



## 6 UNDERSTAND AND ENGAGE WITH POLICY

*“The Scottish Government recognises the important role that the third sector can play in building a successful Scotland. It is committed to developing an enterprising third sector, which can contribute to achieving outcomes for individuals and communities across a range of fields including health, the economy and public service delivery.”*

Voluntary Action Scotland

Social Policy guides the way we respond to the questions and challenges children and families face. Scottish Government policy pays particular attention to the protection, care, welfare and education of children and young people. The needs of those who struggle to stay connected to education, employment or training have been well articulated and there is a commitment to getting better at early intervention and prevention.

Being connected to the day to day experiences of children and families means the voluntary sector can engage in an honest dialogue with Government, attempting at all time to influence and inform and ensure policy meets the demands which poverty, exclusion and discrimination present.

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## PEN PICTURE: National Third Sector GIRFEC Project

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is at the heart of ensuring that all children get the most from their education and learning, particularly those children and young people who are vulnerable, excluded and who need additional support and help. To ensure that GIRFEC works in practice it is vital that all agencies involved with children and young people work well together. This includes the many third sector organisations supporting children and their families, and providing services across Scotland in our most disadvantaged communities.

The National Third Sector GIRFEC project ([www.3rdsectorGIRFEC.org.uk](http://www.3rdsectorGIRFEC.org.uk)) aims to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), Third Sector Interfaces and the wider third sector to strengthen their role in implementing GIRFEC in localities. A crucial part of this involves embedding the role of the community and third sector in community planning.

Without meaningful involvement of the third sector in community planning structures and processes, the wider stakeholder group, and particularly those with statutory responsibilities within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act to deliver the Named Person Service, may not be aware of the rich range of community and voluntary sector resources available across their localities. Developing these connections at Community Planning Partnership (CPP) level will help to ensure all partners are supported to meet the range of wellbeing needs, including those which impact on children and young peoples' learning, through an integrated approach which has the child firmly at the centre.

Therefore, our core purpose as a project is to strengthen and embed the role of the Third Sector in local Children's Services planning and delivery.

There are three main aspects of the project:

### **Work in Demonstration areas**

This is direct work in localities which allows community planning partners to assess the level and effectiveness of their engagement with the third sector. This assessment leads to an action plan to improve engagement. The project also supports CPPs in reviewing progress.

At the end of the period of support from the project, a local learning session is organised in partnership with the CPP and other stakeholders. Other areas with a geographic or thematic connection to the 'host' CPP are invited to come and share knowledge and good practice in a supportive context.

### **National influencing role**

This is work to promote and advocate for the role of the third sector with the Scottish Government, local government and other stakeholders. This involves participation in strategic working groups, engaging in dialogue and building connections with strategic partners and contributing to the development of national policy and legislation.

### **Capacity building**

This is work with Third Sector Interfaces and other third sector organisations to help them build their capacity to engage effectively in children's service planning.