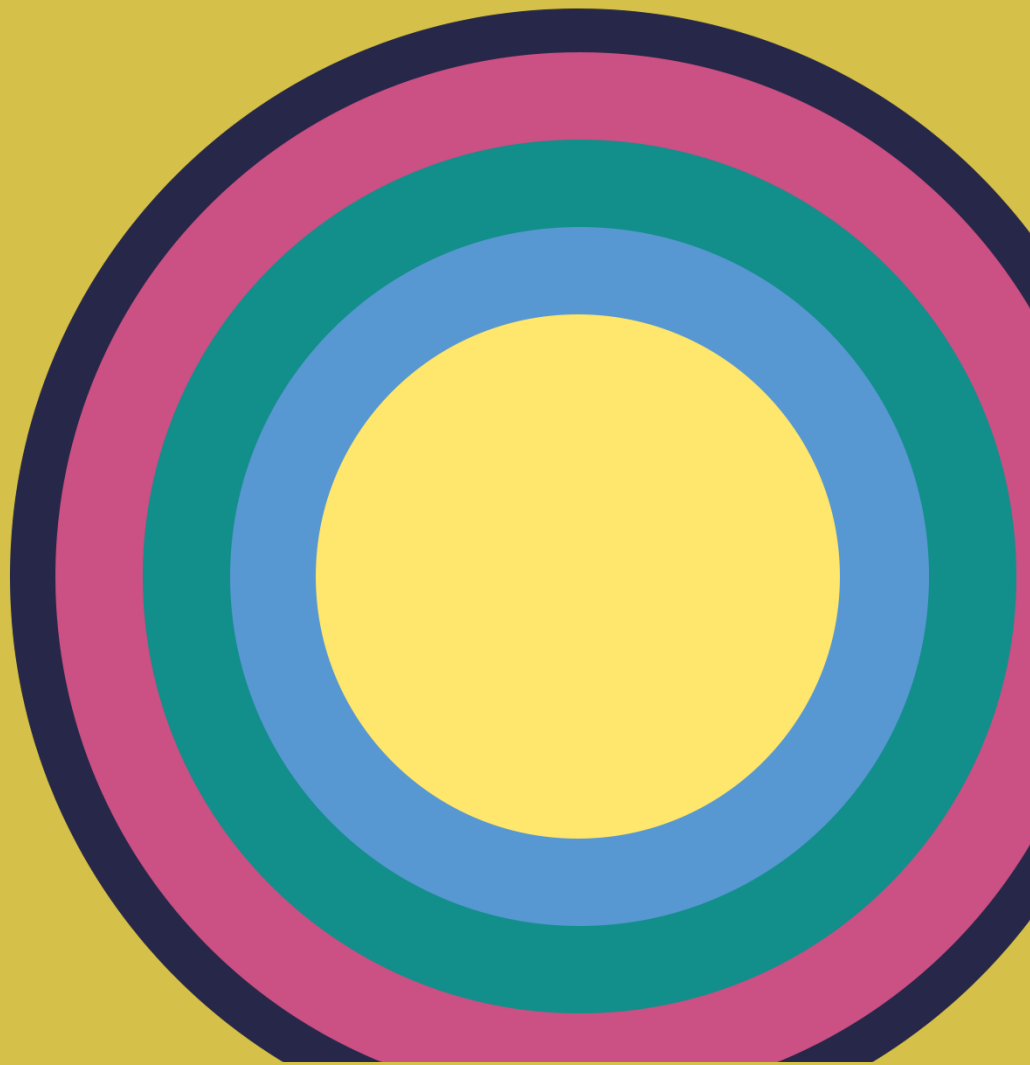


# Focus on The Promise

Strategic Work Programme 2023/24

The Promise Scotland

August 2023



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



# 1. Introduction

The Independent Care Review began work in February 2017 and concluded on 5 February 2020 with the publication of [seven reports](#) based on the voices and experiences of 5,500 children and care experienced adults.

The Scottish Government [pledged to #KeepThePromise with cross party support.](#) Between February 2020 and March 2021, due to COVID-19 restrictions, a small team from the Independent Care Review was incubated within the Scottish Government to set up and start work to #KeepThePromise. On 24 March 2021, The Promise Scotland was established as a non-statutory company, wholly owned by Scottish Ministers. [The Promise Scotland's set up year is described in detail here.](#)

[You can read The Promise Scotland's Annual Review for 2022/23 here.](#)

This **Strategic Work Programme** will run to the conclusion of 2024. It is intentionally short-term focused, as it will run alongside the development of Plan 24-30: work that is being led by Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor on the promise.

The Promise Scotland is organised around four teams, which work closely together to deliver on the organisation's core aims:

- The Insights Team,
- The Support Team,
- The Public Affairs Team,
- The Governance and Operations Team.

## 2. Vision, mission, purpose and values

Scotland's **vision** is that 'the promise' made to its children and families is kept by 2030— that is, that the conclusions of Scotland's Independent Care Review will be implemented in full.

