

getting
it right
for every child
in Moray

Moray Meeting Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

'Planning for Children and Young People' has been developed for professionals who are or may be Named Persons or Lead Professionals with responsibility for facilitating Child's Plan meetings.

However, this guide will be useful for all practitioners particularly the setting goals and outcome section.

This pack should be used in conjunction with the guidance notes on the Child Planning Pathway and Process. This can be found at the Moray Council GIRFEC website - http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_56873.html

Solution Orientated training is also offered through the Moray Learning and Development Group. This can be accessed through the Moray Council GIRFEC website. Please note that ALL professionals who take part in Child Planning meetings must attend this training.

Having worked through the document, you will be able to:

- Explain the function and purpose of Child's Planning meetings
- Understand the role and responsibility of the person facilitating the meeting
- Communicate and engage effectively with everyone involved in meetings
- Conduct a meeting which reflects Solution Orientated principles and follows the Solution Orientated structure
- Use a range of tools to get the most out of a meeting
- Apply a range of strategies for handling different behaviours in meetings.

1.1 What is a Child's Planning Meeting/ Discussion?

A Child's Planning Meeting/ Discussion is one which takes place at any point in a child's life which has the aim of agreeing how the child, their family and professionals can work together to meet a child's identified wellbeing need/s.

It can take the form of a meeting or a discussion/ series of discussions between the involved parties either in person or by telephone, e-mail or other electronic format and. The Named Person usually triggers these processes.

1.2 How does it relate to other meetings?

With the exception of Initial Referral Discussions (IRD's) all other meetings, which previously took place (pre April 16), will be replaced by a Child's Planning meeting/Discussion.

When the meeting/ discussion is planned, the purpose of the meeting/discussion must be agreed and made clear to all parties. For example:

- A Child's Planning Meeting with the purpose of reviewing their Co-ordinated Support Plan
- A Child's Planning Meeting with the purpose of considering Child Protection Concerns
- A Child's Planning Meeting with the purpose of reviewing their Looked After Status

A family should only have to contribute to one meeting/discussion where all relevant parties are also able to contribute to the Child's Plan.

Research suggests that when children or young people and their parents/carers feel included and involved in assessment, planning and review processes, outcomes for children or young people are more positive.

As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to create an environment where the parents/ carers and child or young person are able to help drive the meeting and can contribute meaningfully to the plan.

Solution-oriented meetings do not seek to analyse difficulties in significant detail. However, it should be remembered that on some occasions gathering evidence of risk is absolutely the right approach, for example, where there are Child Protection issues as described in section 2.2.

2. RUNNING AN EFFECTIVE MEETING: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Solution Oriented Meetings: Principles into Practice

It is important to reiterate the significance of principles and values as the foundation for a successful solution oriented meeting.

The principles of solution-oriented practice vary in how they are reported. In Moray, the following five principles have been cited:

- If it works, do more of it, if it doesn't, do something different.
- The problem is the problem, not any person.
- Language shapes and moulds how we make sense of the world.
- Possibilities are infinite.
- Recognise strength, skill and resource in everything

If we see these principles put into practice, the following would be evident:

- Building on people's strengths rather than focusing deficits
- Empowering those we work with and support
- Respectful and supportive conversations
- Adopting a no-blame standpoint and avoiding labelling language
- Equality of perspectives / voice among participants
- A sense of wanting to do things differently

Well run solution-oriented meetings ensure clear goals and outcomes are identified. Time in meetings is often spent describing problems that are already well understood. Only towards the end of the meeting, do people begin to look at planning and agreeing actions. Figure 1.0 illustrates the balance of time spent in problem focused versus solution-focused meetings. Figure 2 offers a comparison of the content of solution focused versus problem focused meetings.

Solution-oriented approaches have been widely used in meetings in Moray over recent years. Whilst a great deal of good practice has taken place, there is a prevalent assumption that the commonly used structure looking at 'Issues / Concerns', 'What's Working' and 'Actions', in itself, makes a meeting solution oriented. However, this structure supports a solution-oriented approach. It is only by putting the above principles into practice as reflected by our careful use of language and attitude.

