practice

Changing Practices: changing or improving the repertoire of established ways of proceeding when concerns have been raised about a child, young person or family	
SIGNS OF PROGRESS	LEARNING POINTS
<p>The procedures and pathways that are now followed by professionals working with children and young people in the pathfinder area are more rational and streamlined.</p> <p>When a concern is raised about a child that requires multi-agency support, a single child's planning meeting is now the norm</p>	<p>Business process mapping of the different paths and routes that a child takes from single to multi-agency support and from universal to specialist services has played an important part in identifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • duplication of procedures and processes;

<p>instead of different agencies holding their own planning meetings around different needs and concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> barriers to the delivery of appropriate, timely and proportionate support. <p>This in turn has contributed to strategic managers buying into the changes proposed.</p>
<p>Staff working with children in the pathfinder areas are now using the same tools processes and procedures, with growing evidence of convergence of stronger shared multi-agency thinking and use of language across agencies at each stage of support provision.</p>	<p>The training provided has been critically important here for two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been multi-agency; It has been workshop-based with a focus on using the new tools and processes to work through cases and typical scenarios. <p>Monitoring and quality assurance by operational managers and the development team has also been important during the implementation phase to ensure not only that the new tools and processes were being employed but also that they were being applied as intended.</p>
<p>Every child and young person in the pathfinder area has a Named Person in health or education responsible for making sure that the child has access to the right help to support his or her development and well-being.</p>	<p>Staff who have taken part in the training for Named Persons and Lead Professionals were more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> document the decisions that have been taken; ensure the evidence for taking these decisions are recorded; go beyond the immediate concern that has been raised to take into account where there is a wider range of unmet needs; demonstrate a clearer link between assessment and planning; specify the intended outcomes and what would constitute evidence of progress in the achievement of those outcomes. <p>Quality assurance and self evaluation processes are also being developed to benchmark the new practices and ensure that these become the norm.</p> <p>Opportunities for staff to meet periodically to reflect on the practice change process and explore ways of building this into the continuing professional development of those who work in children's services enhance the processes and help embed them.</p> <p>Building good working relationships between Named Persons and Lead Professionals is critically important to effective assessments of needs and planning. This is particularly the case where Named Persons are not fully confident about multi-agency working where this is required of them, and is likely to impact on the stage of intervention.</p>
<p>Every child and young person who requires additional help and support from more than one agency has a Lead Professional who co-ordinates the planning and ensures that the different services provide a network of support around the child.</p>	
<p>There is growing evidence that children's needs are being identified at an earlier stage by Named Persons and this is enabling the Lead Professional to get the necessary support in place much more quickly.</p>	
<p>There are also clear indications that the role of the Lead Professional is contributing to a more focused response to children's needs and concerns.</p>	
<p>The input from the child's Named Person is proving to be critical in facilitating the transition from single- to multi-agency support.</p> <p>Understanding of the Named Person responsibilities at this interim developmental stage is still bedding in. There is still uncertainty remaining among Named Persons about this role, particularly about the implication of when they are required to adopt the Lead Professional role.</p>	

