

The Promise Oversight Board

Report TWO June 2023





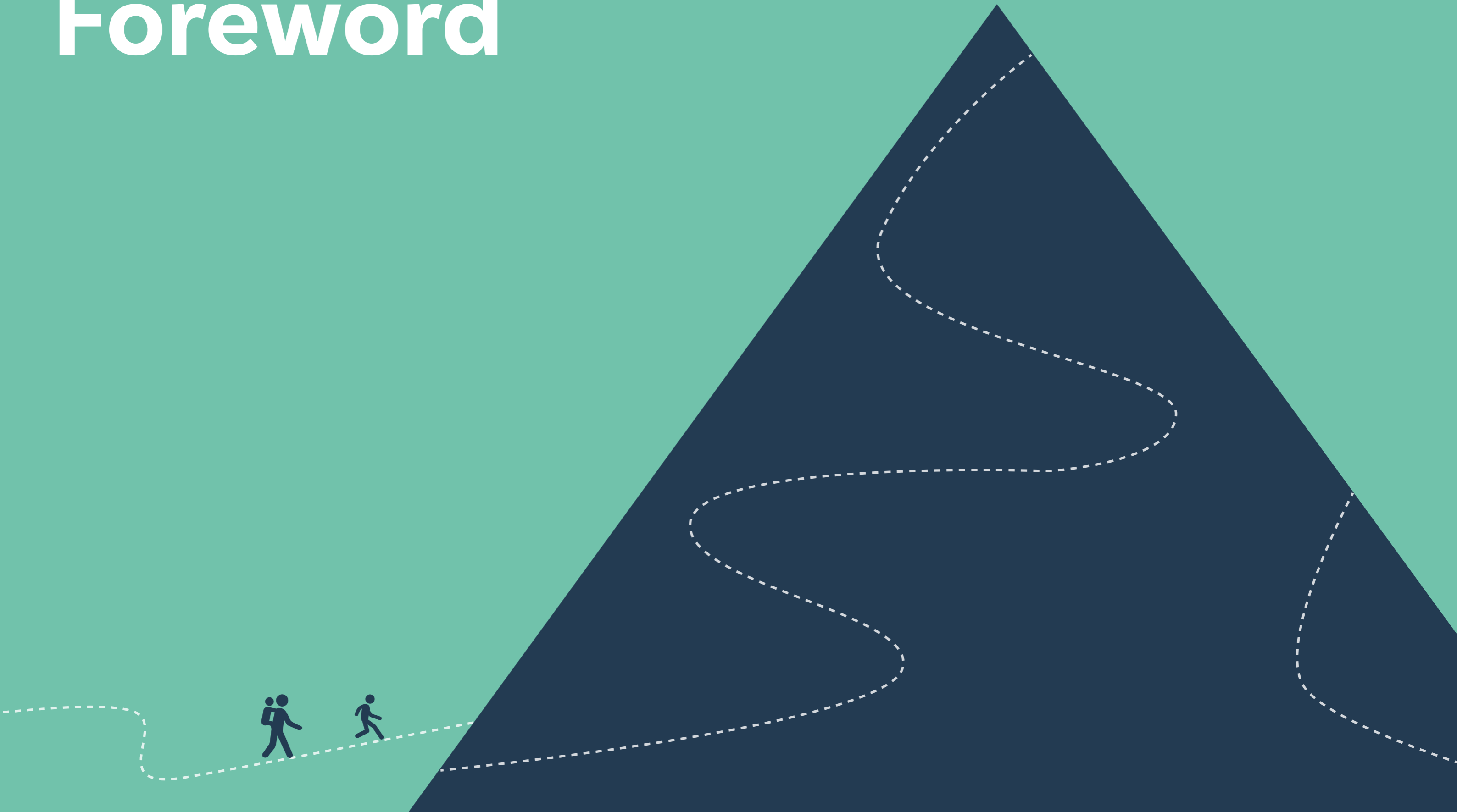
**We grow up loved,
safe, and respected
so that we realise
our full potential.**

Scotland's ambition for
children and young people.

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Foreword



Foreword

More than three years have now passed since the promise was made. The promise that, by 2030, all of Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected.

Keeping the promise is non-negotiable.

Lives have been disrupted by the Covid pandemic and the cost of living crisis has pushed more children, young people and families into poverty. But this cannot be an excuse for failing to #KeepThePromise. Change has become even more important. We know that change is happening, and that progress is being made, with the commitment to #KeepThePromise embedded in many organisations. But there needs to be much faster progress. While some issues are complex and will take time to resolve, there are also simple changes that can be made quickly.

2030 remains the date by which the promise must be kept. If everyone plays their part over the next seven years, this is still achievable.

Sadly, due to the worsening circumstances for so many and the current pace of change, the Promise Oversight Board does not believe that delivering the original aims of Plan 21-24 is realistic by next year.

Change is still being delivered at grassroots level, in local authorities and across all sectors. Sometimes, this change is small; but this can be just as important as big change. It provides hope, and being the first to act can encourage others to follow suit.

To everyone who is working hard and keeping the promise, we express our thanks and our understanding that it is not always easy.

Until all parts of the 'care system' are moving together to #KeepThePromise, some will be unduly burdened.

Scotland is not yet there. However, the progress we speak of in this report is in large part due to the efforts of the paid and unpaid workforce. Your work – whatever role you are in – is appreciated and the impact evident in the lives of those you support.

