

Children's Services Planning: Statutory Guidance

Summary and Recommendations

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 set out reforms to the way services for children and young people are designed, delivered and reviewed. As part of the Act, the Scottish Government provided statutory guidance on Part 3, Children's Services Planning. The duties placed on local authorities and Health Boards under this part of the Act included provision of a "Children's Services Plan" be prepared and in place by 1 April 2017.

Local authorities and Health Boards submitted 3-year plans in 2017, "year one" progress reports during 2018 and will begin the process of planning and collation for the 3-yearly update in advance of the next submission date of March 2020.

This Report highlights the Scottish Government's [consultation on Children's Services Planning](#) which has been launched in advance of the next reporting cycle.

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This paper invites Members of the CYP Board to:

- i. Discuss and provide comments on the content, scope and format of the statutory guidance for Children Service's Plans to inform COSLA's response to the consultation

References

No previous reports on Children's Services Planning.

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Children's Services Planning: Provision of Statutory Guidance

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to ask Members of the CYP Board for their comments on the content, scope and format of the statutory guidance which COSLA can use in our response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Children's Services Planning.

Current COSLA Position

2. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, placed a requirement on Local Authorities and Health Boards to present evidence to the Scottish Government in a Children Services Plan which clearly sets out and demonstrated the actions planned, taken and delivered to improve outcomes for children and young people in their area. The first statutory Children Service's Plans were submitted to the Scottish Government in March 2017.

What is changing?

3. The Scottish Government have launched a consultation, in advance of the next reporting cycle, to test whether the content, scope and format of the statutory guidance is still helpful and fit for purpose or whether this should be modified, amended or improved to further enhance and build on the support available.
4. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 set out reforms to the way services for children and young people are designed, delivered and reviewed. As part of the Act, the Scottish Government provided statutory guidance on Part 3, Children's Services Planning. The duties placed on local authorities and Health Boards under this part of the Act included provision of a "Children's Services Plan" be prepared and in place by 1 April 2017.
5. Local authorities and Health Boards submitted 3-year plans in 2017, "year one" progress reports during 2018 and will begin the process of planning and collation for the 3-yearly update in advance of the next submission date of March 2020.
6. The Director, Children and Families and Chief Social Work Advisor have embarked on a program of strategic engagement with all Community Planning Partnerships to discuss the content of the year one reports and learn about local activity being taken to support the aims and ambitions of the Act. Scottish Government officials presented progress on these visits to the Board at their meeting in February.
7. A key finding from the visits is that the content of the statutory guidance is effective and helpful. However, in advance of community planning partners beginning to plan, collate and draft the year three reports the Scottish Government felt that this is an opportune time to formally consult with wider partners on whether the content, scope and format of the statutory guidance is still fit for purpose or whether this should be modified or improved.

Proposed COSLA Position

8. Members of the CYP Board are asked for general comments to shape COSLA's response to this consultation including:

- Does the statutory guidance provided to date assist in the effective development of a Children Services Plan?
- What part(s) of the guidance were most helpful or least helpful? How could the guidance be enhanced to strengthen the effective development of a Children's Services Plan?
- Does the statutory guidance provide sufficient advice on how widely you should consult in advance of developing a Children Service Plan?
- How could the guidance be improved to enable effective consultation and engagement with local stakeholders during the preparation of a Children's Services Plan?
- Do you agree that the guidance supports, enhances and strengthens inter-agency collaboration?
- How could the guidance be enhanced to emphasise the importance of multi/inter agency integrated collaboration in the preparation of the Plan and the delivery of services?
- Does the statutory guidance support practitioners and staff in delivering the contents of the Children Service Plan?
- How could the statutory guidance be enhanced to enable the Plan to support practitioners and operational managers deliver the local priorities and actions?

Next Steps

9. Following discussion by the Board COSLA officers will prepare a response to the consultation which will be approved by the Children and Young People spokesperson before submission and in advance of the Consultation deadline on 17th June. The Board will be kept updated on developments of the outcomes of this consultation and any impacts this may have on local authorities.

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