<p>The early feedback from families and children and young people indicates that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel more integrated into the planning process; • appreciate having access to someone with a clearly identified lead role; • feel that they are now more aware of when things are happening and what the processes are likely to involve. 	<p>It has become the norm to invite the child and family members to planning and review meetings. A solution-focused approach to those meetings is also proving important in engaging children and families in the whole process. But a step-change is also needed where staff come to recognise the value of working with the child and family to find appropriate and proportionate solutions and building on the strengths that have been identified in the assessment process.</p> <p>It is also important to ensure that Lead Professionals have the skills and tools to engage effectively with children and young people, particularly those under eight.</p>
<p>The process of gathering and sharing information about children’s and young people’s needs is now more consistent.</p>	<p>Improved information sharing is helping to highlight that the initial concern raised about a child or young person, and the initial interpretation of that concern, may not necessarily be the significant one(s).</p> <p>This leads to a more accurate understanding of needs to be addressed and increases the likelihood of the support offered being more appropriate and proportionate.</p> <p>Broadening the range of services providing and receiving information about a particular child is helping to produce a more holistic picture of that child and his or her unmet needs.</p>
<p>The quality of information being shared across children’s services has improved to a significant extent during the pathfinder phase.</p>	
<p>Staff raising a concern about a child or young person report that they are becoming more confident about giving reasons and evidence to support their concerns.</p>	
<p>The language of tariffs, thresholds and levels has not disappeared entirely but is less common in inter-agency discourse.</p>	<p>While the training has been important in supporting the change process it is also critically important to reinforce this with effective quality assurance and self evaluation processes and mentoring by experienced staff, particularly those who have been engaged in the development and trialling processes.</p> <p>Generally we found that staff who use the new processes and tools on a regular basis mostly adapt their practice quickly and effectively. Those who need more support are the ones that only use the tools occasionally and may only act as a Named Person or Lead Professional on an occasional basis.</p> <p>Ultimately the primary aim of the training, CPD, mentoring and quality assurance is not just to get staff to use the new tools and follow the intended pathways, it is to get them to apply these tools and process in an analytical way in order to critically assess the impact which the concerns are having on the child’s growth, development and well-being.</p>
<p>There is growing evidence that staff are becoming more confident and competent in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using the Well-being Indicators to structure their concerns and guide their assessment; • using the My World Triangle to understand the strengths and pressures in a child’s world that impact on that child’s development and well-being; • supporting their professional judgments with evidence derived from their analysis of the impact that these strengths and pressures are having on each child or young person, though the Resilience Matrix tool remains underused as yet. • Staff reports and analyses of records indicate that the use of the <i>Getting it right</i> tools is linked with the production of better quality assessments. 	

7. Ongoing challenges and areas for further development in changing professional practice

- Changes of this magnitude and scope take at least three years before they are embedded in the practices of the majority of staff and even then there is a need to develop effective induction programmes for new appointments and to ensure that developing quality assurance and self evaluation procedures are in place to provide feedback to staff.
- Business process mapping needs to be re-visited after the changes have been implemented to check whether new barriers and areas of duplication may have emerged.
- Engaging professional staff in the mapping process may be an effective way of persuading them of the need for changing and generating a sense of ownership of the new processes when they have been implemented.
- The Well-being Indicators are widely understood and have become embedded in the way staff in children's services within the Highland pathfinder structure their concerns about children, assess their needs and plan and deliver support. However, the evaluation of samples of records and plans indicates that there remains a lack of understanding about the inter-relationship of all the Well-being Indicators and the importance of them all in helping children to achieve their full potential. Not surprisingly, the main focus is on the *Safe* and *Healthy* indicators, but it is important to go beyond these, as soon as there is confidence that these have been addressed. This may need to be addressed in the training and quality assurance processes.
- Much of the focus during the development and implementation phases of pathfinder activity has been on the practice model. However, for those children and young people whose needs are met by the universal services and do not require specialist or targeted support, the key document is the record held by each service and, in particular, its functions as a means of monitoring progress towards each child's developmental milestones and picking up early signs of any emerging problems and concerns. Issues of access and sharing information are being addressed through the development of a virtual electronic system and a Multi Agency Store. But the key question here is whether the records, taken together, can provide practitioners with a holistic picture of each child's development, should the need for this arise, and provide the required quality of evidence-based information in the record on which to platform the multi-agency intervention most effectively when required.
- The evaluation of a sample of records and plans for children and young people with a diversity of needs showed that some practitioners need further support in:
 - completing chronologies around significant events and not just the dates of the actions taken by services;
 - analysing how the evidence gathered around the three sides of the My World Triangle is impacting on the child;
 - using the Resilience Matrix;
 - specifying children's outcomes, with some staff still tending to refer to actions rather than outcomes.
- One of the potential advantages in using the Resilience Matrix would be that it helps staff to focus on how best to achieve long-term outcomes for

the child. This is particularly apposite with outcomes related to the child's well-being. The Matrix could help staff to clarify the link between the more immediate and short term outcomes of a plan of action (such as improved attendance at school) and longer term outcomes relating to achievement and inclusion. However, we saw very few examples of its use, even for highly vulnerable children with complex life circumstances and multiple needs. Assessing resilience is complex, involving skill, experience and sensitivity. It possibly requires more training than was provided for in Highland's basic programme.