Figure 1: balance of time spent in problem focused versus solution focused meetings

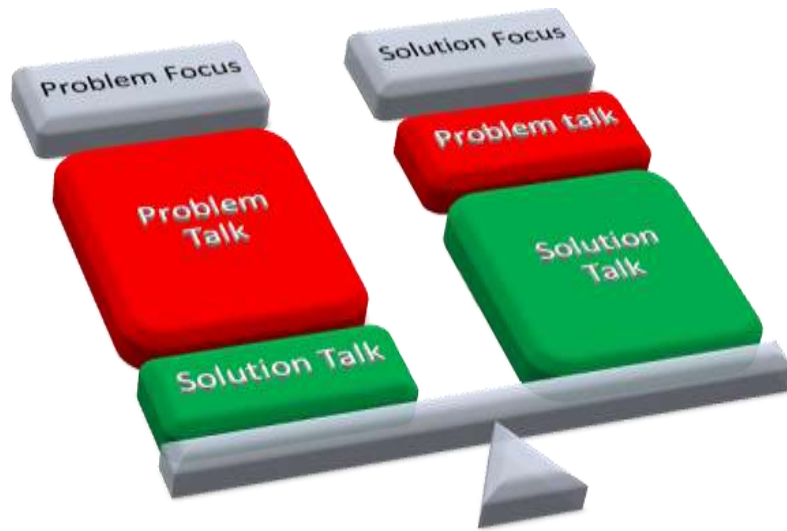


Figure 2: Content of solution focused v problem focused meetings.

Problem focus - why?	Solution focus – what? how?
Assessing problems: Finding out details of what has gone wrong.	Clarifying goals: What is going to be done to improve the situation?
Examining past failures: Trying to find out what happened, who was affected.	Examining past success: What has helped before?
Awareness of recent problems: Things have been a bit better <u>but.....</u>	Awareness of recent improvement and asking how did you manage to do that?
Explaining why things happened	Explaining progress by asking what did you do to make that happen? Who and what helped?
Pinpointing weakness and failures and where these were located	Pinpointing strengths by asking what is it about you that helped you through? Who?
Blaming people perceived as being responsible for the problem.	Acknowledging people’s contribution to the any improvement or solution.

2.2 Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator

Facilitating a good meeting is difficult. The following checklist is based on what professionals and parents value in a good facilitator and could form the basis of a reflective tool.

A good facilitator is someone who has ability to:

- ensures the safety of all present and alters the language of blame
- speak clearly and succinctly
- retain relaxed and open body language
- pay attention and respond to the body language of others
- respect confidences
- be sensitive to people’s feelings
- be impartial and objective
- listen for exceptions to the problem and what is already working well
- elicit existing skills and strengths by asking appropriate questions
- show interest in all viewpoints
- share their attention and actively involve all those present
- demonstrate a sound knowledge of GIRFEC

- actively seek solutions
- start and finish on time
- be approachable
- be tactful
- show enthusiasm
- to delegate
- acknowledge and correct mistakes
- listen carefully to what is being said and not dilute or re-interpret what others are saying
- offer explanations of technical language, job titles acronyms etc. People don't tend to admit they don't understand
- clearly explain the role of everyone at the meeting
- re-orientate people to the purpose of the meeting when things drift off track

Where meetings go wrong:

Where meetings go less well, one or more of the following tends to happen. The facilitator will:

- let the meeting drag on
- make all the decisions or cut people out of decisions
- use jargon
- show impatience
- speaks most at the meeting
- allow one or two people to dominate
- make people feel inadequate
- allow the meeting to become unproductive
- become stuck talking about the problems
- decide the outcome of the meeting before the discussion has taken place
- assume everyone understands the purpose of the meeting

An effective facilitator will have a sound knowledge of GIRFEC. A good working knowledge of the National Practice Model will support the smooth running of the meeting ensuring all relevant information is considered and needs are considered holistically.

2.3 Involving Young People and their Families in Meetings

Meetings are difficult often places for children, young people and their families. It is important that you do what you can to enable them to feel relaxed. Meet parents/carers and the young person before you go into the meeting, acknowledging any worries or concerns. Offer a choice as to where they want to sit

Research suggests that when children or young people and their parents/carers feel included and involved in assessment, planning and review processes, outcomes for children or young people are more positive.

As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to create an environment where the parents/carers and child or young person are able to help drive the meeting and can contribute meaningfully to the plan.

