

Policy Landscape

Connections are key

Unlocking the heart of
relationship-based practice



Overview

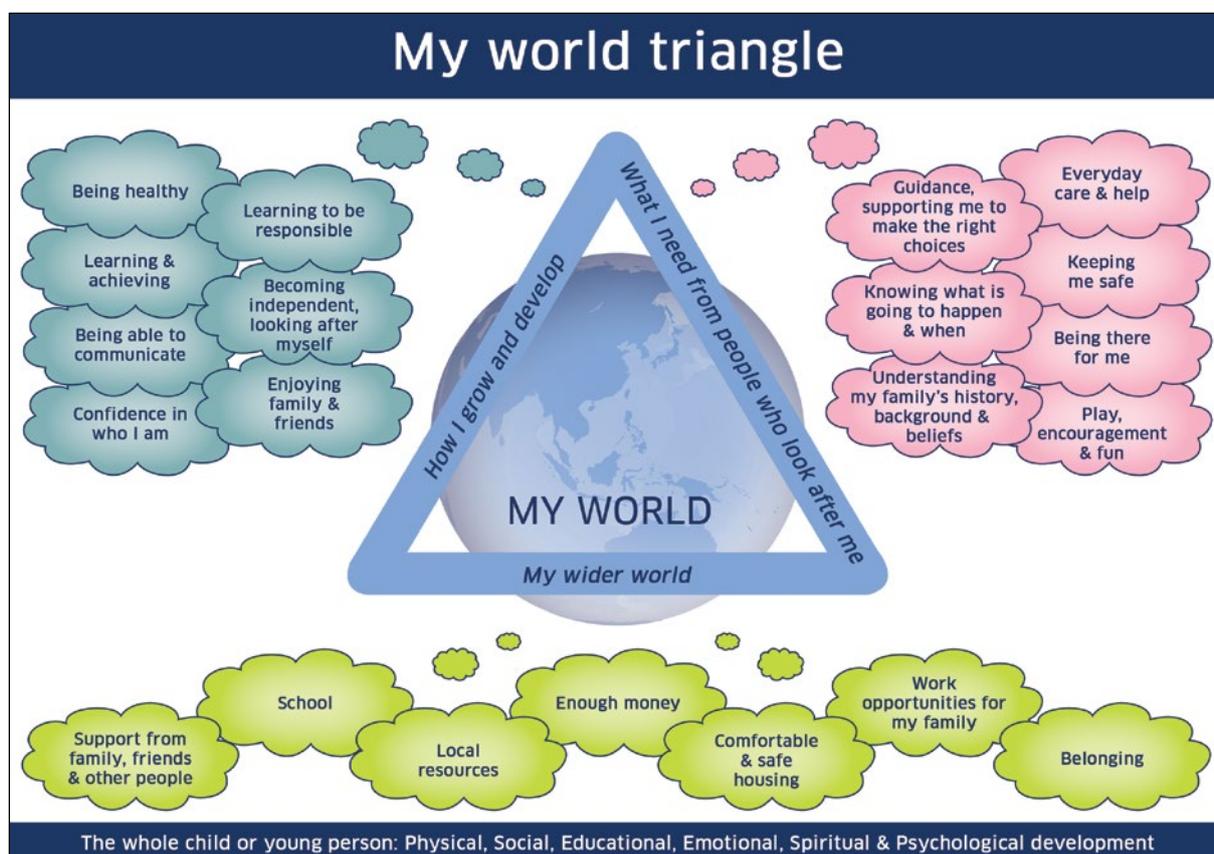
This document briefly reviews the Scottish policy reports, assessment frameworks and care reviews that form the preliminary scope for the review. These publications highlight the growing national interest in helping children and families living with drugs and alcohol and the push for more strategies to encourage quality third sector care.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)



Reflecting the *United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child*, GIRFEC is a child focused model introduced in Scotland in 2014 that aims to address, respect and work with the uniqueness of every child's experience living with drugs and alcohol. GIRFEC considers all wider influences that contribute to a child's wellbeing, and their research into the experiences

of practitioners and young people since 2006 has shown that a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach is essential to maintain all aspects of wellbeing. The areas of 'growth and development', 'the outside world' and 'people around me' shown in the **My World Triangle** are viewed as interdependent in terms of maintaining positive outcomes, which supports the projects ecological and structural definition of relationship-based practice. Similarly, both GIRFEC and this project acknowledge the wider responsibility of individual service workers and groups for ensuring children grow up healthy and happy.



To ensure the wellbeing of every child is protected, the *GIRFEC* model identifies eight factors that need to be fulfilled in their home, at school and in their wider community. These factors are often shortened to SHANARRI.

