

#KeepThePromise



Education

Autumn 2020

Between 2017 and 2020, the Care Review heard the experiences over 5,500 care experienced infants, children, young people, adults and members of the paid and unpaid workforce had of Scotland's 'care system', and their vision for what needed to change. This vision was set out in ['The Promise'](#) which reflected what was heard and detailed the foundations that Scotland's care for its children and families must be built on:



Voice

Voice: Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.



Scaffolding

Scaffolding: Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.



Family

Family: Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.



Care

Care: Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.



People

People: The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

This series of briefings is intended to help Scotland **#KeepThePromise**, highlighting key areas of alignment between what was heard during the Care Review and mapping those to different sectors, in order to guide and inform planning and implementation. They will also bring into focus the substantial amount of overlap between these areas across all parts of the country's workforce. It is hoped that in doing so, the briefings will support inter-sector, partnership discussions on how to take forward Scotland's Ambition, to make it the best place in the world to grow up.

Each briefing begins with a bullet point summary of the 'headline' themes for the sector. The remainder of the document highlights key sector-relevant themes and sections from The Promise giving the relevant page numbers to help signpost readers.

Briefing Summary

- The rights of children must be upheld, and formal and informal exclusion must end.
- Listening to the voices of care experienced children must be consistent and 'built in'.
- The culture surrounding information sharing that has the biggest impact on protecting children. Scotland must ensure that the right information is shared at the right time and that those close to children are heard.
- The language of care must change to be easily understood, be positive and must not stigmatise.
- The sector must strive for the normalisation of care experience and stop practices that create and contribute to stigma.
- The importance of relationships cannot be overstated - every effort must be made to nurture and sustain positive and important relationships for care experienced children.
- Schools play a key role in supporting families in their communities, providing places, opportunities and relationships that can enrich the lives of children.
- Schools must work alongside the broader workforce and carers to support them in being good parents who understand their responsibilities, and value and engage with the educational progress of the children in their care.
- Transitions must be limited, relational, planned and informed. Parenting does not stop at 18. Scotland must continue to consider how to create greater equity and opportunity for care experienced young adults, including how to increase opportunity for care experienced people to access employment, training, stable housing and support.

Upholding the rights of children and ending exclusion

- p.71** In order to ensure that care experienced children are fully included and supported, schools in Scotland must have a clear understanding of the rights of children and how to uphold them. All children, whatever their educational setting, must learn about their rights in a developmentally appropriate way.
- p.72** Scotland must not exclude care experienced children from education or reduce their timetable to such an extent that they are denied their rights to education.
- p.71** In supporting care experienced pupils to thrive, there must be consistent application of legal requirements so that they receive all they are entitled to.
- p.72** The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from school must end.
- p.72** Schools in Scotland must also not exacerbate the trauma of children by imposing consequences for challenging behaviour that are restrictive, humiliating and stigmatising. This includes seclusion or restraint and can include certain use of behaviour reward systems. Scotland must properly support and resource the workforce to step in to put theory into good practice by supporting and building relationships with children.
- p.71** Schools in Scotland must be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.

Consistently listening to the voices of care experienced children

- p.119** Children's voices and their experiences must be the focus of inspection and investigation processes. There must be significant emphasis on listening and responding to what they are reporting about service and professional provision. As a minimum, inspection must integrate meaningful participation methodologies into how they assess the quality of services and understand how to listen, present and collate their voices into the inspection process.
- p.119** There must be consistency across all regulators to align the evidence base so that there is not duplication and so that all those with inspection responsibility are looking at the same things and share common values. For residential services this will require the involvement of Education Scotland.

Language and sharing information

- p.69** Life Stories – Scotland must understand that ‘language creates realities’. Those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their stories and lives; simple, caring language must be used in the writing of care files.
- p.36** Scotland must acknowledge that it is the culture surrounding information sharing that has the biggest impact on protecting children.
- p.30** Scotland must ensure that the right information is shared at the right time and that those close to children are heard. The starting point for any decision must be how to best protect relationships that are important to children.
- p.35** Scotland must be committed to the development of digital tools that incorporate the principle of information ownership. These digital tools must operate at a scale that allows care experienced children and young adults to have control over their information and how it is shared.
- p.97** Scotland must change the language of care. Language must be easily understood, be positive and must not create or compound stigma.

Challenging stigma and normalising care experience

- p.58** The way in which support is delivered must not stigmatise the family. That means there must be no uniforms, lanyards or branded vehicles appearing outside houses or schools to provide support. The basis of all support must be the quality of relationships, not the professionalisation of the workforce. The language of family support must reflect normal discourse, and not be hidden behind professional language such as ‘looked after child’ (“LAC”), reviews and risk assessment. Overly professionalised language stigmatises families and acts as a barrier to engaging and supportive work.
- p.87** Normalisation of Care Experience – Scotland should be a good parent to the children it has responsibility for. That means carers and workers must act, speak and behave like a family so that Scotland can be the best parent it can be. Scotland must stop stigmatising the children it cares for.
- p.39** Children’s hearing system: The times of the Hearings and how children are removed from school has meant they have missed lessons and felt stigmatised in comparison to other pupils.