For the care community in particular, the slow pace of progress causes hurt and anger. To any child or young person reading this report, we want to make something very clear: the responsibility for change doesn't fall to you – it is adults in positions of authority who must deliver faster progress to ensure that Scotland keeps the promise.

The Promise Oversight Board

Our call to action

We want this report to act as a catalyst and inspire the people and organisations working to #KeepThePromise to tell their story of change. We want you to demonstrate to others that change is possible, and that change is happening. Be generous with your learning so that change happens everywhere through everyone, every day.

Every change counts, no matter how big or small.

Scotland cannot afford to wait; our children and young people are relying on us.

Over the next year we expect to see:

- **Explicit leadership and drive from the Scottish Government and scrutiny bodies to articulate a clear set of principles, outcomes and milestones that will guarantee the promise.**
- **A strategic investment plan to deliver the required change.**

Introduction



Introduction

This is the second report from the *Promise Oversight Board* on progress that Scotland is making to #KeepThePromise. We report to the care community and the Scottish Parliament, but this report is intended to be read by everyone who has some part to play in keeping the promise and all those in Scotland who want to monitor the progress being made.

The promise is that Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected. To keep it by the 2030 deadline, Scotland must bring about the change demanded by the *Independent Care Review*, which published its findings in a series of reports in 2020. In this report, we reflect on the 'next steps' identified last year in our *Report ONE*, and *Plan 21-24*, which was the first of three plans that set out how Scotland can #KeepThePromise. More broadly, we are considering whether Scotland is on track in terms of the pace of change and the quality of the changes being made, and – critically – whether this change is being felt by children and families.

The Promise Oversight Board and *The Promise Scotland* are two separate things: the Promise Oversight Board exists to assess whether Scotland is keeping the promise, while The Promise Scotland exists to support people and organisations as they work to keep it. The *members of our board* bring both expertise and lived experience of care to the role. We encourage change to happen by highlighting both what is and is not working. Organisations with responsibility for Scotland's 'care system' can make these changes real, and national and local services can also put change into practice.

In both cases, we will hold them to account on behalf of children and families.

Throughout this report, we only use 'system' terms when necessary and we use single quotation marks to identify these.

Why change is still needed

The urgent case for change was made in the findings of the *Independent Care Review*. There are limitations to what can be evidenced in data, and some statistics are unreliable or out-of-date, but this infographic helps to demonstrate why change is still needed. When the promise is kept, Scotland's ambition for children and young people will be fulfilled: they will grow up loved, safe, and respected so that they realise their full potential.

Behind every one of these statistics there are real children and young people. It does not have to be like this.



1 Source: *Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research* - <https://www.celcis.org/news/news-pages/new-information-published-infants-born-care-scotland>
2 Source: *Scottish Government* - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/keeping-promise-implementation-plan-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessment/>
3 Source: *Scottish Government* - <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2022/07/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/documents/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/govscot%3Adocument/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21.pdf>
4 Source: *Scottish Prison Service* - <http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-7196.aspx>
5 Source: *Independent Care Review* - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Follow-the-money.pdf>
6 Source: *Independent Care Review* - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Follow-the-money.pdf>

Isla's story



Isla's story

The *Independent Care Review* created 12 *composite stories*. That means the stories are not about real people, but have been written to reflect the real experiences the review heard. We thank every single person who selflessly shared their experiences.

One of these stories is about Isla, who was 10 years old when the Independent Care Review concluded and will be 20 when the promise is kept. Throughout this report, you will read about the life Isla must have as a result of the changes demanded by the Independent Care Review. By 2030, will she have continued to move from family to family and from school to school? Or will she enjoy her teenage years being loved, safe and respected so that she realises her full potential?

So many of the changes Isla needs now – to make sure she is happy and can thrive, make close friends, and have a bright future – can happen right now, today. Isla can grow up loved, safe, and respected and realise her full potential. We will continue to champion Isla's corner and demand change for all children and young people in and around Scotland's 'care system'.

Isla's story is but one story. The care community is made up of a diverse group of children, young people and adults, each of whom have a different set of circumstances in their lives. Keeping the promise will ensure they all receive the support they need at the time they need it, whatever their situation.



Isla moved in with a new family when she was only four. She moved back in with her parents not long after and things were much better when she went home. Then her parents separated when she was six. Her mum was unwell and struggled.



