Consultation

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

Yes. GIRFEC Leads attended an event on 21st June re the Bill. The associated documentation on the revised Bill was only distributed the day prior on June 20th.

There was no reference to, or discussion of the financial assumptions and memorandum at that GIRFEC Leads event. When queried we were advised, more information would be made available in due course. Nothing subsequently was received prior to receipt of this Finance and Constitution Committee Questionnaire.

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

N/A - as there was been no opportunity for discussion or comment regarding the FM to help inform comment.

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

No - There was no consultation regarding the FM content and assumptions.

Costs

4. 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.

No – not fully as this does not consider the full range of implications, relating only to backfill of staff acting as Named Persons costs. Additional considerations are noted overleaf:

- Costs arising from provision of trainers and delivery of the training itself are unaccounted for.
- There is no consideration in the FM to backfill cover and train a) those staff responsible to provide supervision advice and support to Named Persons, nor b) those working directly with Named Persons with significant input to Child’s Plans. This includes other staff acting as Lead Professionals notably Social Work Staff, Looked After Child and Child protection Case Conference Review Managers etc
- Training implications for a range of associated staff (for example adult service practitioners working with parents/carers) as they relate to Named Persons, Child’s Plan and information sharing.
- Associated training will also need to be revised and delivered.
- Revision of existing authority guidance
- Communication Costs
- Responding to Freedom of Information/Press
- QA, audit and reporting on provision of Named Person Service/Child’s Plan
- Administrative Costs
5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

No.

They appear reasonable in relation to the backfill of staff aspect, however this does not fully account for wider implications and ongoing costs associated with the Bill (and associated statutory instruments ie the Child’s Plan Order).

6. 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?

No. I believe additional funding must be made available via Scottish Government regarding additional costs noted in the Financial Memorandum, revises the suggested figure in acknowledgement of the wider cost implications, and recognises the ongoing associated costs relating to the Bill.

I believe there has to be an acknowledgement that following the Supreme Court decision, the hiatus on legislative implementation and subsequent lack of clear and concise information to clarify the situation, has directly contributed to a situation of widespread misunderstanding. This has impacted negatively on public perception and practitioners understanding.

The renewed focus on clear and consistent messaging from the GIRFEC Team from here on in will be welcomed in this respect.

7. 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?

Not fully – please see answers provided under question 4.

Wider Issues

8. 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?

No.

I believe there has to be an acknowledgement that following the Supreme Court decision, the hiatus on legislative implementation and subsequent lack of clear and concise information to clarify the situation, has directly contributed to a situation of widespread misunderstanding, both regarding public perception and further for practitioners. The renewed focus on clear and consistent messaging from the GIRFEC Team is welcomed in this respect.
9. 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?

The costs do not relate to a one-off financial implication, albeit the initial implementation and development phases is most significant. As noted above there are also ongoing costs in relation to administration, providing trainers to deliver training, revision of associated authority specific guidance and training where reference to Named Persons, Information Sharing and Child’s Plan Order etc is made.

The requirements of the Child’s Plan Order and review requirements also incur ongoing administrative costs, staff resources, and for example associated audit/QA processes.

It is not possible to fully quantify these costs, however by way of example current administrative costs in relation to supporting Named Persons and Child’s Plan processes to Aberdeenshire’s Education Service alone currently equates to £166,322 per annum.