



the promise
scotland

Focus on Change

Strategic Work Programme 2025/26



March 2025

The Promise Scotland's mission is to support the transformation of how Scotland cares for its children, care experienced adults and families, ensuring that Scotland's children 'grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.'



1. Introduction

On 5th February 2020, the [Independent Care Review's](#) conclusions were published and Scotland made a promise that all children would *grow up loved, safe, and respected* by 2030. The continued commitment made by all political parties to keep the promise is essential.

2025 marks the mid-point to this and the latest report from The Oversight Board, [Report THREE](#), shows Scotland is on the right path, with commitment by people working in the 'care system' and beyond. However the report is clear that Scotland is behind schedule and what is needed now is a clear focus on what must change, and an increase in pace.

[The Promise Scotland](#) remains entirely dedicated to leading, driving and understanding change, supporting Scotland to keep the promise. This strategic work programme builds on all that has been learned so far, and is aligned to [Plan 24-30](#), Scotland's plan to deliver the change demanded by the Independent Care Review.



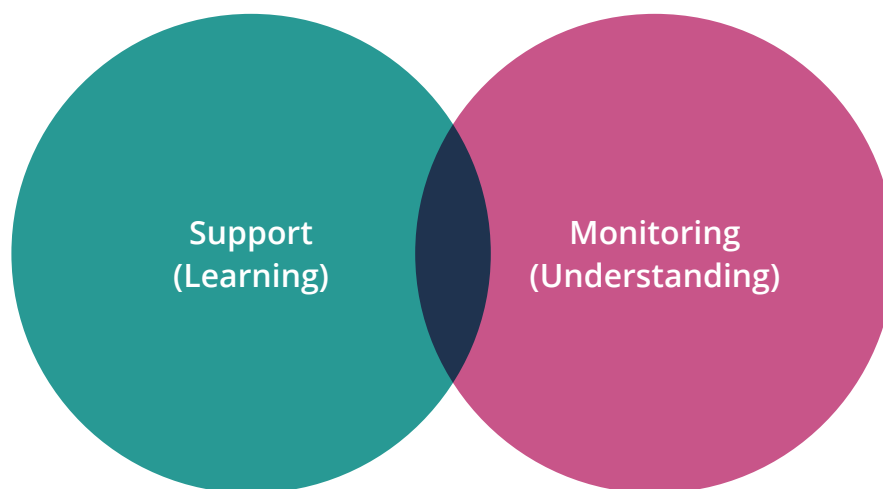
2. What is The Promise Scotland's purpose?

Support and Monitor

The Promise Scotland's purpose is to **support** the change demanded by the Independent Care Review and **monitor** Scotland's progress to keep the promise. It has a commitment to its own obsolescence by 2030 and will always avoid building itself into the 'system'.

To **support** those working to keep the promise, The Promise Scotland will continuously develop specific, systematic **learning** on what works to create change, and share that. This will be directly aligned to the **delivery of Plan 24-30**, led by the **Independent Strategic Advisor**. The change will be tracked via the **Promise Story of Progress**.

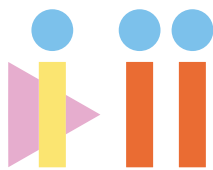
Monitoring is the work to **understand** what change is happening across Scotland, with the aim of always **improving**. This will be rooted in what matters to children and families, and will support the work of **The Oversight Board**, to provide them with the data, information and intelligence needed to report on Scotland's progress.



Taken together, **support** (learning) and **monitoring** (understanding) create a **holistic picture of the progress** Scotland is making locally and nationally towards keeping the promise.

3. How does The Promise Scotland do this?

The Promise Scotland carries out its role in the following ways:



Collaborate

Work alongside those who must deliver the change, by gathering learning, creating collaborative solutions, reflecting on the results and learning from them.



Convene

Bring people together: to learn, join-up, solve problems, broker solutions, and clear pathways.



Challenge

Speak truth to power, locally and nationally, in a way that recognises context and supports improvement. This involves enabling The Oversight Board and the Independent Strategic Advisor to confidently challenge and ensure The Promise Scotland tailors approaches to the support it offers.



Bridge

Support new ways of working by actively demonstrating learning where change has happened; elevating local learning to a national level; and supporting organisations to consider what national change means in their context.



Monitor

Support **The Oversight Board** in its role of holding Scotland to account and being clear about where the system needs to collectively focus its efforts on what matters to children and families.

What will The Promise Scotland work on?

