

Excellence in Youth Justice: Creating a Fair and Safe Scotland

*Early and Effective Intervention for Children and Young People Who Offend
Information Sharing to Promote Wellbeing*

The robustness of Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) as a process to address the needs and risks of children and young people charged with minor offences depends on the quality and relevance of the information provided and the disposals or interventions offered by the Police, Education, Social Work, Health, Community Safety and youth work providers from local authority and the third sector.

- The core information provided at the EEI coordination stage should make it possible to decide whether the charge can be disposed with immediately, whether a referral should be made to SCRA or whether more information is required and the offence should be discussed at a multi agency EEI meeting. [Lord Advocate's Guidelines to Police Constables 2010](#) and local agreements with SCRA must be adhered to.
- While many young people referred to EEI do not commit further crimes, some have already developed a pattern of offending. Factors associated with poor outcomes include: early anti-social and criminal behaviour COMBINED with a troubled home life, poor parenting, a criminal family member, violence or abuse, peer group pressure, poor school attainment, truancy and exclusion, drug and alcohol misuse, and poor mental health. Early identification of risk and need is difficult but essential, particularly for children and young people who possess a cluster of factors. Critical moments in early teenage years are key to pathways in and out of offending ([McAra and McVie \(2012\)](#)).
- Under the Data Protection Act 1998 it is appropriate for agencies to share information where there are concerns about wellbeing which would include minor offending. Information shared must be proportionate and relevant, and the rationale for sharing should be recorded. Guidance from the Information Commissioner regarding this matter will be published in the near future.
- EEI offers a holistic approach to children and young people in conflict with the law, focusing on their needs and strengths while not forgetting the impact on the victim. EEI takes place within the context of *Getting it right for every child*. Professionals may find that providing information, as suggested below, within the format of the [Wellbeing Indicators](#) fosters a common understanding of need and risk:

SAFE – context of incident; impact on victim and community; child/young person's exposure to risk; familial criminogenic factors; parental supervision; parental attitude to the charge; victim of violence or bullying; agency chronology.

HEALTHY – physical or mental health concerns including learning disability or communication difficulty; alcohol or drug use, including at the time of the alleged offence.

ACHIEVING – attendance level; exclusions; attainment/potential/motivation to achieve; learning difficulty; impact of behaviour; strengths; parental involvement.

NURTURED - parental attitude to the incident; positive parental contact with education or health; current or historic domestic abuse, impact of significant family events e.g. bereavement, separation.

ACTIVE – involvement in pro social leisure or school activities; individual talents.

RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTED – pro social peer group; involvement in community activity; pattern of offending; anti social behaviour in the community; awareness of impact on victim; bullying in school.

INCLUDED – agency support/intervention provided to overcome social, emotional or physical inequality.

- Further information on Youth Justice and EEI can be found in the [National Youth Justice Practice Guidance](#) and in the [Multi Agency EEI Processes Report July 2012](#). [Ecology of Judgement in Child Welfare and Assessment \(Helm and Roesch Marsh 2010\)](#) provides a synopsis of multi agency group decision making.

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