Children and young people who have attended Child's Planning meetings have offered the following advice about running meetings:

'Don't put me on the spot'

Children and young people say they need time to settle in to meetings, hear others and think about what they want to say. They, generally, do not like to be the first to speak at meetings, unless this is planned in advance. Most like a bit of time to settle in.

'Don't use big words'

Children, young people and parents would like us to be sensitive to the fact they may not understand jargon, acronyms, technical terminology and language that is more formal. They need adult to take time to explain things

'Don't ask me awkward questions in front of my Dad / Mum'

Children and young people need us to be mindful of their domestic situations. This means that certain questions might be awkward for a child or young person to answer honestly depending on who is in the room. For example, a young person felt torn between their parents. Some points are best discussed with young people prior to meetings, as opposed to at the meeting when parents are present.

'Can I decide where everyone will sit?'

Children and young people need us to be sensitive to where they sit and who sits next to them at meetings. This anxiety can be reduced by letting them help plan the seating arrangements before people come into the meeting.

'Make the environment homely and relaxed.'

Children and young people need us to create a meeting environment where they feel comfortable and more able to take part. We should never underestimate how difficult attending a Child's Planning meeting might be. Getting the child or young person involved in planning where the meeting takes place is a good start. As facilitator, we can also actively check they are comfortable

'Dress down – wearing a suit is intimidating'

Children and young people tend to prefer a more relaxed, less formal atmosphere so we need to reflect not only on the physical environment but also on how you present yourself in terms of what you are wearing and your manner.

'Show that you are helping'

Actions speak louder than words. Essentially, we need to do what we say we are going to do and make sure the child or young person knows we are doing it. Regularly ask the child or young person what is or is not changing because of everyone's input. As facilitator, ensure children and young people receive regular feedback on progress – even if this involves delegating that task. Change is more likely to happen if people feel they have contributed to a plan and have a stake in it. A good facilitator will ask the child or young person what is needed to help them. Make this your everyday practice.

3. Preparing for a Meeting

3.1 The child or young person's view

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. This respect for the views of the child is enshrined in GIRFEC principles.

The person facilitating the meeting / discussion should establish how a child's views will be represented and who will be responsible for doing so. It is important it is to address issues on a case-by-case basis.

Factors to consider:

- The person gathering the child's views will vary depending on the circumstances especially in terms of who knows the child best, who they feel most comfortable with and who has the best relationship with them. Children, where possible, should be afforded a choice in who gathers their views.
- In formal situations, pre-existing relationships and dynamics can have an impact. Often children will say what they think the adult will want to hear.
- The person eliciting the child's views should be someone who can be trusted to be objective. Adults can have a tendency to 'interpret' children's views according to their own view of the situation.
- The easiest way for us, as adults, to gather information may not be the best way for children and young people to be heard.
- It is good practice for a child's views to be gathered before the meeting / discussion
- A child does not need to be part of a discussion / meeting for their views to be represented. Those decisions need to be taken on a case-by-case basis with the child and those who know them best.
- Children or young people with disabilities have the same right as anyone else to be involved in planning for their own needs.

The following is considered good practice: Prior to a meeting, a child or and young person should:

- be fully informed about and prepared for the meetings.
- be consulted about how the meeting space is laid out including who they sit next to.
- attend meetings with adults they already know.
- be asked their preference for who attends a meeting.
- have a choice in how they express their views.

Further information, tools and resources on children and young people's participation can be found on the WithScotland website: <http://withscotland.org/professional>

Other factors to consider: Is there a need for interpreters, any literacy issues, any other difficulties such as communication, learning difficulties that may not allow participation in the meeting?

3.2 Other Considerations when Preparing for a Meeting

3.2.1 Attendance

Attendance at meetings can be an area of concern. Attendance can be maximised:

- Consulting directly with key stakeholders about possible dates for meetings
- Notifying those who need to know about the meeting in good time. Ask people to confirm their intention to attend at the earliest possible stage
- Consider delaying a meeting by a few weeks to ensure the fullest possible participation. Short-term strategies and actions can be implemented, agreed in conjunction with parents/carers, whilst waiting for meeting to take place. Where ever possible, arrange the next meeting, if one is required, at the current meeting
- Prioritise invitations to those who can contribute to the plan rather than people who are there to simply give information they could submit in a report.
- Ask for written submissions if people are unable to attend.

3.2.2 Meeting Space

Where a meeting is held is extremely important. The location can confer status and affect the tone of the meeting.