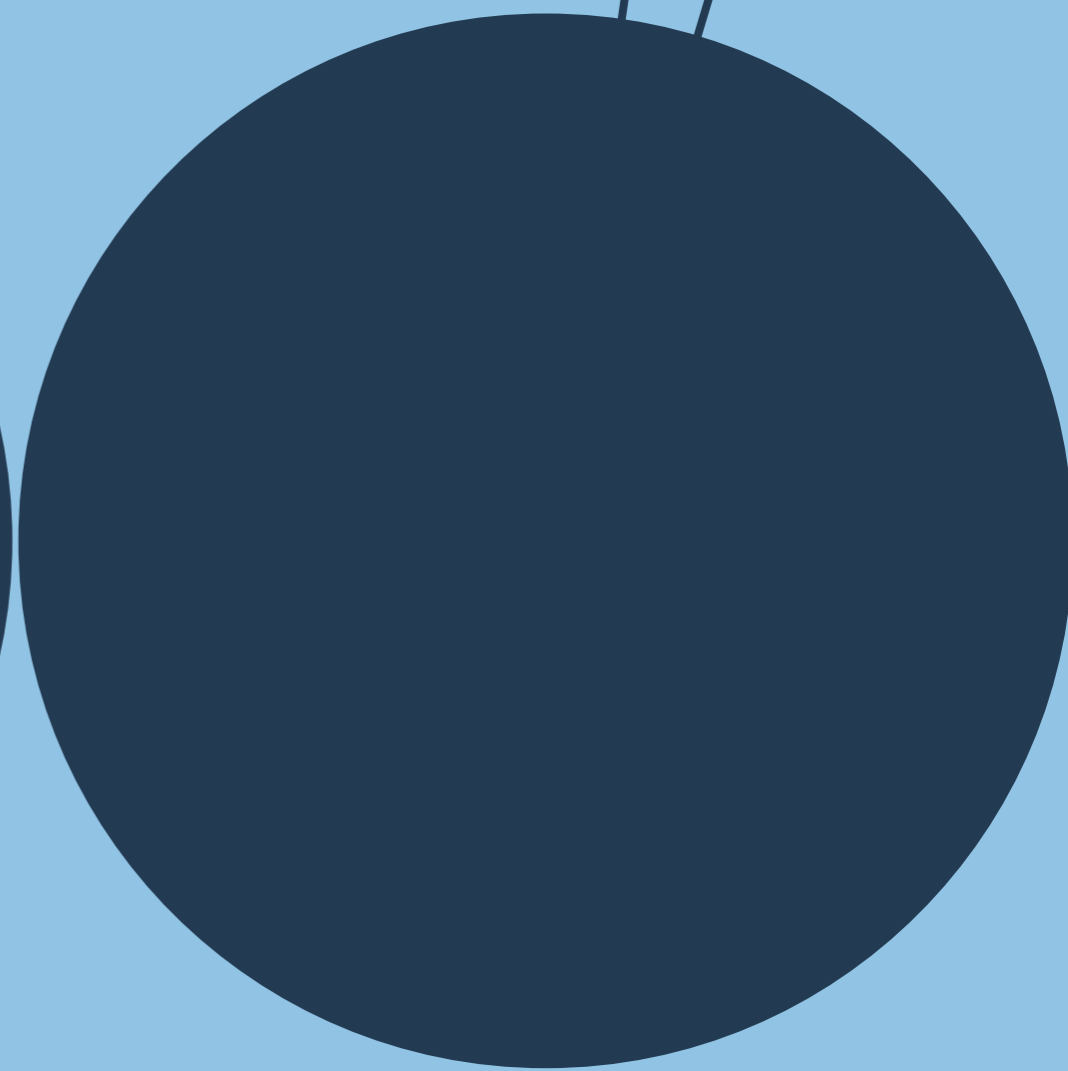
Isla went to live with another new family – she liked it there, but she couldn't stay. She has since lived with a further four new families.

Isla thinks the hardest bit is having to change schools – she has left a lot of friends behind, and no one seems to remember to keep in touch. Her favourite time of day is lunchtime – the dinner ladies are always really nice to her. Isla finds it really difficult to make friends and trust people. Her current classmates know she is in care and she wishes they didn't. Isla's social worker visits every so often. Isla really likes her; she is fun and kind. Isla wishes she could see her more.

Isla has already faced too much trauma for someone so young. This does not need to be the case.



Context



Context

The *Independent Care Review's* unique, participatory approach enabled it to set out an ambitious programme of change as defined by Scotland's care community, whilst galvanising a wide range of organisations responsible for making these changes.

When the review concluded on 5 February 2020, this presented a very different set of circumstances from the traditional 'top-down' approach usually seen at the conclusion of reviews and inquiries. It provided an optimistic starting point for implementation, with enthused organisations ready and committed to change.

Fifty days later, Scotland went into lockdown. But while meetings switched to online, the work continued to establish the priorities for the coming years of change and to plan their delivery.

Covid's impact was not equally distributed across the population. The pandemic meant that the day-to-day circumstances for many of Scotland's children and families in and around the 'care system' got significantly worse. Social workers stopped visiting, schools disappeared as a place of safety for many, relationships were broken, and 'contact' arrangements with families stopped. Those with the least suffered the most, and in all the ways they could least afford to. Lower income households, families already feeling the financial strain, and marginalised groups and communities were most severely impacted by the pandemic. They are also most closely correlated with experience of the 'care system'.

The cost of living crisis the UK has experienced since late 2021 has further exacerbated the existing issues. As with Covid, it has disproportionately affected many groups and communities most closely associated with experiences of care. The challenge of ensuring that children stay with their families where they are safe and feel loved – and ensuring that families are given support to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties that get in the way – is made harder by rising numbers of families living in poverty.

In this context, some headline indicators are looking positive. The total number of children "looked after" decreased by 5% in 2022, compared to 2021. This is the lowest number of children in Scotland's 'care system' since 2005, with the vast majority living with families. **Scotland is clearly making progress**, although there is still not enough known about the lives behind the numbers, nor about whether families are being given the right support at the right time.