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

The Promise Scotland's **purpose** is to support the change demanded by the Independent Care Review, with a commitment to its own obsolescence by 2030. Because of this, at all times it will avoid building itself into "the system."

The Promise Scotland will embed the following **values** in everything it does, internally and externally:

**Voice** is at the heart of everything The Promise Scotland does. Stories, views and experiences – of care experienced children and adults, and those working alongside them – will be honoured and engaged as part of The Promise Scotland's work.

**Independence** – The Promise Scotland is an independent organisation with a single agenda: to #KeepThePromise by 2030.

**Integrity** – The Promise Scotland is straightforward, honest and transparent— both internally and externally.

**Curiosity** – The Promise Scotland is genuinely curious, looking to understand what is working well and what is not, to overcome barriers to change and to work with others to build solutions.

**Empathy** – The Promise Scotland is empathetic to the people it works alongside.

**Relationships** – The Promise Scotland recognises that, ultimately, building strong, positive and respectful relationships is what matters to children, young people, families and the workforce. This will guide and inform the work of The Promise Scotland.

# 3. What The Promise Scotland does and how it works

The Promise Scotland does not deliver services directly, nor does it have any regulatory or statutory powers. Its role is to:

**Collaborate:** work alongside those who must deliver the change the care community demanded.

**Convene:** bring people together: to learn, join-up, solve problems, broker solutions, or clear pathways. The Promise Scotland only gets involved where it can truly make a difference.

**Challenge:** speak truth to power in a way that recognises context and supports improvement, aligns or redirects. The Promise Scotland challenges poor practice.

**Bridge:** support systems locally and nationally to transition to better ways of working, by identifying learning, highlighting innovative practice and being assertive about what good looks like.

**Monitor:** support the Promise Oversight Board in its role of holding Scotland to account to #KeepThePromise. Being crystal clear about where the system needs to collectively focus its efforts.

Having considered the ever-changing context in which **the promise** must be kept, activity underway across Scotland to deliver Plan 21-24 and what is needed to prepare for Plan 24-30, The Promise Scotland's Strategic Work Programme for 2023/24 will have four inter-related strands:

## Strand One: Focus areas

In order to maximise the added value of The Promise Scotland, the Strategic Work Programme has identified four focus areas. These are areas where progress is inconsistent across Scotland and systemic barriers continue. In working within these thematic areas, the Promise Scotland will identify tangible contributions it can make to support progress.

1. **Keeping families together wherever it is safe to do so:** early help and support for families

2. **Making sure children who cannot live with their family have all they need to thrive:** a good childhood
3. **Moving on:** making the transition into adulthood
4. **Increasing opportunities:** education with a specific focus on ending formal and informal exclusions

## **Strand Two: The Promise in Places**

**Promise in Places** will seek to take a holistic lens on specific places, exploring the potential for piloting whole system change and keeping the promise in its entirety in local places. This will seek to leverage existing knowledge and provide learning across the country.

## **Strand Three: National Projects and Groups**

The Promise Scotland is committed to a number of national projects for 2023/24, as set out in the Scottish Government's **Keeping The Promise Implementation Plan:**

- The development of a **blueprint for the creation and control of information about care experienced people, and for access to it.**
- **A report on how local and national governance arrangements need to change** to deliver a simpler and more effective system of accountability for the care system. This will deliver by June 2024.
- Scoping **a national lifelong advocacy service** for care experienced people and their families. Recommendations will be made to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2023.
- Co-chairing **the Promise Collective**, a forum for better aligning Scottish Government funded national improvement activity in relation to keeping the promise.

## **Strand Four: Strategic support and guidance**

The final programme of work recognises the importance of supporting the Board of Directors of The Promise Scotland, The Promise Oversight Board and the Independent Strategic Advisor to fulfil their roles.

This includes:

- Providing the Secretariat for the Promise Oversight Board, including provision of information and intelligence to support their role in holding Scotland to account and the publication of their annual reports. This will include support to the new Chair(s).
- Providing a wide range of support to the Independent Strategic Advisor as she leads the work to develop Plan 24-30
- Providing support for the Board of Directors of The Promise Scotland, which is responsible for the efficient and effective running of the organisation.

## 4. How does the Promise Scotland work?

The Promise Scotland needs to focus resources and energy in the areas where it can make the biggest difference to system change most quickly. The Promise Scotland cannot be closely involved in all of the very extensive work being done across Scotland. So it will ask the following questions to determine where there is the greatest requirement and / or likelihood of the organisation making the biggest difference:

1. Is activity already underway - or in plan - to deliver the required change?
2. Is there a need for more / different activity to deliver the required change, and if so, is the Promise Scotland best placed to do it?
3. What can only the Promise Scotland do that will support the required change?
4. Who does The Promise Scotland need to work and / or broker with to make the required change happen?
5. When does The Promise Scotland need to get involved in change and why and - as importantly - when does it need to step out?







**#KeepThePromise**

**The Promise Scotland**  
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