I/Royal College of Nursing
Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill

Background
The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is continuing to work to formulate its position on the Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill and its response to the Education and Skills Committee's call for views on the Bill. This response should, therefore, be considered in that context and read, where possible, in conjunction with the evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee.

Consultation

Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

Yes, the RCN has engaged with the Scottish Government on the Bill to date, and has raised the importance of funding for health visitor training and supervision. This has included engaging with partner nursing and midwifery organisations to discuss the implications of the Supreme Court Judgment and ongoing concerns about implementation of the named person (http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00514993.pdf).

In addition to health visitors receiving training in order to take up the named person role, it is crucial that other members of nursing teams and support staff, who may require training and education because of their interaction with the named person as part of the wider team involved in the Getting It Right for Every Child approach, are trained appropriately. This would, for example, include school nurses, public health nurses, nursing team support staff and so on.

It is important to note that the high vacancy rate amongst health visitors, and the high proportion of health visitors over the age of 50, and therefore nearing retirement, remains a concern. These workforce pressures can make it difficult for staff to be released for training purposes.

The RCN provided a written submission to the previous Finance Committee's call for evidence in relation to the Financial Memorandum for the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. Some of the issues raised in that evidence, particularly around ongoing training costs and the need for additional administrative support, continue to be relevant in relation to the Children and Young People (Information Sharing) (Scotland) Bill.

If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

The RCN has concerns that the FM is based on training for NHS professionals being a 'one-off process' with 'subsequent competence development of new staff...achieved through practitioner training in education programmes.' As such any additional or ongoing training will need to be subsumed within existing pre and post-registration programmes.
The RCN is concerned that this does not fit with its previous calls to ensure that there is adequate resource for the training, education and supervision of health visitors.

Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise? Yes, although having detail rather than an outline of a broad approach would have allowed for more thorough and meaningful consultation.

Costs

If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.
The RCN would not be directly affected by the Bill.

Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?
As stated above, the RCN does have concerns that there is insufficient resource being allocated for training, education and supervision for health visitors, and the one off nature of the training.

If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?
Not applicable.

Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?
The assumption that training, after the first year of implementation, would be subsumed within existing organisational training programmes is a concern. It is not clear that sufficient resources are in place to support such ongoing training.

Wider Issues

Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?
The RCN has some concerns around ongoing costs, as set out above.

Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?
At this point in time the RCN is not in a position to comment on possible future costs which fall outside the direct sphere of the Bill.