Public funding is under increased pressure, with the Accounts Commission warning that "*councils have never faced such a challenging situation*". In 2021/22, revenue funding from the Scottish Government increased by 5.2 per cent in real terms compared to 2020/21 - according to the Accounts Commission - but this only brings funding back to a level similar to 2015/16, which was the same year the Independent Care Review was announced. Councils must provide statutory services; however there is confusion about what that means. Social work, education and employability services are being impacted at a time when they are needed the most. Added to that, cuts to important services such as libraries and swimming pools exacerbate inequalities. Healthcare services also remain under extreme pressure in the wake of Covid-19, with a well-documented backlog of care. *The Auditor General has warned* that financial challenges could limit investment in the NHS. We warned in *Report ONE (p31)* that the lack of mental health provision for children and young people and the lengthy waiting lists are having a profound impact.

Housing shortages have created a housing crisis in Scotland. The rate of social housing construction has fallen and there are more than *9,000 children in Scotland without somewhere to call home*. Care experienced people are twice as likely to experience homelessness. This is unacceptable and support needs to be consistently in place across Scotland.

Commitment to #KeepThePromise remains high. Despite recent political changes, First Minister Humza Yousaf has said the government is determined that by 2030 Scotland will #KeepThePromise. Commitment to keeping the promise has been sustained across the Scottish Parliament, by all political parties, and beyond. There is evidence of focus, aspiration and change, although not at the scale and pace that means it is always felt by children, young people and families. Despite this, there remain perceptions that keeping the promise is the responsibility of children's services and social work; Scotland must move beyond this and recognise that the holistic change needed requires a holistic response.

The workforce strives to #KeepThePromise.

We celebrate and thank members of the paid and unpaid workforce who are determined to deliver change. We know many are exhausted; we know that Scotland has fewer foster carers than it needs; and there is a recruitment and retention crisis in care, social work and education. We understand that budgets are tighter than ever, and that when there is less money to go round it means people and resources are stretched thinner than ever.

This context is important as we ask if Scotland is on track to #KeepThePromise for children like Isla.

Is Scotland on track to #KeepThePromise?

Plan 21-24 was published on 31 March 2021. There are five priority areas that make up this plan. These focus on making significant changes to the lives of care experienced children, families, and young people across Scotland.



Planning

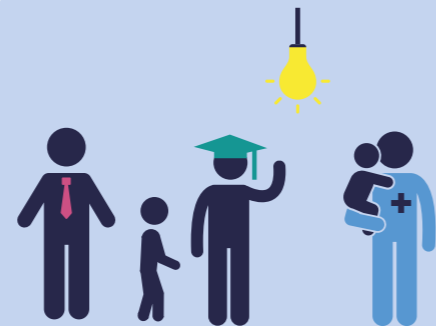
Scotland needs to plan for services that #KeepThePromise, and make sure these have the money they need. And it needs to make sure these exist everywhere: not just in certain parts of our country.



Building capacity



A lot needs to happen to build a system of care that puts children and families at the centre. Right now, Scotland must establish its foundations.



Supporting the workforce

Children experience the 'care system' through people – and those people need better support.

A good childhood



All children in Scotland's 'care system' will have a good, loving childhood. They will feel loved. They will have their needs met. And they will have their rights upheld.



Whole family support

To realise a child's rights, you have to support their family – whether it is one they are born into or not. And all families need support at different times.

Sadly, due to the worsening circumstances for so many and the current pace of change, the Promise Oversight Board does not believe that delivering the original aims of Plan 21-24 is realistic within its given timeframe.

However, 2030 remains the date by which the promise must be kept and if everyone plays their part over the next seven years, this is still achievable.

Scotland must not tolerate a lack of improvement in the lives of children like Isla and their families. The Independent Care Review set out clearly what needs to be done, and the rationale for those changes. While there are excellent individual examples and collaborations that are achieving change, there is still nowhere that collects who needs to do what, by when, across the 'system'. We know it can be done and we are confident the promise can be kept.

We welcome the opportunity presented by the appointment of the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise as well as Fiona Duncan's role as Independent Strategic Adviser. Scotland does not yet have a single route-map to 2030 in place. There continues to be no shared set of outcomes and indicators across a timeline that will drive the necessary collaboration. There is also no comprehensive investment strategy in place. These things are important to enable us to report with confidence about pace and performance.

We expect to see explicit leadership and drive from the Scottish Government and scrutiny bodies to articulate a clear set of principles, outcomes and milestones that will guarantee the promise is kept so that Scotland's care experienced young people's life chances are not defined by the fact they have been in care. We expect to see a strategic investment plan to deliver the required change. This does not have to mean additional resources when public finances are fragile; it means making best use of the resources that already exist by focusing on outcomes for children and families.

**Priority
areas:
change is
possible**



Priority areas: change is possible

We have seen that change is possible. In this section we highlight three priority areas for Report TWO where the green shoots of change are emerging, where further change is needed and why it matters.

- **Education.**
- **Brothers and sisters.**
- **Homelessness.**

Positive change is happening in all three areas somewhere in Scotland. If you are a practitioner or an influencer, think about what you can do to make change a reality for children and young people in your care - then act.

If you are a child or young person, do not give up hope. Things are changing.

Report ONE included other areas of change and updates on these are summarised in [appendix one](#).

Education

'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.'

The promise, p71

Why change matters

For care experienced young people, schools are about much more than just education outcomes. They are critical to building relationships, friendships and aspirations. They can also provide day-to-day continuity and a safe and predictable environment and be a constant factor in the lives of care experienced children. They can provide a sense of normality and – if uninterrupted – provide a chance for them to progress and realise their potential.

