

**National Care Service Consultation Engagement event for Frontline Social workers
Q&A - 29 October 2021**

Topic – Children Family Services

Question	Answer
<p>GIRFEC has been in place for a long time and was supposed to provide the same 'whole family approach' with varying degrees of success.</p> <p>How is the NCS going to do things differently to make this more successful?</p>	<p>The NCS builds on Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), Scotland's rights-based approach to improving wellbeing outcomes at an individual/family level. It is proposing GIRFE (Getting it right for Everyone) to mirror this consistent language and shared framework for across the wider workforce. However, we recognise that implementation of GIRFEC must be strengthened and evaluated, alongside this change, to ensure its consistent delivery across and within all services which impact on the wellbeing of children, young people, and families, whether they are within the scope of the NCS or not.</p> <p>There is certainly variation in delivery and this is something we hope that the NCS can help address going forward. When seen with in the context of the Promise, UNCRC and GIRFEC the NCS could provide an opportunity to address regional and local variation in children's services, improving access to services, improve transitions between services and reduce variation in eligibility criteria thresholds that currently exists across the country.</p>
<p>How is an NCS going to address the fact that there will always be children who need to be cared for away from their families as there will always be a need for permanence away from home - fostering, kinship or adoption?</p>	<p>Following the publication of the Independent Care Review, The Promise set out a number of areas for improvement to ensure that Scotland's children grow up feeling loved. Part of our commitment to Keep The Promise includes increasing the help available to all families when they need it through holistic family support.</p> <p>We know that sadly, there will be children who are unable to live at home and for whom decisions around their permanent living arrangements will be required, and this may mean living in a fostering, kinship or adoptive family. The voice of children, young people and adults who experienced the 'care system' and which were echoed in The Promise will be used to inform our thinking around Children's Services and the NCS.</p> <p>As noted earlier our hope is that through the NCS we can address some of the current issues there are in terms of national consistency and bring greater accountability to Ministers in how we support our children and young people.</p>

Why is the NCS being forced through without a robust review of what is in existence and take forward learning from research into the functioning of HSCPs?

I would have more confidence if there was evidence that the proposed changes were being based on research, for example, a review of HSCP's. before such a major change takes place. Where is the evidence that these are operating successfully?

It is not being forced through – Ministers will consider very carefully the feedback they receive from the consultation – and their own knowledge of the issues affecting children's services.

Despite our best efforts, the lived experiences of some children, young people and families suggests that the existing system does not consistently deliver on our vision for children's services.

The IRASC focussed specifically on adults, but many of its themes and recommendations are equally relevant to children's services:

- the promotion of fairness and equity by removing variation in eligibility, charging and commissioning,
- the need to ensure portability of care packages across boundaries,
- greater assurance to Ministers and the public about performance,
- the closing of gaps in performance through national improvement and the ability spread and scale-up good practice,
- the removal of unwarranted variation in service delivery to those that need support.

We must also use the evidence from the Independent Care Review and its recommendations in the Promise - the need for whole system approaches to care and support, greater consistency in the standards of care, improved transitions between children's and adult services, the lack of accountability when systems and partnerships are not working and the need to shift from crisis intervention to early intervention and whole family support, with direct links to health treatment and recovery services

All of this along with research from SCR's, evidence from Kinship carers, disabled children's groups, secure care, issues with procurement – as well as our knowledge of what is working well in practice, for example where we know integration is working well to join up health and social care services will be used to inform our thinking on the NCS.

Topic – Money/Profit

How do we ensure that social works needs and funding are kept high on the agenda when there is such financial pressure on health services?	The National Social Work Agency will ensure a high profile for social work within the NCS and our Ministers recognise the importance of social work and have met recently with a number of frontline workers, with SASW and SWS – so they know the crucial role the sector plays and will continue to play in helping the NCS to deliver the support needed by our most vulnerable groups. But we all have a role to play in ensuring that the voice and values of social work is heard in all the groups and roles we undertake with our colleagues from across Health, Justice Education and social work.
It was very disappointing that the Feeley review didn't recommend the end of for profit care provision. So there are concerns about opening the door to more privatisation. How will this be overcome?	The review did not go that far but did recommend that there should be a managed market, which means to encourage more provision from social enterprises and not for profit organisations; there were also recommendations on market oversight and transparency and reinvestment of profit in services. Together these mean a shift towards not for profit, more oversight and scrutiny of profit in care while commissioning care over time from not for profit organisations.

Topic - Justice

As a social worker in Justice Services all options for us are a little concerning with the NCS. We don't 'fit' all that well just now at the moment and there's a concern that in a National Care Service we'd be overlooked because there aren't as many of us. But not being with other social workers and potentially going down a Probation Service route is also scary. I feel strongly that we need to keep our social work values and identity. How will we keep our social work values and identity?	Including justice social work services as part of the NCS could have value, including addressing longstanding concerns about the consistency and availability of community justice services, and creating greater links to related public health services to achieve better outcomes for individuals, their families, and communities. The NCS consultation proposes a National Social Work Agency which would ensure that social work values and identity – including justice social work – would be retained.
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Topic – Integration with Health

I feel social work and social care are swamped by the larger Health Service who has more power & money so people in the community seem to get very little assistance. It's only when people end up in hospital & are counting as blocking beds that people seem to get support to return home. Will having a NCS improve the text above?	The NCS consultation proposes a National Social Work Agency and bringing all social work together within the NCS. As well as an Executive Director of Nursing there will be an Executive Director of Social Work who will lead on social work across the NCS and nationally. The NCS also proposes a national approach to data collation and evidence of service delivery which will raise profile of social work and social care services
Is this really the privatisation of health and social care?	No and the proposals around market management, scrutiny of profit and investment in not for profit organisations as well as public bodies operating services mean the opposite.

Topic – Regulation

How will the national social work agency sit alongside the Care Inspectorate and SSSC and is there a danger that we have too many regulatory bodies; taking up scarce resources?	No decisions on the roles for inspection and regulation will be made until Ministers have fully considered the responses to the NCS consultation. We recognise though that improvements can be made to the inspection framework to join up better in terms of the “ask” on agencies and organisations through multiple inspections and this is something that will certainly be looked at going forward.
Can I have more clarity around the role of the Care Inspectorate in a NCS?	No decisions on the roles for inspection will be made until Ministers have fully considered the responses to the consultation
How does the NCS align with the principles of Self Direct Support (SDS)?	<p>The proposals take forward recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care which include ensuring that care is person-centred and that the NCS puts a human rights based approach at its heart, to better support the outcomes and needs of the individual.</p> <p>The proposals include a focus on enabling people to access the care and support that they need to lead a full life. The National Care Service will have a clear focus on positive outcomes for people and Getting it Right for Everyone, and will involve the people of Scotland in the design, development, and delivery of support and services from the outset and on a continual basis.</p>