

Dear Colleague

## THE ROLE / THE FUNCTION OF THE CHILD HEALTH COMMISSIONER

This letter sets out the essential role of the Child Health Commissioner (CHC) within NHS Boards, and their importance to the Scottish Government's aim of continuously improving outcomes for children and young people. It supersedes CEL 19 (2011).

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, places a requirement on Local Authorities and Health Boards through Children's Services Plans to identify local needs, priorities, and actions, and to develop solutions that address the needs of the children, young people and families they support. This aligns with Scotland's approach to promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of every child through Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).

All of the above reflect the values in Scotland's National Performance Framework, which aims to ensure all of Scotland's children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.

CHCs have a senior, professional leadership role in informing and influencing, and to ensure that health priorities are identified, understood and addressed in health service planning and integrated service planning partnerships with NHS Boards, local authorities and key agencies.

### The Function of the Child Health Commissioner:

- The CHC will advocate both locally and nationally that the rights and interests of children and young people, as detailed in the UN Rights of the Child are recognised, promoted and acted on in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and services.

**DL (2019) 13**

### Addresses

#### For information

NHS Chief Executives  
NHS HR Directors  
NHS Medical Directors  
NHS Directors of Planning  
NHS Finance Directors  
NHS Nurse Directors  
NHS Directors of Public Health  
Chairs, Regional Planning Groups  
Directors, Regional Planning Groups  
Child Health Commissioners

#### **Enquiries to:**

Supporting Maternal and Child  
Wellbeing Team  
Improving Health and Wellbeing  
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- The CHC will have a lead role in identifying the health needs of the infant, child and young person population. This will require an understanding of the role of strategic planning, public health, the specialist and non-specialist workforce and the operational resources required to meet this need.
- The CHC will have a lead role in the development and performance monitoring of local and regional child health strategy and improvement plans, ensuring equity of access to services in order to reduce health and social inequalities.
- Advocate for infants, children, young people and their families / carers across Health and Social Care systems and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in relation to children's and adult service provision.
- Advise on and support the application of the Getting it Right for Every Child approach for all infants, children, young people and their families / carers across Health, Social Care systems and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in relation to children's and adult service provision.
- The CHC will make a significant contribution to improving child health outcomes via their specific and unique role as a professional expert advisor to the NHS Board on all aspects of child health, health services and related policy and legislation.
- The CHC will advise on and promote the implementation and scrutiny of the health component parts of the Children and Young People (Scotland) (2014) Act and where required, integrated health and social care models as per the Public Bodies Act (Scotland) 2014.
- The CHC will provide, evidence based/rights informed child centred advice to NHS Boards on relevant policy
- The CHC will be part of a communication pathway to receive and impart relevant health information/intelligence regarding infants, children and young people across local, regional and national networks.

Whilst there is variation across all NHS Boards in relation to the role and function, job designation and description, it is vital that the CHC is fully supported within their local Health Board and wider systems and has access to appropriate resources to effectively undertake their role and responsibilities; including participation in the National Child Health Commissioners Group (NCHCG) to inform and recommend on national policy.

A number of priorities for the National Child Health Commissioners Group have been identified including:

- Improving outcomes for infants, children and young people with experiences that may compromise their chances across the life course
- Improving outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People.
- Driving improvement in transition, including to adult services, for children with disability, complex needs, mental health needs and/or long term medical conditions
- Horizon scanning: the CHCs will identify emerging risks or other issues, utilising local, regional and national contacts to plan, intervene and mitigate where possible
- Involvement in performance reviews of children and young people's services, including recommendations to address unwarranted variation.
- Contribution to key challenges such as child poverty, mental health and wellbeing and the development of trauma informed culture and practice across systems and services for infants, children and young people and their families.

The above will shape a structured agenda and annual work plan for the National Child Health Commissioners Group.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Chalmers  
Director for Children and Families