Plan 21-24 made clear that all care experienced children and young people must have a range of individual in-school relationships that they can trust and rely on – with school staff being trauma-informed and using nurture practices, and school moves avoided.

For Isla, the stigma of being care experienced got in the way of her enjoyment of school with each school move and has undermined her confidence when it comes to making friends and trusting people. The evidence shows us the negative impact this has on Isla's school experience and beyond. Isla's life chances have already been affected at her young age by four family moves and four school moves.

By keeping the promise, Scotland can ensure that care experienced pupils like Isla thrive, they achieve better educational outcomes and are more likely to progress their education beyond school, find good jobs, and lead fulfilling lives.

Plan 21-24 made clear that all care experienced children and young people must have a range of individual in-school relationships that they can trust and rely on.

Is this commitment being fulfilled?

There are large gaps in educational outcomes when comparing all children with 'looked after' children. It is important to recognise that the published data is not representative of all care experienced young people. By excluding those previously 'looked after,' more than 40% of care experienced young people are missing from the data. This risks losing sight of care experienced children like Isla who can fall through the net due to several school moves.

However, using the data Scotland does have, we know that:

- Care experienced young people are far less likely to leave school with the minimum level expected for an apprenticeship of one or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or higher (**71% v 96% in 2020/21**).
- They are considerably less likely to attain at the higher levels where the gaps widens – **38% of school leavers 'looked after' within the last year left with one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better** in comparison to 88 per cent of all school leavers.
- They are also less likely to go on to a 'positive initial destination'⁷.
 - **86% of young people 'looked after' within the last year went on to a positive destination after leaving school in 2020/21**, compared with 95% of all school leavers.
 - This drops to 67% for those progressing to college, university or employment in sharp contrast to 91% for all school leavers.
- While data gaps exist, crucially, the exclusion rate for care experienced pupils remains stubbornly higher than that for all pupils and the official statistics do not capture the full picture. Persistent absence from education is a major challenge post-pandemic for all young people. Reduced and alternative timetables risk becoming another form of exclusion for care experienced young people.

Positive examples of practical change

Implementation of measures to tackle poverty

- We welcome and acknowledge the changes that have been made possible through the Strategic Equity Fund, the **Pupil Equity Funding** and the **Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund** which are directed to support the outcomes of the **Scottish Attainment Challenge**. These funds are being targeted to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap and improve the educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people. However, we recognise the challenges of funding cuts in this fiscal year, which will **inevitably impact statutory services and support**.
- Providing grants and digital equipment for care experienced children.

Health and wellbeing initiatives

- Provision of school-based counsellors and therapists.

Providing practical support for improved engagement and educational outcomes

- We acknowledge the positive difference that the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) has made and its support of all care experienced young people. Changes have been made to the **care experienced student bursary** to focus more on engagement, rather than being linked to a 100% attendance requirement. The needs-based approach is welcome. Awareness of bursaries must be raised and students must be supported in the application process.

- The **virtual school model** is expanding across Scotland. This involves a virtual school head teacher who is a senior member of education staff in a local authority, but not in a physical school building. Their responsibilities focus on improving the educational experiences and outcomes of care experienced children and young people. Many areas now have a designated care experience lead and collaboration takes place across the network to share good practice.
- There are also examples of good practice such as tutoring programmes for pupils.
- Relationships make a difference to attendance, engagement and educational outcomes. Schools, local authorities and the Scottish Government must provide whatever assistance is needed for each and every child. These relationships could be with a mentor, youth worker, teacher, support assistant etc.

Enabling positive and sustainable destinations for school leavers by providing:

- Study sessions for care experienced students in higher education from the point of application.
- Peer support and a way to share views.
- A 'named person' for each care experienced student.

⁷ It is important to note the definition of 'positive initial destinations' and the differences in the more aspirational definitions of college, employment or university.

What else needs to happen?

Define care experienced in legislation

We recognise that 'care experienced' is not defined in statute and expect this to be rectified in the Scottish Government's forthcoming The Promise Bill. It is important for all types of care experience to be recognised and to understand what it means for the individual person and their family so their experiences are not discounted. Data is available in the *education information system (SEEMIS)*, so we request that the Scottish Government includes a more complete definition in its *Scottish Exchange of Data (ScotXed)* publications.

School improvement plans outline the promise commitments

- All local authorities must ensure that education improvement plans make specific reference to raising the attendance, attainment and health and wellbeing of care experienced children and young people. Schools offer excellent support and must publish their commitments to the promise in their individual school improvement plans.
- Care experienced children and young people's education plans should be aspirational. They should be regularly reviewed to ensure learners are provided with timely and appropriate support to fully participate in extra-curricular activities and achieve their academic potential. This will ensure equality and equity of provision for care experienced learners.
- Continuity and stability are critical, and all local authorities and schools must maintain school places. Moves must be a last resort, must have robust transition planning to ensure continuity, and must never be driven by budget constraints.

Improve post-school destinations

- We recognise that the levels of lifelong support are inconsistent across the country. Awareness of the practical and financial support available would greatly help care experienced young people to sustain positive post-school destinations.
- We welcome the reform of Scotland's education system in placing the learner at the centre. We encourage the broadening of awards and more bespoke pathways for young people. All colleges and employers need to be more aware of the support that might be required for those with a disrupted school experience to build on good practice. There needs to be a greater focus on the more sustainable destinations of employment, further education and higher education, and for these to be contrasted with the less sustainable and their negatives.

Ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities and improved partnership working

- Locally, some areas are reporting challenges undertaking multi-agency work, as a consequence of the misperception that keeping the promise is mainly a 'social work' role. Everyone has a responsibility to work together and create a positive childhood for children like Isla; this must not fall on one agency or profession.
- Schools must work alongside the broader workforce and carers to support them to understand their responsibilities, and value and engage with the educational progress of the children in their care.
- Data sharing and collaborative working must be made simpler and more actively encouraged.

Ensure actions taken to deliver the target of no more exclusions are genuinely in the child/young person's best interest

- The Independent Care Review conclusions made clear that the formal and informal exclusion of children must end. Exclusion could mirror and also trigger feelings of exclusion that children like Isla may already have: exclusion from family, friends, familiar routine, from normative childhood experiences.
- Schools must be given the necessary support to end or find alternatives to exclusions.
- There must be more data transparency on informal exclusions, as well as the use of limited timetables and attendance data specifically for care experienced young people. In particular, reduced timetables must be reviewed regularly and must not become another form of exclusion. Care experienced young people must be supported in attending and attaining all subjects, at all levels.

Reliable implementation of good practice at scale

Scotland needs to move from pockets of good practice to a place where every school in every local authority is implementing all the key changes needed to keep this commitment. We recognise that the solutions won't be 'one size fits all'; what matters is evidence that each understands what it needs to do in its own context and has credible plans in place to deliver this.

Formal and informal exclusion must end. Care experienced young people must be supported in attending and attaining all subjects, at all levels.

Brothers and sisters

“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.”

The promise, p19

Why change matters

Some children told the Independent Care Review that being taken into care and growing up in the ‘care system’ were among the most traumatising experiences they had experienced, exacerbated by being separated from their brothers and sisters. The pain of that separation can be profound, and can have lifelong consequences.

Living with siblings can enhance feelings of wellbeing throughout childhood and into adulthood. Where brothers and sisters cannot stay together, children need to have their questions about this answered in an age-appropriate way. While every situation is unique, nurturing relationships between brothers and sisters can provide them with emotional support, continuity and familiarity.

For Isla, if she is separated from her brothers and sisters, this will cause her further trauma. There will also be constant painful reminders of this at school and in her community.

When the promise is kept, children like Isla will stay with their brothers and sisters where it is safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there as long as needed.

Is this commitment being fulfilled?

Councils are the implementing authorities for care and protection measures, and for the delivery of the legal entitlements afforded to brothers and sisters. The *Children (Scotland) Act 2020* placed a duty on local authorities that where children were ‘looked after’ they had to “promote personal relations and direct contact” between a child and their brothers and sisters or those in a “sibling like” relationship.

Many local authorities are currently unable to provide an accurate picture of whether brothers and sisters are living together, or why they were separated if they are not living together. This lack of data is heightened when applying a broad definition of ‘sibling’ that includes half-siblings, adult siblings, those with different surnames, and those with sibling-like relationships (such as foster brothers and sisters).

One study which analysed data from the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) found that only one in five children included in the research sample who were looked after away from home via children’s hearings were placed with their brothers and sisters.

The *Staying Together and Connected* National Implementation Group (STAC, chaired by the Scottish Government and CELCIS) is due to make recommendations on next steps to support implementation and publish their final report in Summer 2023. The group is also leading work to improve data collation and monitoring of implementation of this work, which is currently running to a different timescale than Plan 21-24.

Critical to delivering this commitment is the availability of foster care places which enable siblings to stay together. The primary source of data on foster care and adoption in Scotland comes from The Care Inspectorate’s *annual statistical bulletin*. It outlines data about adoption and fostering services in Scotland, based on information collected from service providers in their annual returns.

- There were no new fostering services registered in 2021 and the total number of fostering households across existing services decreased.
- The number of foster carers approved has been decreasing since 2017.
- The number of children coming into foster care exceeds the number of new foster care households in 91% of local authority services.
- Most services report recruitment challenges with foster carers, with a higher figure reporting specific challenges with recruiting households able to foster family groups.

While there is a lack of evidence to explain the cause of this decline, the current context (the cost of living, pandemic impact, increased policy and practice demands) may worsen this situation.

Despite this, it is heartening that the number of family groups separated in foster care (25%) has not worsened since 2017. Given overall decreasing capacity, family group separations could have increased. It is not possible to pinpoint why separations have stayed stable, but one possibility is that the increased attention and effort in keeping brothers and sisters together has helped prevent this situation from worsening, despite the unprecedented external pressures.

Positive examples of practical change

Ensuring those making the decisions to understand why keeping siblings together matters and what their role is in enabling it

- Local authorities have introduced staff training on legislative changes and are developing greater understanding of what is important to children about living with and spending time with their brothers and sisters. This follows guidance published in July 2021 by the *Staying Together and Connected National Implementation Group*, co-chaired by the Scottish Government and the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS), which states that where it is safe and in their interests, brothers and sisters should live together, and where they are not living together adults should work hard to build and maintain connections. The measurement must always be "would this be good enough/ acceptable for the children in my life?"

Improving leaderships oversight of decision-making

- Several local areas have agreed to provide scrutiny of any arrangements that result in brothers and sisters living apart. One local authority committed to this in response to a policy co-designed with young people who have experience of care.

