Please note: These meeting notes are Scottish Government summaries of the discussions Scottish Government officials and Ministers heard at these meetings, not formal minutes agreed by those attending. The meetings ranged in audience from frontline practitioners to heads of organisations, and parents and young people, and because of this, the meeting length and delivery format on the day, as well as the structure and length of each meeting note varies. There was a variety of views expressed at each meeting.

**GIRFEC Engagement on Information Sharing**
**Meeting with members of the Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW)**
**28 November 2016**
**Scottish Government Note of Meeting**

It was explained at the meeting that SASW is a membership organisation with members holding a wide range of views on the Named Person. The views expressed at this meeting are of the individuals attending and not of SASW as a whole. Wider issues were also discussed, such as the resourcing of frontline social work services. The key message from the three members who attended the meeting was that there should be no need for ‘Named Person, if social workers could do their job in the way they believed was intended’. Everyone is “assessing”, yet Social Workers are trained to be “working” with children, young people and their families in order to develop relationships of trust.

Key points made at the meeting included:

**Consent and safeguards**
- Consent is about having a conversation with children and parents.
- Named Person is yet another “system”. We need a focus on Practice
- Need more family group conferencing services, or similar.
- Confusion over Named Person name as this is also used in the Mental Health Act and means something different.
- The only time not to disclose (confidential) information to parents is if they are suspected of abuse. At all other times parents should be informed about the information being shared.
- Conversations can be difficult to have with parents about why information needs to be shared but this should not be a barrier to having them.
- Some way of prompting practitioners to consider sharing or seeking consent may be useful, but it must not create an adverse effect.
- Would be helpful to have training to empower practitioners to have confidence when sharing information.
- Learning on multiagency working and putting the child at the centre would be useful. Training for all staff not just social workers.
- Looking at how services engage with the Roma community may be helpful.
- Human Rights Conventions are clear on consent, and that information sharing without consent should be at no lower level than harm or abuse.
- Clarity about 16-17 year olds capacity and seeking consent from parents. There also needs to be some professional judgement built in to this and decisions taken on an individual basis. Capacity to make a decision is not solely age dependent.

**Wellbeing**
- Training on understanding wellbeing concerns would be useful. GIRFEC (though a great concept) has resulted in risk averse practice, thresholds of
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referral are lower, against insufficient capacity to deal with volume of referrals or to provide the right services at a level below social work intervention.

Communication/parental engagement

- Need to be clearer about the role of Named Person, as it was felt that parents are unlikely to ask the Named Person for help due to the negative image and fears about them being there to make a judgement.
- Needs to be clearer that the Named Person’s advice/support role is something health visitors and teachers do anyway as part of their existing, professional role.
- Need to provide clarity that children, young people and their parents can choose not to engage with the Named Person service.
- Communication that the Named Person is a service to support children and families would be helpful, and not a process which will impose on parents.
- Needs clear communication to the public about what is being shared and why.
- Longitudinal research into benefits of GIRFEC approach could help to promote the positives, but there is not much research available presently.
- Involvement in large, multi-agency group meetings can be intimidating to parents. Guidance and training will support effective good practice.