

Multi-agency Working

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Co-working across child sector agencies and professional groups has become a central tenet in governance, policy and practice in Scotland, other UK countries and internationally. The shift from mono- to multi-(many) or trans-(cross-cutting) forms of professional work is premised on the benefit to children and families in locating children's assessed needs being 'at the centre' of agencies' co-work (Forbes and Watson, 2012). Equally, the shift towards multi-agency working is economically driven, premised on more cost-effective public sector service delivery. Recognised elsewhere, the discourses of 'social justice' and 'economic efficiency' closely intertwine in multi-agency working policy and its enactments in practice (Forbes and McCartney, 2015).

In Scotland, 'joined-up' public services aimed to prevent children failing in the school system – and more broadly in life and society, cut across education and other children's sector services, such as health and social care. More broadly, in relation to particular complex needs and circumstances of children and their families, co-work may where necessary, for example, for 'at risk' children unlikely to enter the workforce, potentially being socially excluded (Levinas, 2005), include other public agencies such as housing and policing. A shift to the concept of the prevention of children's educational and social exclusion has been developed since the 1990s as a central aim for social care, education, health and allied professions, and public agencies more broadly. Relatedly, a shift has occurred in agencies' strategies and practitioners' practices towards collaborative support for children in receipt of several services. A series of policy and practice changes have viewed multi-agency co-work as a – *the* – key strategy for 'better outcomes' on children's assessed needs and educational and social inclusion. Over time, shifts to co-working models of collaboration have effected major re-conceptualisations, and reconfigurations of children's services, and concomitant remodelling of the sector workforce (Forbes and McCartney, 2012; Forbes and Watson, 2012; Hill et al., 2012).

Increasing attention to service integration in children's services' policy and governance requires that different agencies' practitioners work together to provide timely, 'seamless' service, ensuring that all necessary specific expert knowledge and skills are brought together and applied for the benefit of the child. Co-professional working is increasingly expected across child sector practice with the concomitant expectation that a positive impact will be made on children's experiences and outcomes. However, limited attention has been paid as to how (on what governance and policy bases) professionals collaborate, why (on what research evidence), and with what effects (what child workforce remodelling and practice reconfigurations are involved).

Reviewing policy and drawing on policy research and theory to understand how multi-agency working works in Scotland, the chapter critically comments on the categories and terminology applied; it then examines issues relating to types and models of multi-agency co-practice; and goes on to delineate previous and current key policy and governance developments and their effects in and for multi-agency practice, including the ‘flagship’ *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach (hereafter, GIRFEC). In closing, the concept of ‘wicked’ issues – complex issues that persistently challenge society and current policy and practice orthodoxies – is examined. It is argued that such endemic and occasionally ‘startling developments’ – societal ‘game-changers’ beyond the boundaries of any single agency – necessitate a joined-up, multi-agency, trans-professional (professionally cross-cutting) response (Lawson, 2016).

SPECIFYING CATEGORIES: UNTANGLING THE CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Since the inception of ‘multi-agency working’ in the UK countries and other places, the ‘guddle’ (a confused and confusing mess) of terms involved has frequently been highlighted. However, authors have less commonly emphasised the effects of such terminological fuzziness. The effects of careless and imprecise, or ‘sloppy’ (Lawson, 2016, 3.1), usage involve loss of conceptual clarity, categorical purchase and understanding of each concept and exactly what is involved in using each term (Forbes and Watson, 2012; Forbes and Sime, 2016). Understanding of ‘multi-’ and related terms, and of ‘agency’ and related terms, demands particular care about their use in policy, governance and research. Drawing on a number of prior definitions used in research and, for example, by Scottish Government agencies, distinctions relevant in this chapter may be understood in relation to the key terms ‘multi-’ and ‘agency-’:

- *multi-agency working*: where more than one agency works with a young person, family or a project;
- *inter-sectorial working*: where two or more public sectors and their agencies or services such as education, health and social care work together.