Increasing the availability of 'placements' which keep siblings together or close to each other

- Local drives to recruit more foster carers and adoptive parents who are able to look after larger sibling groups.
- Increasing availability of 'placements' within local areas so children who have been separated can live closer together.

- Work to support families to stay together and increase the number of children who can be looked after safely at home or with kinship carers.

Providing support to enable those living apart to remain connected

- Collaborating with families to develop flexible spaces that enable families who are separated to spend time together, with spaces that are friendly and welcoming and don't feed into the stigma and stereotype of being care experienced.
- Developing programmes that support children and young people to keep in touch with people that matter to them and spend time together.
- An article in the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, highlighted the work done by residential care workers to enable brother and sister contact and provide support in "delicate circumstances".
- The *Promise Partnership*⁸ has provided support to eight collaboratives to understand how Scotland is delivering on the promise; that where safe to do so, brothers and sisters should live together. This includes seeing how resources can be used to support connections between brothers and sisters who do not currently live together.
- Several areas are exploring how they can strengthen the support provided to current and potential kinship carers.

What else needs to happen?

Routine collection and reporting of relevant data

There is an urgent need to resolve the routine collection and reporting of data to better understand progress towards delivering this commitment and where improvement is and isn't happening.

Reliable provision of advocacy services

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 also built in the requirement that "*all children concerned in relevant proceedings have access to appropriate child advocacy services*". The pain of separation is a complicated thing for a child to voice, they must have a range of ways to communicate their views. Every local authority needs to demonstrate that it is meeting this requirement.

An agreement on foster care payments and allowances

The lack of an agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA around a national decision on fostering fees and allowances is thwarting progress.

Reliable implementation of good practice at scale

Just as with educational change, every local authority must implement all the key changes in its own area needed to deliver this commitment.

The pain of separation is a complicated thing for a child to voice; they must have a range of ways to communicate their views.

⁸ The Promise Partnership is separate to both the Promise Oversight Board and Promise Scotland, and is delivered by the Corra Foundation, on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Homelessness

“Housing pathways for care experienced young people will include a range of affordable options that are specifically tailored to their needs and preferences. Youth homelessness will be eradicated.”

Plan 21-24, p24

Why change matters

Every child deserves a stable, loving home. This is a basic human right. However, the evidence shows that care experienced people have more than double the chance of experiencing homelessness, usually before their 30th birthday. This remains a scandal.

Children like Isla have already had to move between different families and homes at a young age, and should not face the trauma of homelessness later in life.

Despite commitments to the contrary, many young people leaving care are expected to leave their home at an earlier age than the rest of the population, with less preparation and with less support. Isla should have the choice of when she leaves her family home, including if this is with a foster family, and she should not have to move on due to her age removing her eligibility. Non care experienced young people do not have an expiry age for leaving the stability and comfort of their family home.

Homelessness can create the circumstances where multiple disadvantage - which can include substance misuse, mental health problems or offending - is much more likely to occur. In Scotland, nobody should have to be homeless.

When the promise is kept, young adults will have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them. Older care experienced people will have a right to access supportive, caring services for as long as they require them.

Is this commitment being fulfilled?

Councils have a legal duty to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Scottish Government's vision in its latest *Ending Homelessness Together* action plan is that everyone has a home that meets their needs and homelessness is ended. Councils are expected to have a rapid rehousing transition plan with a youth homelessness prevention pathway embedded into it.

There is evidence that the number of young people staying in continuing care 'placements' is increasing, as well as the number of active plans aimed at supporting young people into adulthood and independent living.

Further, the government has a range of relevant policy options to assist in ending homelessness, including the building of affordable homes, rights for tenants, and anti-poverty measures.

Given all the evidence of a link between leaving care and being homeless⁹, and the financial costs as outlined in the Independent Care Review's *Follow the Money report*, we have significant concerns about the decision by the Scottish Government that the implementation of *“the prevention pathways for care leavers, young people and veterans has been temporarily paused”*. This has been blamed on “capacity challenges”. This *particular pathway was published in 2019*, and stated “it is a basic requirement to ensure national and local public bodies fully honour their responsibilities to all young people, and especially those who are care experienced”. Its aims included ensuring that if they do experience homelessness, young people leaving care can “rapidly access support which is effectively tailored to their specific needs and circumstances from their corporate parents” and supporting “practice and culture shifts... to help ensure young people are prepared for, and

supported through, the transition into adulthood, and beyond, once they have moved into their own accommodation”. The final recommendations of the *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group* made it clear that all public bodies should respond to the evidence of which groups constitute the highest proportion of people who become homeless - which includes those leaving the 'care system' - to “clearly articulate the pathways and interventions needed to prevent this outcome for particular groups”.

While the government hit the pause button, *homelessness increased in Scotland in 2021/22*. A quarter of households who make homeless applications include children. Alongside this, there is a decrease in new homes being built, long waiting lists for social housing, and increasing rents in the private sector.

There is *homelessness prevention legislation* proposed for this year which includes a new statutory duty for all public sector staff to 'ask and act' when they think someone they are engaging with may be at risk of homelessness. This should and must create new opportunities for young people in care to access support.

⁹ See 'Why change is still needed' - care experienced people are twice as likely to have experienced homelessness, usually before their 30th birthday.

Positive examples of practical change

Improved support for young people transitioning out of care 'placements'

- Support for young people who are transitioning out of children's homes to enable them to return or to stay longer.
- Opportunities for young people who are not ready to live independently to stay living where they are happy and safe. For example, enabling fosters carers to easily become supported carers.