Safe
Healthy
Achieving
Nurture
Active
Respected
Responsible
Included

Though providing a model for operating effective care, the *GIRFEC* model recognises that each child has unique experiences and acknowledges the presence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). The Wellbeing Wheel above and the My World Triangle are tools, that services and practitioners are encouraged to use where possible to use when supporting children. The recommendation for collaborative service work and the recognition of how important whole family support can be for the child is what makes *GIRFEC* an integral component of our project's policy landscape.

The Quality Principles for Drug and Alcohol Services and the Health and Social Care Standards



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Published in 2014, The Quality Principles are a framework set designed to improve recovery services across Scotland built upon the work that the Scottish Government and Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and services have been providing. Out of the eight framework guidelines, family inclusiveness, strength-based assessment and integrative support were promoted as effective pathways to recovery. They are listed below.

You should be supported by workers who have the right attitudes, values, training and supervision throughout your recovery journey.

Trauma informed work, setting personal recovery goals and evidence informed treatment all centres around listening to the experiences of the people accessing services. This is an integral component of the project's standpoint and are considered important at government level.

Included in this principle was a requirement that workers should encourage a community-based recovery, a further point that is incorporated into this project's framework.

You should be involved in a full, strength-based assessment that ensures the choice of recovery model and therapy is based on your needs and aspirations.

The quality principles supports the idea that assessments should be strength based, attentive to potential trauma and for those using the service should be aware of all options and considerations that will be taken when developing a recovery plan. Most care provided to children and families is part of an on-going process and should be treated as such rather than a short-term fix. Doing so requires workers to be attentive to personal needs and be updated and supportive with personal relationships that can affect the recovery journey. The project supports the above framework principle and uses it as part of our research basis.

You should have a recovery plan that is person-centred and addresses your broader health, care and social needs, and maintains a focus on your safety throughout your recovery journey.

The focus on safety throughout the recovery journey is important in this framework. Safety and risk assessment are areas that are frequently visited when considering a whole family approach, for the wellbeing of the children and other family members. Health, care and social needs are interdependent and approaches that aim to improve all aspects are prioritised in this research. More so, this principles aim to encourage work between practitioners and workers in different fields to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and family is covered on multiple grounds.

Services should be family inclusive as part of their practice.

This final principle promotes and strengthen family inclusive services for children and families living with drugs and alcohol. Incorporated in this view is the multidimensional meaning of family, extending to anyone who plays a significant role in a person's life. The ability to choose who is considered as family is essential to those living with drugs and alcohol who are in recovery as it allows individuals the power to choose who is involved in their journey and part of the circle of support. The service should help minimise the impact that drug or alcohol use may have on those around the person. It gives service workers a responsibility to communicate and connect with those considered to be in a close circle, recognising the impact that living with drugs and alcohol can have on those other than the individual directly experiencing it.

Children in Scotland



In 2018 Children in Scotland introduced their *25 Calls*, bringing together diverse voices from across the sector to propose how children can experience greater equality and strengthened human rights. From politics to clean air, each call pushes for better support for children in Scotland from across a variety of sectors. For the purpose of this review we were most interested in the Calls that included the rights of children, support for children in care and investment in whole family support. They are listed below and form part of our evidence framework that shows the need for continued support for children and families.

Call 4

To end abuse and neglect, live what we know: it's everyone's job to make sure children are alright

Call 4 pushes for all sectors in Scotland to have collective responsibility for the wellbeing of every child. Informed by parents', Children in Scotland acknowledge that often it can be difficult to know who to turn to for help, and that health visitors, teachers and other public workers should be available to support children.

Call 7

Support the aims and work of the Care Review – making changes to improve care now and in future

Supporting the Care Review, Call 7 prioritises the relationships that are important to children and young people to protect and promote positive social development. There will always be support in place to make sure children are safe during this, only continuing with families when it is deemed safe for all members.

Call 17

"Prioritise integration, support for families and participation to give children the best start"

Call 17 highlights the need to consider people as experts in their own lives and listen to feedback from children and families. Feedback has suggested to Scottish care support frameworks that rather than providing more childcare, the provision of high-quality child support is more effective. Encouraging children to participate and contribute to the development of support that is given to them allows them to shape their own future and improve services for generations to come.

Call 21

"Invest in relationship-based whole-family support." By Parenting across Scotland

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child have been supported and incorporated into Scottish law, meaning that we now recognise the family is the best place for a child to grow up. It states that a child: "For the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding."

To do this, an integrated network of support must be given to families to give them the best chance to thrive during or after recovery. This will involve increased cross-sector communication and a collective responsibility to assist each other in helping families stay together.