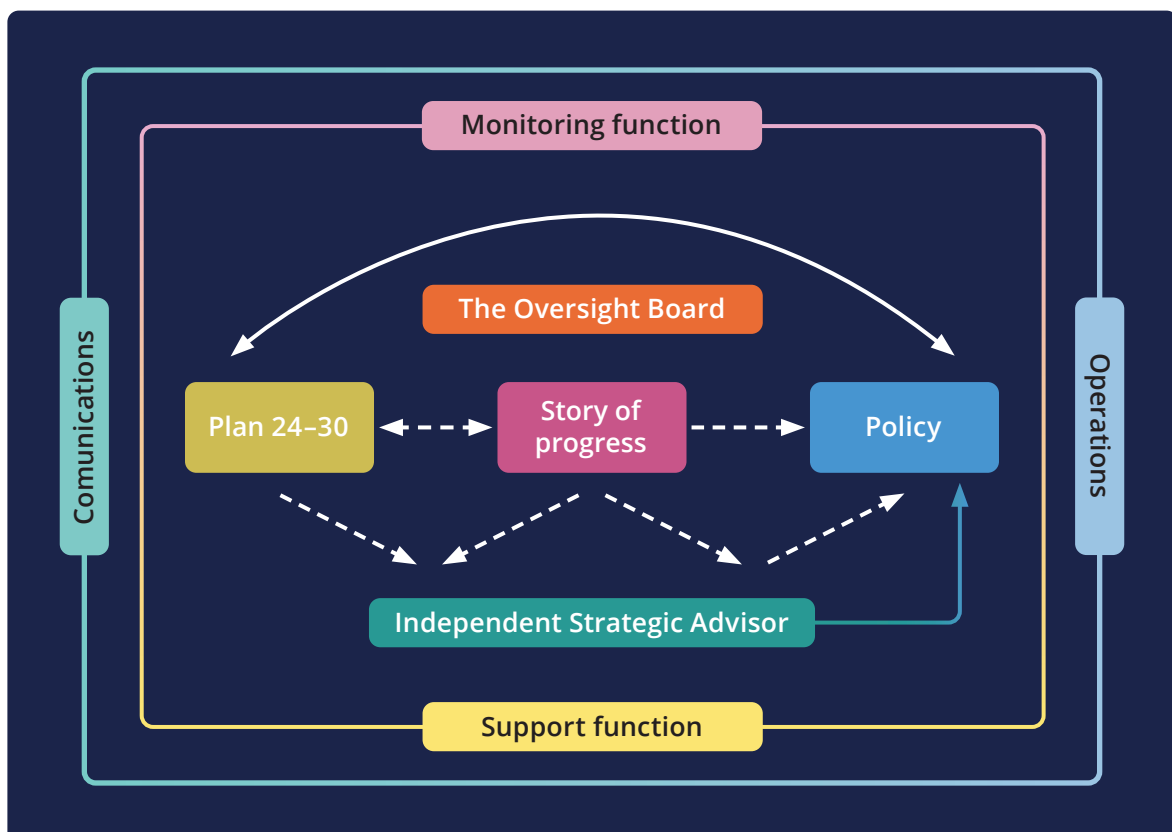
In 2025/2026, The Promise Scotland will deliver across four areas:

1. Plan 24-30
2. The Promise Story of Progress
3. Policy and Parliamentary Engagement
4. Support and Guidance to Oversight Board and Independent Strategic Advisor

These areas will remain the priorities for at least the next 12-18 months, but as Scotland progresses on its journey to keep the promise, The Promise Scotland must adapt and change to ensure its work is always focussed on the right areas. For that reason, the specific actions set out in this strategic work programme cover 2025/2026: in the latter half of 2026 a new work programme will be developed. This will be informed by:

- Active horizon scanning for changes in the operating environment.
- Developing insights from priorities to inform next steps.
- Learning from Promise Story of Progress about the work and pace of change.

The diagram below shows how different priority areas inform each other, and how The Promise Scotland functions around that.



4. Plan 24-30: detailed route map development

Plan 24-30 organises the 80+ actions from the Independent Care Review under the five foundations of the promise, resulting in 25 themes. Each theme has a very clear set of destination statements, setting out where Scotland needs to be by 2030. It also contains a description of where work is already underway to deliver the outcomes required.

Developing detailed route maps will show where Scotland is at the mid-point, and what changes must happen, by when, and by who, for the promise to be kept by 2030.

For confidence that the change will happen on time, it is critical that the content of the route maps comes from the organisations that have to make the changes. Reflecting how urgent and important it is that Plan 24-30 is comprehensive, The Promise Scotland has made supporting organisations to develop the content for route maps a priority for 2025.