Schools must nurture and sustain relationships that are important to children and young people

- p.67** The Care Review has heard from many children and adults who experienced far too many moves to allow for them to make friends and build relationships, settle at school and in neighbourhoods and communities. Scotland must limit the number of moves that children experience and support carers to continue to care.
- p.71** Schools in Scotland must provide space and opportunity for all members of school staff to develop kind, supportive relationships with care experienced children.
- p.71** Scotland must ensure that in being ambitious for achievement and opportunity, there is also recognition that schools provide an important place for care experienced children to enjoy stable, nurturing relationships that prepare them for life beyond school.
- p.72** Schools in Scotland must ensure that pupils and parents understand 'care experience' as part of their communities and as another type of family. Teachers and school staff must be supported to be aware of the issues facing care experienced pupils so they can best engage and encourage.
- p.72** Schools and Local Authorities must do everything required to support children to build positive relationships at school and maintain attendance, engagement and learning in a meaningful and supportive way.
- p.71** Mentoring has a significant positive impact on children and young people who receive it, with evidence that it can

improve educational attainment. Schools must also be supported to encourage and develop mentoring relationships for those who would benefit. Offering mentoring to a wide range of children and young people within schools ensures that it is non-stigmatising and will have a wide take-up.

Schools play a key role in supporting families in their communities

- p.46** Scotland's commitment to early intervention and prevention must be realised through proper, holistic support for families. There must be a significant upscale in universal family support services.
- p.49** Scotland must ensure that there are places in every community for parents of young children to go for support and advice, to meet other local parents and to stay and play with their children.
- p.52** Scotland must support all families caring for disabled children and those with additional support needs. If families require intensive support they must get it and not be required to fight for it.
- p.55** Whatever issues families face, Scotland must ensure that intensive family support is available, proactive and characterised by the **10 family support principles**.

- p.71** Through their daily interaction with children, schools in Scotland provide places, relationships and opportunities for all children and have a particular importance for care experienced pupils.
- p.71** Through recognising the potential for schools to be important community hubs and supporting them to build on the assets of the community they could be resourced to provide support to families in need in a non-stigmatising way.
- p.46** Universal services (such as schools and mental health services) must recognise the role they play as adjacent parts of the wider scaffolding of care so they can support and nurture those with care experience.
- p.57** Intensive family support must be geographically located in local communities, with the explicit intention of maximising the assets of the community and community-based relationships. Support must be explicitly connected to, or even housed in, locations that work for local families and the community, such as schools, health centres, village halls and sports centres. Scotland knows where this support is most needed. Communities must have a say in where support is located.
- p.18** Poverty - There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for Scotland's children, families and communities.

Education and the workforce

- p.71** Improving the educational attainment of care experienced people should not be the sole responsibility of school staff, but Scotland must support the broader workforce and carers to value and engage with the educational progress of the children in their care.
- p.100** Nurturing Scotland's Workforce – Supporting the workforce to care must be at the heart of Scotland's service planning. Supervision and reflective practice is essential for all practitioners, regardless of their professional discipline or role, who are working with children.
- p.104** People and Risk – Scotland must support the workforce to contribute to a broader understanding of risk. Scotland must understand, through its people and structures, the risk of children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences.
- p.108** Learning must support the interaction between Family Carers and other professionals. It should nurture equal partnerships and encourage joint learning, with informal learning, mentoring, coaching and support networks, and opportunities for joint reflective practice. Feedback must be a routine component of development.
- p.112** Parenting –All of Scotland's institutions, organisations, national bodies and Local Authorities who have responsibilities towards care experienced children and young adults, must be aware of, understand and fully implement all their parenting responsibilities.

Transitions and adulthood

- p.93** Parenting does not stop at 18. Throughout The Plan, Scotland must continue to consider how to create greater equity and opportunity for care experienced young adults. That consideration must include how to increase opportunity for care experienced people to access employment, training, stable housing and support.
- p.93** There must be comprehensive thematic reviews of 'transition services,' and all those with ongoing parenting responsibility must be required to explain how they plan to deliver integrated services for care leavers to adulthood.
- p.68** Transitions - Any transition in a care experience child's life must be limited, relational, planned and informed.
- p.93** Young people with care experience must have access to independent advocacy and legal representation so that they understand their rights to certain benefits and services and are able to access them.
- p.93** There must be a streamlining and clear communication of the variety of financial support available to those with care experience.
- p.93** Scotland must prevent students leaving settings of care from getting into significant student debt through higher education, that must involve financial support and debt write off as required.
- p.93** Universities and colleges in Scotland must also act on their responsibilities towards care experienced students, ensuring they are provided with access to mentoring and support throughout their studies.
- p.93** Scotland must remove all barriers for young people who have had parenting responsibility to continuing their education. They must be supported to enter education at any age. They must be entitled to repeat year funding (if they are required to repeat a year), and year round funding to include the holiday period.
- p.92** Adult Life – Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

#KeepThePromise

'The Promise' outlines an approach to family and to care that will mean that Scotland can truly be 'the best place in the world to grow up.' To achieve that, there is considerable work to be done.

This series of briefings is intended to support your organisation in thinking about what it means to #KeepThePromise. It should be used to help you to align organisational policies, strategies and practices with what the Care Review heard, and to identify what changes can be made to those, both now and in the future. The Care Review made clear that it is simply not possible to isolate any one aspect of the system. Therefore, these sector briefings should also help organisations understand who else they need to work with in order to make change happen.

To realise the ambitious scale and extent of change, The Promise Team will need the ongoing input and views of all those with responsibility. Please look at the #KeepThePromise **engagement document** to help you think about the work of change.

The Promise website will be regularly updated with information and resources.

For more information about what the Care Review heard about education see the **Evidence Framework**.



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