Other key terms, salient in the conceptual and terminological map of ‘multi-agency working’ and used here are:

- ‘Mono-’ which is most frequently used with ‘professional’ or ‘disciplinary’ – where a single professional practitioner group or subject discipline, such as social work practitioners, is involved and/or works singlehandedly in a job role task, for example, a class teacher with a child in their class.
- ‘Trans-’ used to conceptualise relations that ‘cut across’, used with ‘sector’ or ‘agency’, ‘professional’ and ‘disciplinary’. Trans-sectorial: (a) work across two or more public sector agencies (e.g. education, health, social work) on cross-cutting issues; (b) co-working across the child and adult public sectors on cross-cutting issues. Trans-professional: work across professional groups on cross-cutting engagements, remits or responsibilities. Transdisciplinary: collaborative working across (academic) subject disciplinary areas (such as sociology, economics, linguistics, spatial planning, housing studies) on cross-cutting research, policy and practice issues and engagements.

To understand ‘working’ relations amongst agencies, it is helpful to distinguish the category of ‘agency’ and of the concept of professional working relations that are ‘cross-cutting’ (see e.g. Percy-Smith, 2005). The following understandings of what exactly is involved in any particular model of ‘multi-agency working’ are pertinent in this chapter:

- *Holistic government or governance*: integration and coordination of the work of different agencies or services at all levels and in relation to all aspects of policy-related activity – policymaking, regulation, service provision and scrutiny. (For example, the 2013 merger of eight police forces and related agencies such as the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency into a single ‘Police Scotland’.)
- *Cross-boundary working*: agencies working together beyond the area of any one service on issues beyond the scope of any one agency.
- *Cross-cutting*: issues that are not the ‘property’ of a single organisation or agency, for example child poverty, child protection, new arrival families.
- *Integration*: agencies working together in a single, often new, organisational structure. (For example, the restructuring of Scottish Police and Fire and Rescue public agencies into single national services since the relevant 2012 legislation.)

Transformations of Scotland’s children’s policy, governance and institutional-level practice on multi-agency working mirrors shifts globally in child and adult sector public services. In Scotland, noted above, the recommendations of a government commissioned report, *The Future Delivery of Public Services*, 2011, known as the ‘Christie Report’, heralded police and fire services’ mergers, a structural redesign and workforce remodelling towards integration, each now a single service in Scotland. Relevant in this chapter, the Christie Report explicitly called for new inter-agency training for the public services, envisaging that such training would reduce professions’ ‘silo mentalities’, drive ‘service integration’, and build up a ‘common public service ethos’ across the sector (p. ix).

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING: GLOBAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE DRIVERS

Focusing the attention and resources of governments globally on the holistic wellbeing of children, the publication of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) may be viewed as a ‘watershed’ moment that necessitated subsequent shifts to multi-agency working. Since 1989, UNCRC has prompted the production of holistic (whole child) ‘child strategies’ and accordingly the deployment of resources (economic, including the children’s workforce) in new approaches and programmes underpinned by the UNCRC policy goals. The UNCRC specifications were recognised in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, thereby giving children’s rights, as realised in GIRFEC policy, a statutory basis in Scots law.

Incremental policy ‘step change’ towards collaboration ‘in the round’ between children’s agencies and professions that puts the welfare and wellbeing of the child ‘at the centre’ has been mirrored in child strategy policy and approaches elsewhere. Such cultural transformations have occurred in the USA, England – the Every Child Matters framework led the changes in other UK countries in putting ‘the child at the centre’ of multi-agency working, in Northern Ireland, Wales, Ireland and other places (see Forbes and Watson, 2012; Hill et al., 2012).

Investigation by Coles and colleagues (2016) shows clear correspondences between the children's system policy models and principles of European countries and those of Scotland. Like Scotland, UNCRC-based children's rights are central in Nordic countries' social justice models. More broadly, and highly pertinent in this chapter, child strategy policy in (Western continental) European countries pursues *collaborative* solution-focused support embedded within public services. In Scotland, like these other places, major incremental policy, legislation, strategy and practice shift requires professionals and agencies to collaborate (engage as appropriate in multi-professional and multi-agency working) and coordinate, or integrate as required, to work effectively together, putting the child at the centre of their co-work.