8. Signs of progress and key learning points for changing professional cultures

Changing professional cultures: bringing about a shift in the prevailing institutional and individual values, operating principles and established norms or ways of working together across agencies and services supports and reinforces changes in systems and practices.	
SIGNS OF PROGRESS	LEARNING POINTS
<p>There are clear signs that a sense of ownership of <i>Getting it right for every child</i> is emerging amongst professionals working with children and young people. This is most evident in social work and amongst a range of cross-agency workers. It is developing more slowly and more variably within the universal services and some specialist services but it is to be expected that this sense of ownership would take longer where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff only use the new processes occasionally, or • Use additional tools and processes for specialist assessments. 	<p>One of the critical factors in developing this sense of ownership has been the fact that so many strategic and operational managers across the children's services have bought into <i>Getting it right</i>.</p> <p>Another critical factor has been the role that a vanguard of staff who were actively engaged in the trialling process has played in encouraging and supporting their colleagues to adapt to the changes and new processes.</p>
<p>The notion that help for children should be timely, appropriate and proportionate is widely accepted across the pathfinder area as a guiding principle for their work.</p>	<p>Two parallel shifts in professional culture have been emerging in the pathfinder area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff in children's services are increasingly recognising that a central part of their professional responsibility and identity is that they work with children and in order to do that effectively, need to understand the whole child; • staff working together are moving away from the use of labels such as pupil, young offender, looked after child, in order to see the child in the round. <p>While, initially, some practitioners thought that the <i>Getting it right</i> approach might impact negatively on their professional identities, in practice this fear has diminished. This is partly because of the training, partly because of a year's experience of using the new processes and partly because of the pre-<i>Getting it right</i> developments in Highland towards</p>
<p>A common language around the Well-being Indicators and the My World Triangle is now understood and widely used across the services and agencies.</p>	
<p>The language of tariffs, thresholds and levels has not disappeared entirely but is less common in inter-agency discourse.</p>	

	integrated children's services.
The level of inter-agency trust is much higher than was apparent at the beginning of the pathfinder phase.	This has been supported by agreed data sharing protocols but it is also apparent in the fact that specialist and targeted services are now becoming more willing to see the universal services as the appropriate providers of support for children and young people with a range of additional needs.
There is a growing perception within the children's services workforce in the Highland pathfinder area that the effectiveness of integrated working needs to be measured in terms of the outcomes for the child and young person rather than in terms of whether or not the specific service outputs were delivered.	<i>Getting it right</i> is an outcomes-led approach to delivering children's services. It is important therefore that steps are taken to review whether existing procedures for collecting and reviewing data on children and young people provide the kinds of evidence needed, in order to judge whether changes in systems and practices are leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.

9. Ongoing challenges and areas for further development in changing professional cultures

- There now needs to be a period of checking for consistency and establishing benchmarks for good practice to ensure that the initial progress is sustained and that concerns continue to be raised about children in ways that are timely and appropriate and ensure a proportionate response.
- A package of support measures needs to be put in place – training, quality assurance and mentoring of staff – that will ensure that all professionals involved in assessment and planning for children are skilled not only in using the new tools but also in analysing and interpreting the resulting evidence in order to determine what would be the most appropriate interventions for a particular child.
- As individual practitioners and multi-agency teams become more creative and innovative in the way that they seek to address children's unmet needs they will tend to opt for actions and support mechanisms that were originally intended for a small number of children and young people with very complex needs or experiencing a major crisis in their lives. This becomes particularly challenging when resources are scarce. In such circumstances some practitioners and operational managers either want to re-introduce thresholds and criteria or apply them tacitly. The alternative response to this challenge is:
 - to ensure that the shared professional culture does more than pay lip service to the principle of early and timely intervention so that children get support before crisis intervention is needed;
 - to ensure that the assessment processes are thorough and evidence-based and therefore lead to actions taken on behalf of the child which are demonstrably appropriate and proportionate.

The shift in professional culture envisaged in *Getting it right* is most likely to happen where individual practitioners are not only trained to apply the new processes and procedures but also have an overview of what *Getting it right* is

seeking to achieve. This then drives their thinking about how best to respond to children’s unmet needs and concerns.