Considerations include:

- Ensure the spaces is a private as possible
- Use a room of an appropriate size. A very big room can make people feel isolated. A small a room can make people feel uncomfortable
- A cluttered or messy room sets the wrong tone
- Temperature and lighting in the room
- The additional needs of participants
- Consider need for a seating plan and place names.
- The room layout – it is important everyone can hear and see everyone else

3.2.3 Timing of meetings

The length of the meeting needs to be tailored to accommodate the needs of the child or young person so there can be no set time limit.

Generally, it is good practice to set a time limit on the meeting of 45 min – 1½ hours. As a rule of thumb, the following might be helpful in terms of planning.

- A review: 30 – 45 Minutes
- A straightforward plan: 45 - 60
- A complex plan: 60 – 90 minutes

Meetings over 90 minutes are not conducive to making effective decisions

3.2.4 Reports and information

Everyone attending the meeting should have all the relevant information they need beforehand including reports, assessments and previous plans.

Doing this allows attendees enough time to fully understand the situation and to think of how they might contribute to the plan.

This will maximise time spent on finding solutions rather than going over the historical details documented elsewhere.

3.2.5 Roles & Responsibilities

It is helpful to agree roles and responsibilities ahead of a meeting. If there is no administrative support available, ask someone to scribe in advance of the meeting.

The scribe will have a good understanding of the SO principles. They will use language of the participants wherever possible, modifying where the language of blame is used. Such changes should be checked with the participant to ensure the integrity of their point.

It is also helpful to identify a timekeeper. Assuming the purpose of the meeting allows, the following formula is helpful:

- 25% of time on issues/concerns
- 75% on solutions – 25% what's OK, 25% Goals, 25% Ideas/Actions

The facilitator will need to exercise judgment and discretion as to whether the meeting should move on, as timescales slip.

3.2.6 Contentious meetings

If there are concerns that a meeting may be particularly challenging, or if you are new to facilitating meetings, your line manager or your Locality Wellbeing Officer who may be able to offer support.

Focused applications of the SO principles and process will support managing difficult situations by having clearly set out purpose and process of the meeting to start with which can be referred back to as needed.

3.2.7 Assessing Risk

In gathering information prior to a meeting, there appears to be a risk of significant harm, concerns discussed with Social Work. Contact the Triage Social Worker if there is no current Social Work involvement.

If at any point in the preparation or planning phase you think there are child protection concerns, follow your child protection procedures immediately.

3.2.8 Planning checklist

Item	Action required
There is a clear purpose to the meeting	
Information has been gathered from relevant parties including reports, previous plans and chronologies	
Assessments have been analysed and risks assessed using appropriate tools including the National Practice Framework	
The need for the meeting has been discussed parents/carers and the child or young person. The assessment and analysis of the situation has been explained	
Explicit consent to share information has been gained from parents/carers and the child or young person? (dependent on age and level of understanding)	
The meeting room has been booked and is suited to the purpose of the meeting and the number and needs of the participants	
Reports have been requested from those who can't attend	
The parents/carers and or young person are aware of who will be present at the meeting	
There are plans to support and enable parents/carers to express their views / have their views represented – even if the child chooses not to attend the meeting	
The parent is aware they are able to take a supporter to a meeting	
Time is planned after the meeting to check the child or young person and the parents/carers understand what has been agreed?	
Discussions have taken place, ahead of the meeting, about who is best placed to be Lead Professional	

4. Running a Meeting

The following section is a step-by-step guide to running a Child's Planning meeting using a format, which supports the use of solution-oriented practice. This format will be used in the vast majority of Child's Planning Meetings. As previously stated, there may be times when this format is not appropriate.

4.1 Before Beginning

- Check the room and ensure it is ready to host the meeting
- Have extra copies of reports etc. available in case someone has forgotten theirs.
- Meet and greet parents and children and young people and enter the room with them
- Arriving early sends out a clear message that the meeting is important and that you are organised, professional and that you are confident in leading the meeting
- Ensure there is appropriate means of recording the meeting – normally a flipchart or a whiteboard

4.2 Opening the Meeting

A good facilitator will begin the meeting with a confident and upbeat tone.