Other world-level agencies endorse the pivotal call by UNCRC in 1989 for countries worldwide to put in place child strategies and programmes, including changes to remodel the children's sector workforce and redesign the knowledge and skills needed in children's practitioners' education and training. In a seminal 2010 report, *Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice*, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognised the need for co-working to transform the co-working practice of health with other public sector agencies (such as education). Seeking systems-level change that would produce an appropriately skilled (health) workforce that could work effectively with other agencies, the WHO *Framework for Action* calls for cross-cutting initial professional education of health workers and other professional groups (p. 13, inverted commas original): 'Interprofessional education is essential to the development of a "collaborative practice-ready" health workforce.'

In Scotland, co-responsibility for multi-agency working that places the child at the centre has become a practice reality for all agencies working with children and young people and their families. The requirement for multi-agency coordination across agencies' organisational boundaries unequivocally underpins all practice prescriptions given in, for example, the *Guidance on Partnership Working between Allied Health Professions and Education* (Scottish Government, 2010). Published in the context of work on the WHO *Framework for Action* directives, and premised on Allied Health Professionals' long-term experience of working with education and other agencies, the *Guidance on Partnership Working* establishes the co-responsibility of allied health professions and education for co-working. The partnership working approach is informed, too, by the principles of GIRFEC (www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/06/20135608/56098), the Scottish national multi-agency 'child strategy' approach since 2005.

A number of the current Scottish Government national outcomes pertain to the GIRFEC agenda and to public services reform premised on multi-agency working. National Outcome 16 states that 'Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.' Further:

The achievement of this outcome will be determined by the ability of public services to develop and deliver person centred services and to contribute effectively to Scotland's future prosperity. Public services must also prioritise the issues that matter most to people, ensuring the focus of public spending and action builds on the assets and potential of the individual, the family and the community. *Collaboration across public services will underpin the Government's efforts to reform public services.* (www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome/pubServ, emphasis added)

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING: KEY SCOTTISH CHILD POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Since the UNCRC (1989), a marked shift towards forms of co-working that bridge and link professionals' practice across child sector agencies has characterised policy in Scotland. The institution of the New Community Schools programme (1998), the aspirational model delineated in *For Scotland's Children: Better Integrated Children's Services* (Scottish Government, 2001), and the ensuing 'flagship' GIRFEC policy agenda (2005) sought to institutionally embed and subsequently remodel multi-agency working in schools and other agencies.

A landmark policy statement, *New Community Schools: The Prospectus* (1998, www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/publications/fm30/fm30.pdf), signalled a major shift. *The Prospectus* viewed the school as 'the hub' for integrated delivery of education and other services to children. It mandated co-location of services in 'multi-agency hubs' in schools to improve the educational outcomes for children; improve the life chances for young people; tackle the opportunity gap; introduce a more holistic approach to children's needs; address social, emotional and health problems; and ensure that children achieve.

The Prospectus, published almost twenty years ago, explicitly recognised that 'the gap' between children that was key, was the gap between the *opportunities* (and related socio-economic resources) available to children, linking *the lack of opportunity and living in conditions of relative poverty and disadvantage for some, with educational outcomes*. Ahead of its time, *The Prospectus* recognised that *educational outcomes* – attainment – depend on the availability to children of broader opportunities and a holistic approach to the particular life-wide problems a child may experience, than what a teacher, school or education alone can do.

The Prospectus introduced school-site, multi-agency working as the mechanism to ensure that the different, diverse or multiple needs of all children were met in the round (ibid., Foreword). *The Prospectus*, moreover, introduced the concept of service integration: changed systems, structures and practices. Stating unequivocally that the 'integration of services is essential' (ibid., Introduction, Section 2), it called for: integrated provision of school education; informal as well as formal education; social work and health education and promotion services; integrated management; integrated objectives (for service delivery arrangements and measurable outcomes); and multidisciplinary training and staff development (ibid., Framework, Section 3, parentheses added).

In 2002, *Count Us In – Achieving Inclusion in Scottish Schools* re-emphasised the school-as-hub in a twin strategy on social inclusion and raising educational standards (see note at <http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/education/inquiries/pmi/HMIe.pdf>). To provide a more *integrated* and holistic support service, it plainly stated that 'inclusive education relies on schools working in partnership with others'; and made a number of clear recommendations on education and other agencies' (health, social work and others) co-work relations:

- shared understanding of aims and objectives and a clear understanding of the contribution that each agency can make towards achieving them;
- true partnership – all partners are prepared to share decision making and the leadership of specific pieces of work in appropriate ways;
- ways in which staff from schools and other agencies relate to each other and to pupils have to be flexible and managed responsively to meet the needs of individuals and groups;
- good opportunities for joint training between professional groups are crucial.