10. Signs of progress and key learning points for strategic and systemic changes

Systemic and Strategic Changes: changing or improving the ways in which structures, policies, IT systems, stakeholders and strategic management plan, guide, support and co-ordinate the change process in children’s services.	
SIGNS OF PROGRESS	LEARNING POINTS
<p>Focus groups, interviews and questionnaire surveys with a wide range of strategic and operational managers, frontline professionals and other stakeholders, including children, young people and their families, indicate that the vision behind <i>Getting it right</i> is now well-embedded in the pathfinder area.</p> <p>That vision is wide-ranging. It incorporates the aims and objectives of <i>Getting it right</i>, i.e. that every child has the right to be safe, nurtured, healthy, active, respected, responsible, included and supported to achieve their full potential and that this will, in turn, help to ensure that every child is confident, an effective participant, a successful learner and a responsible citizen. However, the vision also includes the means by which these aims and objectives will be achieved: a commitment to change the way services and agencies work together and in partnership with children, young people and families to ensure that every child gets the help she or he needs when they need it and for as long as they need it.</p> <p>While some operational managers and key workers in children’s services initially thought that <i>Getting it right</i> was targeted mainly on the most vulnerable children and young people that perception has now receded and <i>Getting it right</i> is now widely perceived to be having a significant impact on universal provision as well.</p>	<p>A communications strategy was needed which communicated the vision behind <i>Getting it right</i> as well as informing the stakeholders about the specific changes to systems and practice that were planned and when they would be implemented.</p> <p>The breadth and scale of the potential impact of <i>Getting it right</i> on so many services and agencies meant that it was essential that all stakeholders had an overview of the planned developments in addition to information about how these changes would affect them directly.</p> <p>Without a shared overview there was a risk that each service, agency and stakeholder group would have a fragmented view of <i>Getting it right</i> shaped primarily by the priorities of their own agency, department or post.</p>
<p>The Chief Officers and the other Lead Officers in the more targeted and specialized services working with children and families have all bought into the vision and the implementation plan for <i>Getting it right</i>.</p>	<p>While the championing of <i>Getting it right</i> by the Chief Officers sent out a clear and consensual message to all the stakeholders and to managers and staff at every level it was essential, particularly in the early days of the pathfinder, that Chief Officers and Lead Officers also ensured that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pathfinder developments were effectively integrated with other policy initiatives within their services and agencies; • conflicts relating to joint working (e.g. over sharing confidential information or

	<p>over responsibilities for coordinating action) were quickly and effectively resolved.</p>
<p>Health board members have also bought into <i>Getting it right</i>.</p> <p>This has also been the case for the local elected representatives.</p> <p>This is a development which has had cross-party support from the outset and strong links with the Community Planning Partnerships.</p>	<p>This has been particularly important at three levels. Elected members have had an important role to play in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explaining the thinking behind <i>Getting it right</i> to local service-user groups; • establishing important links between the pathfinder and strategic committees; • ensuring that committees and strategic managers involved with services for adults were kept aware of key developments in children's services.
<p>The development work and implementation of <i>Getting it right</i> in the Highland pathfinder was undertaken by a team seconded from the various services and agencies working with children and families. The secondments were full-time for the duration of the pathfinder phase. This was jointly funded by Scottish Government and the agencies which make up the Highland Community Planning Partnership.</p> <p>The time required for development work, establishing multi-agency links, consultation with practitioners and operational managers, trialling new tools, procedures and protocols, organizing training and reporting on progress was extensive. It is difficult to see how this could have been done across all children's services without staff from different services being freed up to do this on a full-time basis.</p>	<p>Several organisational changes were also introduced to support the development team and to facilitate the implementation process in the pathfinder area. These included:</p> <p>Reference Groups were set up in each service and each sector comprising operational managers and senior practitioners who had a mediating function between the development team and the operational staff in each service/sector.</p> <p>Multi-agency strategic planning groups were established around priority themes, examples of which included looked after children, youth justice, early years and childcare, disabilities and mental health issues.</p> <p>Integrated Service Officers, formerly Senior Family Liaison Officers, were delegated to oversee the interface between universal and targeted services and to take on a quality assurance role to ensure consistent standards of support were provided to children and young people.</p> <p>Local Service Managers Groups who became involved whenever the requirements of a child's plan could not be met from within area resources or where there were disagreements between professionals and agencies about the most appropriate and proportionate response to a child's needs.</p>
<p>Prior to the pathfinder phase a broadly-based governance and strategic planning structure had emerged in Highland specifically designed to co-ordinate policy for children's services and facilitate joint planning and decision making between the local authority, the health board, the police, the Children's Reporter's Office, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders, including groups of service users. This has continued to operate during the pathfinder phase and has played a key role in</p>	<p>The inclusiveness of these structures has been an important factor in ensuring that all the relevant stakeholders supported the planned changes.</p> <p>Also the elected members have acted as a link between all the key strategic committees on the council and health board and the pathfinder and the wider process of integrating children's services across Highland.</p>