The following steps might be helpful in guiding those important initial stages:

- Welcome everyone to the meeting
- Ask those present to offer introductions. They should give their names, role and relationship to the young person. As facilitator, seek clarity where roles are explained in ambiguous terms.
- Ask those present to note their attendance on a sheet
- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting and what we all hope to achieve
- Explain the structure of the meeting
- Be clear about the ground rules and expectations of those present emphasising the need for confidentiality and the need to retain a focus on the child
- Clarify housekeeping arrangements including fire evacuation procedures and location of toilets. Allow or build in breaks as necessary

4.3 Agreeing the Title and Purpose(s) of the Meeting

This is important in terms of ensuring everyone has a shared understanding of what the focus of the meeting will be. It is also helpful where the facilitator feels the meeting is going off track as those present can be reminded of the purpose. Titles should be worded in positive terms.

The following questions are helpful as we seek to clarify the purpose:

- What suggestions are there for a working title for this meeting?
- What would we like to achieve as a result of having this meeting?
- Does anyone have a different view of this? Would anyone like to add to this or refine this slightly?

The title / purpose(s) of the meeting should be recorded on the flipchart

4.4 Noting Issues and Concerns

There is a natural tendency to want to start with the positives in any situation but there is a clear rationale for seeking to elicit any concerns first. Specifically:

- Evidence suggests that people need to have their concerns and their perspective heard before moving on constructively to look at ways forward
- Visiting issues and concerns after what's working can negate any positive messages that were elicited
- Hearing issues and concerns help to set an agenda for the meeting therefore helping to keep things on track.

As facilitator, you should try to ensure that people offer simple statements of their issues rather than significant description. Try to discourage people from using blaming language and attributing problems within the person.

The following questions are helpful when exploring issues and concerns:

- What are the main issues here?
- Who has a different view of the situation?
- How is the issue affecting you now?

It is important that people's concerns are heard and validate and that one person's concerns are not given greater importance than another. Without labelling someone's concern as being 'bad' or other, it is important to acknowledge you have understood what your concern is. The following questions can support this.

- So what I am hearing is this?
- Are you happy with the way this is written? Is that what you feel you have said?
- Am I right in thinking that you are feeling?
- It sounds like you are feeling very frustrated with things just now.
- Issues and concerns should be noted on the flipchart in concise terms.

4.5 Exploring Exceptions and What's Working

A key premise of solution-oriented working is that we acknowledge strengths in a situation and then build on those. Sometimes that is about exploring times when things are even just a little better.

- When is the problem not such a problem? What is happening at these times?
- Can you think of a time when the problem was less of a problem? What did you or others do differently at that point?
- Who else notices when it is not such a problem? What do they notice? What is different?
- What has worked in the past in this situation?
- What can we do more of?
- How can we build on that?
- Who can help us?
- How are people managing to cope now?
- What is happening that is stopping the situation getting any worse?
- Exceptions and what is working should be noted on the flipchart in concise terms.

4.6 Setting Goals and Outcomes

Any support provided through the Child's Plan process must be outcome focused and linked to the overarching GIRFEC Well Being Indicators (SHANARRI). This means that we have to carefully consider the differences an intervention will make to the life of the child or young person. **Outcomes** are things that matter to an individual - not actions or resources.

Outcomes are specific changes, benefits, learning and effects that actually happen or are expected to happen as a result of our action and interventions.

More information and guidance on writing outcomes can be found on the Scottish Government website using the link below.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/YoungPeople/gettingitright/background/wellbeing>

Solution-oriented principles can be used to support the setting of goals. Sometimes it is helpful to focus on the big goal and then collapse / break down those goals into smaller steps:

Questions for longer-term goals and outcomes

- Imagine that in a year you did not have to come to these meetings. What would things look like at that time?
- Imagine you wake up tomorrow, and all the difficulties that brought us to these meetings have gone, what do things look like now?
- What do you hope for in the future?
- You say you want (child) to be more confident. How will you know that is happening, say, in a year's time? What would be different?

Questions for shorter-term goals and outcomes:

- What would be the first, small sign that would be happening? What would that look like? What will we see, hear, feel?
- What is the first step to making our longer-term outcome happen?
- What would you be doing?
- What would other people be doing?

These should be explicitly linked to the Child's Plan where the outcome identified is the long-term goal and the how will know it has been achieved (measuring progress) is the short-term goal.