Invoking ‘*inter-*’ work relationships between separate agencies and ‘their’ practitioners, *Count Us In* also enjoins better structural integration of agencies’ work in a holistic service; coordinated planning of services; and reformed relationships between agencies’ practitioners in support of the ‘inclusion agenda’.

In parallel, the Scottish school curriculum programme, *Curriculum for Excellence* had been implemented from 2010. The CfE policy ambition was for Scotland’s children to be: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Beyond narrow academic attainment, the CfE programme focus on young persons’ full engagement and participation in community and society, regardless of dis/ability, gender, ethnicity or social class, constituted a step change in education policy. Germane here, charging all schools and teachers with broader citizenship learning to develop high levels of educational and societal participation and agency for students, predicated new ways of working for schools and other agencies. Consonant with the GIRFEC child strategy, the aims of CfE prompted new ‘extended’ forms of professionalism in the child sector. Two high-profile programmes now decree co-working as required across the children’s workforce – statutory services, other public agencies, and relevant voluntary and private agencies.

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING IN LAW

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 enshrines children’s rights in law, constituting the statutory basis for the GIRFEC policy programme. In relation to multi-agency working, the 2014 Act rules that, from 2015, all relevant Scottish Government ministers (not solely education) issue reports on how their directorate has taken into account the UNCRC (1989) specifications. Relevant here, the Act also requires local authorities and health boards to develop joint children’s plans, in cooperation with a range of other service provider agencies. Further, it establishes in law the concept of a statutory universal ‘named person’ for all children in Scotland, placing a duty on relevant public bodies to share information with a child’s named person. Following a UK Supreme Court judgement in August 2016 that the proposal’s information sharing provisions related to data protection law were insufficiently clear, the introduction of the named person scheme has been delayed from 2016 until autumn 2017. Certainty on the legality of the information sharing systems and processes is patently of concern for children’s agencies and practitioners undertaking cross-agency communications and information transfer to support children (Forbes and Watson, 2012).

INTEGRATING INSPECTORATES: RETAINING SEPARATE REGISTRATION BODIES

Applying to all children’s services, the GIRFEC approach mandates effective integrated co-working by all children’s practitioners and agencies, driving

the developments that will improve outcomes for children and young people by changing the way adults think and act to help all children and young people grow, develop and reach their full potential. *It requires a positive shift in culture, systems and practices across services for children, young people and adults.* (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 6, emphasis added)

In tandem since 2005, a joint cross-agency inspection regime has driven a culture and practices of multi-agency working. Key inspection prescriptions integrating agencies’

practice include: *A Common Approach to Inspecting Services for Children and Young People* (HMIE, 2006), which introduced generic quality indicators; and the *Code of Practice for the Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People* (Scottish Government, 2006) aimed to put in place integrated inspections, the related necessary powers to share records and information provided in the Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Act (Scottish Parliament, 2006). Two further policies emanating from education embed a coherent multi-agency service self-evaluation and inspection framework: *A Guide to Evaluating Services for Children and Young People Using Quality Indicators* (Scottish Government, 2007) and *Improving: Services for Children* (HMIE, 2007). Taken together, service inspection policy has effected ever closer agency integration on strategic and operational levels.

Multi-agency working is now a requirement of registration and maintenance of professional registration status. Co-working is mandatory for teachers in General Teaching Council for Scotland (the Scottish teacher registration body) standards requirements, and also for other children's agencies. Issues remain: while co-practice is now routine at the school-clinic (institutional) level and practitioners at the individual professional level are more regularly acquiring the necessary context-specific, co-problem-solving, soft skills and practices for good 'multi-' working, governance structures remain 'mono-' professional.

Equally, Scotland child strategy policy on multi-agency working, now unequivocally ordained in GIRFEC, CfE, other education and public agencies' policy, and made statutory in law has not, to date, been realised in redesigned, realigned forms of practitioner preparation for co-work. Practitioners continue to learn mainly 'mono-' disciplinary 'home agency' knowledge (for example, linguistics, education professional studies) in mainly 'mono-' professional university departments. Practitioners, clinics and schools remain accountable to their 'home' agency professional registration and institutional management structures. Managerial structures are not routinely shared, and separate professional registration bodies and professional associations (trade unions) operate (Forbes and McCartney, 2012). The product of these disconnects being practitioners not best equipped to act in multi-agency work contexts.