supporting pathfinder activity.	
Strategic links between the pathfinder development team and other developments and initiatives impacting on children's services have reduced the potential for duplication and overlap of effort.	<p>These strategic links have been particularly important at two levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing the key transition points, e.g. from health to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary and children's services to adult services. • reducing the likelihood of parallel pathways emerging for the assessment and recording of children's needs and the development of appropriate plans.
When a transformative change process such as <i>Getting it right for every child</i> involves pathfinder activities across so many different services and agencies and so many practitioners being asked to respond to new demands and take on new responsibilities, then it can be particularly difficult to manage expectations. Some agencies rolled out specific tools, pathways and procedures before the pathfinder process had been worked through which meant that they were being used in a multi-agency context with staff in other services who had not yet been asked to adopt new practices. In other instances some staff started using new tools and pathways without waiting for the trialling process to be completed.	<p>While the Strategic Chief Officers Group can reduce the likelihood of each agency rolling out some aspects of the new processes ahead of time it is also the case that operational demands within services and the fact that the administrative boundaries for different agencies may not be co-terminous can still present problems. Again it is important that the planning and management of the change process is co-ordinated at a multi-agency level in order to better predict the possible implications for other services and plan accordingly.</p> <p>At the individual level it is important that operational managers introduce some degree of quality assurance during the development and implementation phases to identify where practitioners may be using developmental tools and pathways inappropriately.</p>

11. Ongoing challenges and areas for further development in strategic and systemic changes

The main challenge now is to ensure that the infrastructure and mechanisms for governance and strategic planning currently in place are appropriate for ensuring that the *Getting it right* approach will be effectively embedded across the whole of Highland as part of the roll-out.

Much will depend on how the following three challenges are addressed:

- To a large degree, the pathfinder area is predominantly urban where contact between services and agencies tends to be easier, there can be some co-location of multi-agency teams and service-users access to services is reasonably good. It remains to be seen to what extent the systems and procedures that have been developed can operate as smoothly in more remote rural areas.
- In a period where budgets are even more constrained than during the pathfinder phase, whether there will be more pressure on the Service Manager Groups to focus on inputs and outputs or whether they will still be able to sustain an outcomes-led and holistic response to children's needs.
- The set of challenges around whether further development work might be needed during the roll-out phase, with the key issue here likely to centre on the use of information technology. Throughout the pathfinder phase the health visitors and school nurses have been using a paper record. This is large and unwieldy. It has always been assumed that an electronic version would be developed that would be easier and quicker to use with drop-down menus and a user-friendly navigation system. However, if and when this kind of electronic record becomes available it will impact on practice in ways that are as yet difficult to predict. For example, it may need to be piloted with a small group of professionals before rolling out to all health visitors and school nurses.

12. Ongoing challenges and areas for further development in improving outcomes for children and young people

- In a minority of cases review meetings still focus primarily on discussing new concerns that have emerged and reporting on the actions taken, rather than the outcomes of those actions.
- As reported in detail in the Overview Report, there are signs of a professional cultural shift related to the use of the new practice model but one of the areas where more work is still needed (in terms of training, mentoring and quality assurance) is in thinking about outcomes rather than thinking in terms of outputs and actions.

13. Conclusions

Professional practice within the Highland pathfinder is changing in the right direction, training has helped and professionals are clearly reflecting upon and learning from experience. Some further structured professional development and quality assurance would help to bring all practitioners' skills up to the same level in terms of assessment, planning and reviewing progress in relation to the individual child or young person. However, it is clear from the evaluation that a package of support measures rather than a one-off training package will be needed to accompany the range of changes entailed by the *Getting it right* approach. This will work to enhance the already significant and positive steps made in supporting children to be safer, healthier, achieving better, more nurtured, more active, more respected, responsible and included.



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