Improving Scotland's Health Rights, Respect and Recovery

Improving Scotland's Health Rights, Respect and Recovery



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The Scottish Government's alcohol and drug strategy, *Rights, Respect and Recovery* (2018) document centres around the aspiration that all people in Scotland have a right to lead healthy and happy lives, that they are respected and that they achieve their recovery. This strategy sets national guidance on preventing drug related deaths, alcohol and drug use and related harm to individuals. It recognises that such events can have drastic effects on children and family members in an individual's life – through social and physical health, wellbeing or financial instability. Listed in the Chapter 6 of the strategy are several outcomes and commitments made to support positive wellbeing for children and families.

The strategy reflects the project's scope as it commits to listen to the lived experiences of children and families living with drugs and alcohol to deliver appropriate treatments, interventions and solutions. Many children experience family alcohol and drug use differently and can be at risk dependent on their interaction with the experience. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can increase the risk of future personal struggles with alcohol and drugs. It is essential to understand the impact of ACEs and the ways in which children can cope or be at risk depending on their personal experience. This subject is addressed in the review, with a focus on assessing resilience and risk, and why it is essential to have a person-centred approach to care. Each family is considered unique with their own experience in this strategy, reflecting the values of this project.

Outcome: Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use will be safe, healthy, included and supported

Commitments to achieve the outcome

Ensure family members will have access to support in their own right and, where appropriate, will be included in their loved one's treatment and support.	C1
Ensure all families will have access to services (both statutory and third sector) provided through a whole family approach, in line with the values, principles and core components of GIRFEC.	C2
Involve children, parents and other family members in the planning, development and delivery of services at local, regional and national level.	C3

7. It is also extremely important to identify and support the positive contribution family members can make to a person's recovery journey. Although family relationships are complex, they are more often than not one of the most important factors in supporting someone with drug or alcohol use. However, family members also need support to build their own resilience and recover themselves.
8. This strategy sets out a shift towards a whole family and family-inclusive approach to treatment and must be developed with lived and living experience at the heart.

Whole family approach

12. The whole family approach looks at tailored support for all that are affected: adults on their recovery journey and also the children. We want children and young people to remain in stable loving families wherever possible. For this to happen, services need to work together to support families and share concerns quickly and effectively to protect children and young people from harm.
 - Children at risk are identified and appropriate action taken.
 - Treatment and good parenting comes together.
 - Children's needs are met in their own right.

The strategy recognises the variation of 'family' and the value that supportive social circles must encourage a positive environment. Published in late December 2018, this strategy is at the forefront of policy making and this research will maintain the same standpoint. The focus placed on loving families and having love at the heart of children's experiences is supported by the *Independent Care Review*.

Independent Care Review

Independent Care Review

In 2016, an independent root and branch review of the care system in Scotland was announced by the Scottish Government. *The Independent Care Review*, which concluded in Spring 2020, aimed to identify and deliver lasting change in Scotland's care system and leave a legacy that will transform the wellbeing of infants, children and young people. The lived experience and wisdom of people were at the heart of the Care Review; with over 5500 voices of children and young people in care, care leavers, families, paid and unpaid carers underpinning the work. It is their experiences and voices that gave clarity and focus on what matters. Throughout the review, children and young people spoke of the importance of meaningful and loving relationships in their everyday lives, and the need for their rights to be respected. The Care Review published its findings and recommendations in February 2020. The report identified five foundations for

change, with over 80 specific changes that must be made to transform how Scotland cares for children and families as well as the unpaid and paid workforce.

Among other principles, these four resonate with the purpose of the project and form the groundwork of why the project will be useful for future generations of children, policy makers and support workers.

These five publications summarised form the policy context of this review. With four of them being published in the last year, these strategies are a contemporary example of Scottish policies advocating that everyone has a responsibility to take care of children and families living with drugs and alcohol. The focus on whole-family approaches, redefining what it means to be a family in contemporary society, and the movement for respect and person-centred care to be at the heart of each recovery journey is what makes these publications important for this research. Those involved with this project aim to keep these values present in all the work that takes place and have them form the backbone of this research.

All adults involved in the care of children and young people are empowered, valued and equipped to deliver the best care system in the world.

Scotland's care services will plan and work better together, sharing information more easily to ensure we understand the what and how of supporting children, young people and their families from a local through to a national level.

Families on the edge of care will get the support they need to stay and live together where safe to do so.

Relationships which are significant to children and young people will be protected and supported to continue unless it is not safe to do so. This recognises the importance of brothers and sisters, parents, extended family and trusted adults.

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