MULTI-AGENCY WORK: GIRFEC – SCOTLAND'S CURRENT CO-PRACTICE MODEL

The current overarching 'flagship' educational and social policy and related legislation pertaining to all services to children in Scotland, wheresoever 'delivered' – schools, clinics, homes, community – is the GIRFEC strategy. The *GIRFEC: Proposals for Action* (Scottish Government, 2005) policy highlights that key ideas in the wellbeing approach derived from child welfare and protection developments and specifically a consultation paper on the children's hearing system (www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/18507/EQIASearch/ChildrensHearings). The GIRFEC child strategy constitutes a sector overarching whole child approach to meeting needs and improving wellbeing. Applying to all agencies' work, it obliges practitioners and agencies to optimally coordinate – join-up – their work, spanning previous mono-professional and mono-agency boundaries. Specified in *A Guide to GIRFEC* (Scottish Government, 2008, p. 6), the approach:

builds from universal health and education services and drives the developments that will improve outcomes for children and young people by changing the way adults think and act to

help all children and young people grow, develop and reach their full potential. It requires a positive shift in culture, systems and practices across services for children, young people and adults.

The approach introduced eight wellbeing indicators (informally, the ‘SHANARRI’ indicators), viz., that Scotland’s children are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. The GIRFEC approach, accepting that all children shared these childhood-long and life-wide needs, rights and expectations, has from the start been underpinned by the core idea that no one agency or service, or profession, has the breadth and scope of knowledge and skills to address all of these. Therefore, no single agency could be solely responsible – or made, or expected to be singly responsible for addressing all of these needs. Coles et al. (2016, p. 342) elaborate:

The GIRFEC proposals for the improvement of children’s services encouraged improved integration of policy and practice at both national and local levels, so that agencies and practitioners could work together around children’s needs, to ensure that children received the help they needed when they needed it.

Most recently (2017), the Scottish Government GIRFEC site (www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright) describes the GIRFEC strategy in the following terms:

- GIRFEC is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work in partnership with the services that can help them.
- It puts the rights and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of the services that support them – such as early years services, schools and the National Health Service (NHS) – to ensure that everyone works together to improve outcomes for a child or young person.
- Most children get all the support and help they need from their parent(s), wider family and local community, in partnership with services like health and education. Where extra support is needed, the GIRFEC approach aims to make that support easy to access and seamless, with the child at the centre.
- It is for all children and young people because it is impossible to predict if or when they might need extra support.

A number of key principles have incrementally come to underpin the GIRFEC approach, including: early intervention, and attention to children’s early years; local responses, such as the 2006–9 Highland (region) Pathfinder Project, which centrally informed subsequent local and national policy guidance on multi-agency working; the role of the ‘lead professional’ – not a statutory requirement, but delineated in policy and guidance as good practice where a child has particularly complex needs that may necessitate more tightly linked multifaceted multi-agency working; and the now contested role of a named person, legislated for in the 2014 Act. This is a professional role taking responsibility for a child as single point of contact to provide support and advice to families, including on all necessary children’s services, and to raise and appropriately pass on to the correct agencies and authorities concerns about the child’s wellbeing, aiming to ensure the child’s overall wellbeing – that all eight SHANARRI indicators are being met for that child.

The Scottish National Practice Model (NPM) brings together the current language and GIRFEC approach to identify and respond to concerns for a child. The NPM language and approach now pertain to all relevant, responsible agencies. All children's practitioners, from the stage of co-assessment of concerns and needs for a child onwards, therefore, as appropriate, use: the GIRFEC 'Well-being Wheel' (the eight SHANARRI indicators and the concept of wellbeing legislated in the 2014 Act); and the 'My World Triangle' and the 'Resilience Matrix' (not statutory in law, but recommended in guidance and policy). Together, as appropriate, these tools constitute a shared approach across agencies and practitioners. This 'stepped approach' by all practitioners and agencies to the organisation of all information on a child has established a joint system and processes for gathering, recording, discussing and deciding how identified and assessed child wellbeing concerns should be addressed. An important effect of the introduction of the NPM and its principles, approaches and tools, therefore, has been to align the processes used by all child sector agencies. The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (2013, p. 7) briefing on the provisions for the NPM notes, for example, that: 'It is recommended that it is used by all agencies, including when recording routine information.' GIRFEC therefore has an emphasis on the way that information is shared and recorded by different professions.