Whilst Scotland's destination is static – the promise must be kept by 2030 at the latest – how this happens must be dynamic and adaptable to reflect change as it happens and changes that have not been predicted. This is why Plan 24-30 is hosted on its own website and that the content of the route maps, and the sequencing of actions, are so important.



The Plan 24-30 route maps will:

- Be underpinned by what matters to children and families, and care experienced adults rather than what matters to the 'system'.
- Be developed in collaboration with those leading and delivering the work, promoting collective ownership and accountability.
- Set out the key actions the 'systems' and services are taking now and must take in future.
- Surface the bridges and barriers to progress, including those set out within [meeting in the middle](#).

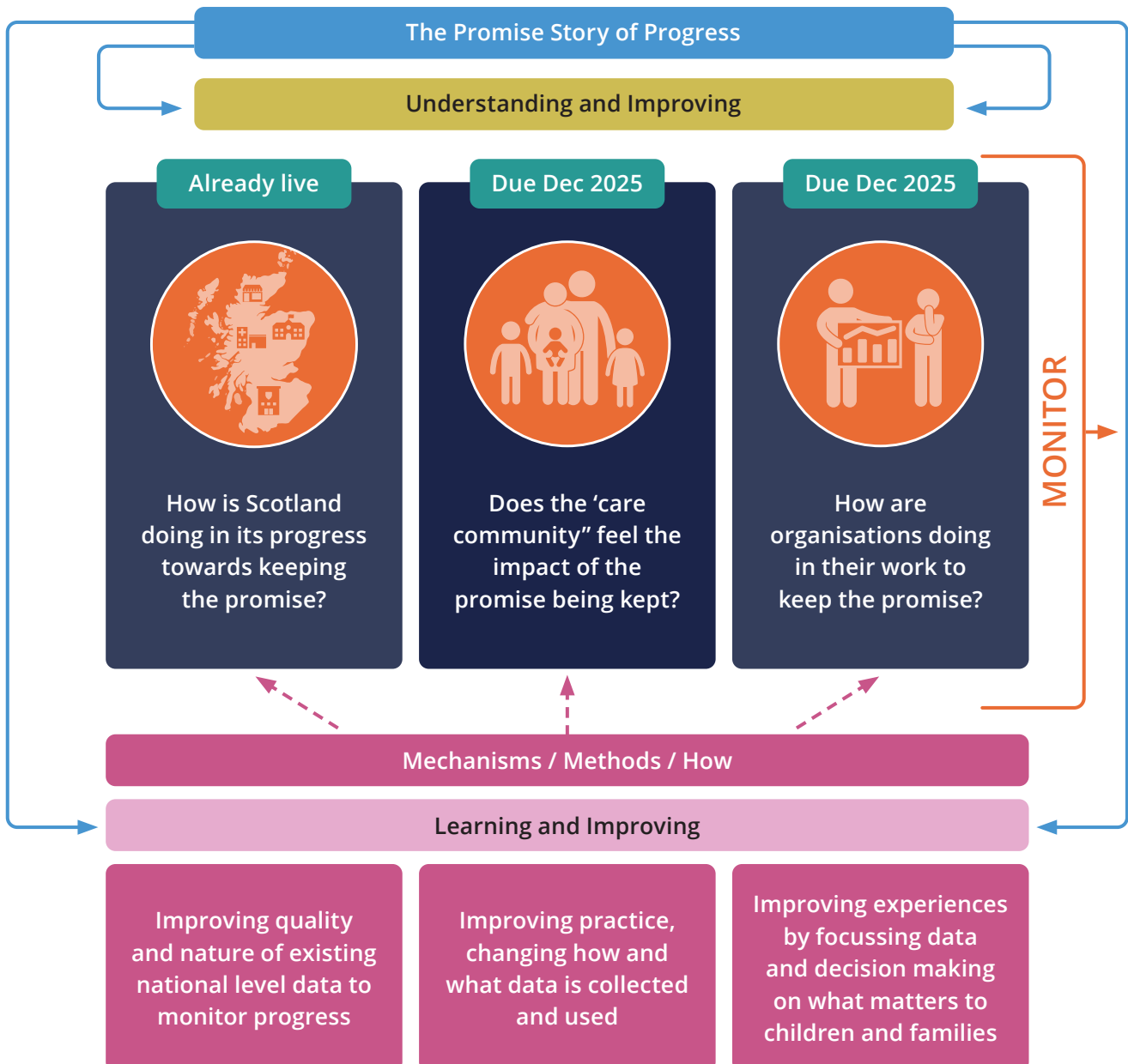
In supporting the route map development, The Promise Scotland will:

- Provide support to the Independent Strategic Advisor in her role to challenge and advocate for the urgent changes needed to keep the promise.
- Identify those responsible and accountable for change and work alongside them to develop route map content.
- Convene groups to collaborate and learn to make sure the development of route maps is an active process that builds on positive change and creates improvement.
- Map the interdependencies across Plan 24-30 so route maps are connected, ensuring support for children and families is joined up across systems.
- Maintain and update the Plan 24-30 website, including route maps, to ensure it reflects planned and unplanned changes across Scotland.



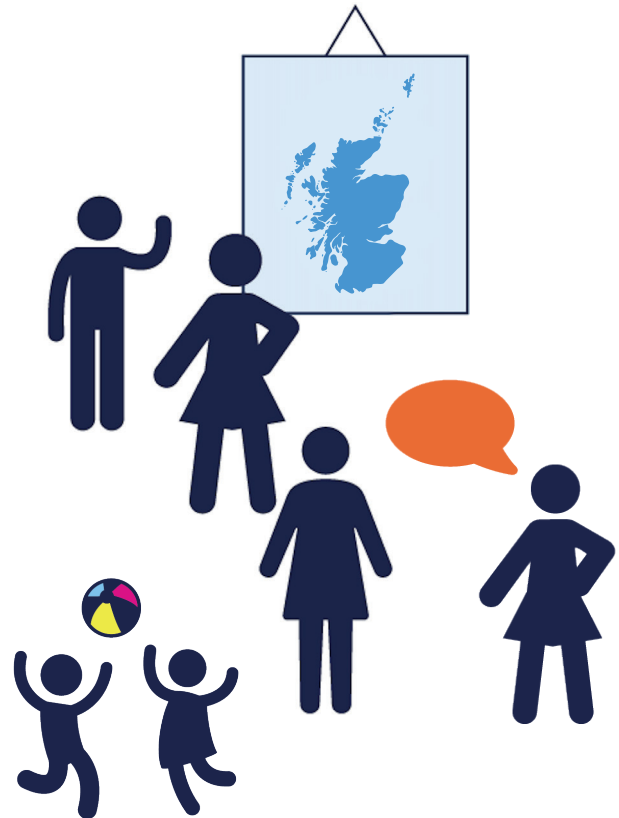
5. The Promise Story of Progress of Progress

To understand progress on all conclusions of the Independent Care Review, there are three questions that need to be answered:



When taken together, the answers to the three questions (featured on the graphic on the previous page) are collectively referred to as **The Promise Story of Progress**.

The first part of The Promise Story of Progress is **The Promise Progress Framework**. Published in December 2024 by COSLA, The Scottish Government and The Promise Scotland, The Promise Progress Framework tackles the question 'How is Scotland doing in its progress towards keeping the promise': it contains a set of outcomes and national indicators which help to understand the progress Scotland is making towards keeping the promise.



In 2025 The Promise Scotland will:

- Continue to **develop the outcomes and national indicators** that are part of the Promise Progress Framework: **'How is Scotland doing in its progress towards keeping the promise?'**
- Work with Scottish Government, COSLA, the care community and partners to develop the methods, and begin to answer the questions: **'Does the 'care community' feel the impact of the promise being kept?'** and **'How are organisations doing in their work to keep the promise?'**

Work to develop the Promise Story of Progress will:

- Be underpinned by the continued development of the Doing Data Differently programme of work, including the Promise Data Map and **Information Sharing project**.
- Form part of the support provided to The Oversight Board and enable their reflections on the work of change.
- Enable visibility of local change and progress.
- Support The Promise Scotland's ability to provide insight into developments and events as they happen throughout the year.

6. Policy and parliamentary engagement

Considerable work was put into securing cross party support in 2017 when the work of the Independent Care Review started. This remained strong when the conclusions were published, and the promise was made in 2020 and Parliament restated its collective commitment in November 2024. With Scottish Parliamentary elections in May 2026, that cross party support is more important than ever.

The Promise Scotland's policy and parliamentary work aims to retain that support, ensuring that effective parliamentary scrutiny takes place and commitment to keeping the promise and to Scotland's care experienced community remains steadfast.