If the goal is achieved, either long or short term need to consider in the plan

- Did it happen?
- If yes, what was the impact

4.6.1 Using SMART Targets

Outcomes written in the Child's Plan should be 'SMART'. They should be:

Specific

Outcomes should be:

- Well defined and clear, stating what will have changed for the child or young person/children and / or their family.

Measurable

The team need to have a clear of how they will know when the outcome has been achieved and what tools will be used to evidence this

Achievable

Outcomes should not be beyond a person's or service's capabilities. Teams need to consider whether, realistically, outcomes are manageable within the period / within available resources.

Relevant

Is the outcome meaningful in the context of the child's life?

Time-limited

When considering outcomes, it is important that they are not opened ended and that specific timescales are set for completion and review.

Some examples of outcomes

Well-being indicator	Outcome
Safe	Katy is able to make more informed and safer choices about her alcohol intake
Healthy	Alan will enjoy a greater range of foods at school lunches
Achieving	Connor is supported to develop his early phonological skills
Nurtured	Sarah will feel more confident and valued
Active	John will increase his levels of physical activity
Respected	Kiera will have greater opportunities to contribute to her own learning plan
Responsible	Liam shows concerns and compassion for other children or young people when they are hurt or upset
Included	Daniel will have access to community based activities such as cubs

Examples of statements that are not outcomes:

Statement	Reason for not being an outcome
Katy's Dad attends alcohol counselling sessions	Outcomes should be child or young person focused. This is an action for the parent.
Ryan is healthy	This is far too broad and not SMART
Connor achieves his full potential	How would you measure this?
John attends swimming club once a week	This is an action not an outcome. The outcome is what John gains as a result of going (i.e. John is physically active)

Once formulated, all goals and outcomes should be recorded on the flipchart / whiteboard.

4.7 Identifying Actions

Once the outcomes have been established, the facilitator will enable a process of identifying a range of possible options of what people 'could' do before establish what people 'will' do. Potential barriers to actions or the extent to which they are achievable can also be explored.

4.7.1 Generating Ideas

'What could you do' questions:

- What ideas and options are there for improving the situation? Anything else?
- What can be done about.....?
- What will be happening instead of (the problem)?
- What about you... what ideas do you have that might help?
- Who else has any ideas as to what might be done?
- What has worked in the past – what can we use from that?
- If there were something else you could try, what would it be?
- How can others help?
- Think back to the 'what's working' section, is there anything we can build upon?

4.7.2 Ideas into Action

'What will you do?' questions:

- Which of these ideas will help us move towards the goals and outcomes we have discussed?
- Is that an action you can commit to?
- That was difficult in the past, what can we do to make it work this time?
- Who can give you support?

Actions will be recorded on the flipchart. These will have clear timescales attached. The person / service responsible for carrying out the action will be named.

4.8 Recording a Meeting

The use of a flipchart / or whiteboard is an important element of a solution-oriented meeting. This enables the final record of the meeting to be transparent and means everyone leaving the meeting has a clear understanding of what has been recorded.

The following will be recorded on the flipchart:

- Purpose(s) of the meeting
- Issues and concerns
- What's working
- Outcomes – linked to the Well-being indicators
- Ideas
- Actions

The outcomes and actions arising from the meeting process can then be used to populate the Child's Plan either during or after the meeting.

Outcomes etc should not be written into the plan ahead of the meeting. Its best to introduce these during the meeting. People, particularly parents/carers, can report feeling that they were not included and that they were presented with a series of foregone conclusions rather than being involved in a genuine dialogue and decision-making process.

When recording a meeting, the views of the child / young person and their parents should be reflected.

4.9 Ending the Meeting

Ending the meeting well is as important as starting it well. Those attending the meeting should leave with clarity about key outcomes and actions. Therefore, at the end of the meeting, the facilitator should:

- Summarise the outcomes and actions in a realistic manner without disproportionately emphasising the positives.
- Gain everyone's verbal acceptance of the plan and ensure any dissent or disagreement is clearly recorded
- State what happens next with regard to processes. This will include explaining the next steps with regard to completing and signing the Child's Plan.
- Set a review date.
- Acknowledge people's contribution in the meeting.

5.1 After the Meeting

Planning for children or young people's needs is a continuous process of planning doing and reviewing. The meeting is not an end in itself. Neither is the production of a planning document.