For children's agencies' and relevant adult services' practitioners, GIRFEC demands particular shifts on assessment, recording, child data sharing and so forth that, together, as top-down, cross-sectoral directives, fundamentally realign and essentially redesign previous and 'naturally evolving' co-working principles and practices. The current (2016) Scottish Government website (www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/9481/3) states that that for 'people working in children's and adult's services' GIRFEC means:

- The child or young person is at the centre of your work, understanding what their unique needs are and how you can help.
- You use common tools, language and processes to consider a child or young person's wellbeing, working closely with them, their parent(s) and other professionals, supporting them where appropriate.
- You feel confident that you have the right information to provide the best support you can to a child or young person and their parent(s).

The integrated approach introduced through GIRFEC, locating the child at the heart of multi-agency working, is key to effective cross-agency collaboration. The focused purpose of GIRFEC model co-practice is to effectively ensure shared assessment of needs and, from 2017, a single child's plan.

MULTI-AGENCY WORKING: ORTHODOXIES, CHALLENGES AND GAME-CHANGERS

Scotland like other countries faces a number of challenging problems, viz., child wellbeing and protection, looked after children and young people, new migrant children, child poverty and disadvantage. Such challenges demonstrably cut across the expertise and resources of a number of public agencies at all levels: institutional level (school, clinic, youth care and youth justice institutions); the level of policy and governance; and at the level of practitioners' knowledge and skills acquisition for co-practice (Forbes and Sime, 2016). None of these complex, 'wicked' problems (see e.g. Forbes and Watson, 2012),

emergent social and economic realities, ‘startling developments’ (such as the unforeseen number of new arrival migrant children and families from the extended European Union countries), and the post-2015 arrival of asylum-seeking refugee children and families, can be adequately addressed within a traditional twentieth-century style, ‘mono-’ working education system.

That such major societal challenges cannot be ameliorated solely by education is an insight that needs to be understood in any policy and governance response. For example, current policy tightly couples ‘child poverty’ and ‘academic attainment’, whereby the responsibility for solving the ‘wicked’ intergenerational problem of the educational outcomes of poor children is placed on schools and teachers. In a different framing, causes for the under-attainment of children living in poverty may be viewed as an effect of their lack of economic capital and concomitant lack of full sociocultural access. Such reframing of the issues immediately ‘changes the game’, demanding a public sector systems-wide multifaceted multi-agency response (Forbes and Watson, 2012; Forbes and Sime, 2016; Lawson, 2016).

Augmenting government policy directives that prescribe sectoral ‘multi-’ and ‘trans-’ working, part of the responsibility for the ‘re-culturing’ of agencies in the child sector towards ‘multi-’ working must lie with professional standards bodies and with those responsible for children’s practitioners’ initial professional education. Necessary developments to support separate professional registration bodies’ multi-agency working ‘standards’ statements would be the following:

1. the production of agreed aligned standards for cross-agency and cross-professional working and leadership;
2. restructuring to realign university departments which educate and prepare practitioners to enter, continue to develop professionally, and exercise leadership and management functions in children’s agencies;
3. ensuring that all child sector practitioners acquire – and practice – the necessary cross-professions, cross-disciplines and cross-agency knowledge and skills to achieve what GIRFEC characterises as necessary.

That is: to get it right for every child in and through a universal approach applying to all Scotland’s children.

This chapter has shown that future hard questions on child/person-centred multi-agency working towards the twin drivers of better outcomes for children and social justice must carefully and fully frame issues and solutions with a clearer regard to practitioners’ and agencies’ intellectual resources. These should strengthen trans-agency connections and trans-professional work relations, and in particular look ‘upstream’ to the transformational redesign of all inappropriate ‘mono-agency’ thinking in initial education and professional registration bodies’ standards. The multi-agency universal approach envisaged in the GIRFEC strategy must be pursued.

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