It also supports politicians and decision makers in the development and delivery of policies, legislation and practice to deliver the promise. This involves engaging with government, parliament and other decision-makers on a local and national level, and in 2025/26 will include:

- Ensuring cross party support for the promise remains, through briefings, support for MSPs and informing the development of party manifestos.
- Influencing local and national policy through Plan 24-30 route map development.
- Continued work to support the development of the Promise Bill to deliver legislative, policy and practice change to keep the promise.
- Increased engagement with UK Government on areas of mutual interest and keeping close to the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- Engaging with local political leadership across Scotland, including COSLA, recognising their critical role in keeping the promise.



7. Support to The Oversight Board and Independent Strategic Advisor

The Oversight Board

The Oversight Board is responsible for monitoring, tracking and reporting on Scotland's progress to keep the promise. It reports mainly to the care community and the Scottish Parliament, but the reports are also intended for the workforce and everyone who has some part to play in keeping the promise.

The Oversight Board highlights where progress is being made, where more needs to be done, and where organisations need to do things differently.

The Promise Scotland provides secretariat support for The Oversight Board. This involves governance, administration and communications support, as well as providing the information required to reach a view on progress.

This information comes primarily from:

- The work to develop Plan 24-30 route maps.
- The development of the Promise Story of Progress.



Independent Strategic Advisor

The **Independent Strategic Advisor** advises Scottish Ministers and works alongside the many and varied custodians of the 'care system', and the systems and services that surround it, to make sure the vision set out by the Independent Care Review, in its entirety, is the reality by 2030.

The Promise Scotland supports the Independent Strategic Advisor to:

- Communicate and develop Plan 24-30 and associated work.
- Gather feedback on Plan 24-30 to continuously update and improve the plan.
- Use The Promise Progress Framework to identify areas where work must be accelerated.
- Influence strategically and respond to policy developments.

How the Promise Scotland delivers

For The Promise Scotland to deliver its purpose, it must:

- Be a well-run organisation, meeting statutory requirements and demonstrating exceptional governance.
- Have the processes and systems in place to measure the impact of its work; maintain commitment to obsolescence; and ensure best value use of resources.
- Use its networks of influence to amplify the voices of those in, and working alongside, the care community, keeping a singular focus on delivering the change demanded by the Independent Care Review.

8. Summary

Working to support and monitor, in 2025/26, The Promise Scotland will:

Activity	Output	Impact
Continue to collaborate with all those who need to make change by 2030 to secure commitments to form content for all Plan 24-30 route maps.	By the end of 2025 Plan 24-30 will comprehensively make clear WHO will do WHAT by WHEN with all actions owned, or allocated or in development.	Scotland has a single, multi-agency, cross-sector plan to #KeepThePromise that enables dynamic delivery towards a static destination by 2030.
Work with Scottish Government and COSLA to develop methods to answer the Promise Story of Progress questions on the impact felt by the care community and organisational progress .	By the end of 2025 the methods for these questions are in place, allowing the three questions from the Promise Story of Progress to be looked at together.	Scotland has an agreed way of tracking progress and to ensure it is felt in the lives and experiences of children, families, and the care experienced community
Continue to develop the outcomes and national indicators that are part of the Promise Progress Framework element of the Promise Story of Progress : how is Scotland doing in its progress towards keeping the promise?	The Promise Progress framework reflects the breadth of national level data available and is kept up to date.	Scotland has an agreed way of tracking progress and to ensure it is felt in the lives and experiences of children, families, and the care experienced community.

Activity	Output	Impact
<p>Ensure cross party support for the promise remains, through meetings, briefings, and MSP support.</p>	<p>Parliamentarians are clear on their role in keeping the promise, and use their position to help achieve the changes needed.</p>	<p>Levels of scrutiny and support enable delivery of the static destination of 2030.</p>
<p>Continue work to support the development of an effective Promise Bill that delivers legislative, policy and practice change to keep the promise.</p>	<p>The bill is rooted in what the Independent Care Review heard.</p>	<p>The Promise Bill developed by Scottish Government will make the legislative changes necessary for the promise to be kept.</p>
<p>Increase engagement with UK Government on areas of mutual interest and keeping close to the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.</p>	<p>All reserved policies and legislation impacting on children, young people and care experienced adults are considered in the context of the promise.</p>	<p>The impact of UK wide legislation is understood, and opportunities for learning and alignment are optimised.</p>
<p>Continue to provide high quality support to The Oversight Board and Independent Strategic Advisor so they can fulfil their roles.</p>	<p>All activity to support and monitor enables high quality support.</p>	<p>Scotland is supported, and robustly held to account for the quality and pace of change</p>



#KeepThePromise

The Promise Scotland
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