As facilitator, you can set the tone by following up on each of your action items as soon as possible.

Everyone who is a partner to the plan should receive a copy of the Child's Plan.

If you receive a request for a copy of the Child's Plan from another agency working with the family, it is important that you gain consent from parents/carers or the child or young person before sharing - unless you believe the child is at risk of serious harm. If you are uncertain, seek advice from the GIRFEC Partnership Officer or Locality Wellbeing Officer.

Post meeting checklist

Item	Action required
A post meeting discussion has taken place with the child or young person? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have checked they felt listened to and included • I am confident they understand what has been agreed 	
The child or young person's views are recorded on the plan	
A post meeting discussion has taken place with the parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have checked they felt listened to and included • I am confident they understand what has been agreed 	
I have recorded the parents'/carers' views on the plan	
Arrangements to have the plan typed up, signed and distributed	
Arrangements been made to have the plan signed	
The next meeting date, time and place has been communicated to people who couldn't attend the initial meeting	
The venue for the next meeting has been booked	
There is a process for ensuring everyone has received a copy of the plan.	
A copy of the signed plan has been lodged in relevant files.	

6. ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES

6.1 New to meetings.

Some helpful advice for those new to meetings:

Identify someone to support you

If you are chairing your first meeting and you're anxious or nervous, ask for help and / or advice from someone who is experienced. In a larger school, a colleague may be able to help. Educational Psychology and the Locality Well-being Officer may also be in a position to guide or coach.

Be honest.

Let people know you are new to the process and do not feel you need to know everything. Others in the meeting may be able to help if you are not sure about something or you can say that you will find out and get back to people.

Use administrative support where this is available

Facilitating a meeting, populating the plan, listening to contributions and taking notes is a huge task for any one person so use administrative support where possible.

6.2 When a Meeting Goes Off Track

Meetings will not always go according to plan. The following table offers some scenarios as well as some ideas about how to deal with them:

Issue /problem	Possibilities
If you have a speaker who is taking up too much time and not allowing others to contribute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thank them for their contribution and state that we need to hear from others what their thoughts are. •Give them some responsibility at the start of the meeting if you know it is likely to be an issue. •Outline a time limit at the start (i.e. everyone will have 1 minute or will be allowed to make 2 statements in this section so that we can hear from everyone). •Acknowledge any strengths, skills etc 'It's great that you have so much to contribute – maybe we could move on to hear your ideas on how to make the situation better.'
Negativity/participants reluctant to move on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Offer a choice, 'I know that there are still a number of issues that people would like to raise. We can make a choice to continue this section for another 5 minutes or move on to the next section' •Acknowledge core message from statements made 'I think you feel about what has happened and we need to consider what we are going to do about •Remind participants of the purpose of the meeting (i.e to come up with a plan of action).
Group failing to move on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ask group 'How well are we meeting our goals just now?' If yes, carry on. If no, what can we do about it

	and still allow everyone to have their say?
Someone making irrelevant statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Acknowledge the core message from their statement and ask if there is another time when this could be discussed with a more relevant group.
Someone barriers/blocks to actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Plan ahead to where you think these might come and be prepared with more questions to ask. 'I am wondering what you might do to make the situation better?' 'I am curious about what you think might help move the situation on a bit?'
Someone who is not contributing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ask them directly for a contribution 'X, you've not had chance to have a say, would you like to add anything?'

7. Further Reading and Information

WEB LINKS

GIRFEC national guidance, briefing papers and support materials

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

How to build Solutions at Meetings (2001) Michael Harker in 'Solutions in Schools: Creative applications of solution focused brief thinking with young people and adults', Ed. by Ajmal, Y and Rees I.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/positivebehaviour/approaches/solutionorientedapproach/what.asp>

National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/3052/0>

National Risk Framework to support the Assessment of Children and Young People 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/11/7143/1>

Wellbeing: A guide to measuring meaningful outcomes Feb 2014

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/YoungPeople/gettingitright/background/wellbeing>

Articles

How to build Solutions at Meetings (2001) Michael Harker in 'Solutions in Schools: Creative applications of solution focused brief thinking with young people and adults', Ed. by Ajmal, Y and Rees I.

Feedback

Please email us at educationandsocialcare@moray.gov.uk if you have any feedback regarding how helpful you found this material and what else you think we might include or address in future updates.

Acknowledgement

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