Practical, emotional, and mental wellbeing support for young people to develop the skills needed to live independently. This might include:

- Providing support to ensure every child leaving care has a digital device, bank account and passport.
- Providing support for money management, cooking, shopping, cleaning and home maintenance.
- Managing the front door, including learning to say 'no' when appropriate to those who ask to enter.
- Financial support to maintain tenancies while working.
- Accessing bursaries and entitlements for accessing further education.
- Providing work experience and paid opportunities in local authorities to build skills and confidence in the transition from education to employment.
- 'Trial' flats that support young people to stay for a few weeks to get a better sense of what is involved in independent living and what kinds of support they would like or need to enable them to transition.

- Some areas are participating in the *National House Project*. This is aimed at enabling young care experienced people to develop a peer community with others who are also leaving care, and to live together in a home that supports them to develop the skills needed to live interdependently and provide one another with practical and emotional supports and skills.

Designing processes and services which make it easy for the young person to access support

- Appointing coordination roles to work between social work and housing teams, and identifying single points of contact.
- Multi-agency working to create a 'one stop shop' style service for young people transitioning out of care.
- The creation of protocols to ensure that young people with care experience are given priority access to housing.

What else needs to happen?

Re-instate the prevention pathways for care leavers

The Scottish Government's pausing of this prevention pathway means that only two of the five existing pathways developed by the government – women and children experiencing domestic abuse and people leaving prison – are currently being taken forward. It is incredibly disappointing that a choice had to be made among these five important pathways. It is vital that the pathway for care experienced is reinstated by the Scottish Government.

Stronger partnership working

As with many other areas, progress requires a partnership between government and local authorities and greater use of the support provided by third sector partners. Partnerships must consider what the day-to-day lives of care experienced young people will be, and ensure that young people can access affordable homes where they will thrive and which provide the foundation for a good adulthood.

Reliable implementation of good practice at scale

Scotland needs to see a shift from isolated examples of good practice and ensure that every responsible organisation is implementing all the key changes needed in its own area.

Priority areas: next steps

By the time we publish Report THREE next year, there must be more evidence of impactful change. Care experienced children and young people like Isla need to see co-ordinated action and changes made by all those who are corporate parents. In particular, there must be change in the priority areas of education, brothers and sisters, and homelessness.

Education:

Care experienced children and young people will receive everything they need to thrive at school. They will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities, the formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from education will have ended, and more care experienced young people will be going on to genuinely positive destinations.

Brothers and sisters:

Scotland will have stopped the practice of separating brothers and sisters, unless for reasons of safety. We need an accurate picture of whether brothers and sisters are living together, with a simple metric for measuring this.

Homelessness:

The prevention pathway for care leavers will have been restarted by the Scottish Government. Housing pathways for care experienced young people will include a range of affordable options that are specifically tailored to their needs and preferences.

Why this matters: Isla's story so far



Why this matters: Isla's story so far

Isla was 10 when the promise was made.



When Isla was four, after a Children's Hearing, she moved in with a new family nearby, who she really liked. Her parents got lots of support, so when Isla went back to them things were much better. She started school and made lots of friends.



When Isla was six, her parents separated. Her mum was unwell and needed help, so Isla went to stay with the same family. They were so happy to see her. Isla was sad, but knew that her mum was being looked after. Her social worker popped round lots and told her how her mum was doing. The family walked Isla to school every day. When Isla got an invite to her friend's birthday, they helped her pick a present and took her along.

Once Isla's mum was a bit better, Isla saw her every week, sometimes at home and sometimes with her social worker. Isla lived with the family until she was nearly 13.

The family Isla stayed with helped her to get ready to leave. They had a tea party and told her they'd always be there for Isla and her mum.

Following a Children's Hearing, Isla moved home. Because Isla and her mum lived apart for so long, living together is not always easy. Isla's mum has asked for help with Isla's schooling and they are talking to Isla's teacher and social worker about what would help. Isla and her mum will continue to need family support, stable accommodation and help at school so she can meet her potential.



Appendix one: Updates since Report ONE

In our first report, we concluded that we remained “hopeful and optimistic”. However, we warned that the current systems and structures did not make it possible to effectively monitor progress or measure the pace of change. We felt that while progress was happening, “there must be greater urgency and demonstration of a collective understanding of the scale of change needed”.

This is a summary of updates in areas that we identified in *Report ONE*.

Scottish Government action

We recognise that responsibility for implementing the promise sits across multiple areas of government. Of the 43 directorates of the Scottish Government, 26 have an interest in the implementation of the promise, straddling 49 of 117 policy areas. Each area must own the part they play, alongside effective mechanisms for overall leadership and collaboration to ensure the promise is kept.

To this end we were pleased to see the First Minister, Humza Yousaf, creating a specific ministerial portfolio of ‘Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise’ and prioritising an early meeting with Fiona Duncan, the Independent Strategic Advisor to the promise who was chair of the Promise Oversight Board and is a director of The Promise Scotland, and Fraser McKinlay, chief executive of The Promise Scotland.

However, in terms of policy delivery, we are disappointed that the Scottish Government has not yet demonstrated that the necessary work is being done to embed its commitment to

#KeepThePromise across all relevant policy areas. This is most clearly illustrated by the absence of any recognition that the care community is over-represented in the homeless population in the *Ending Homeless Together report*.

Across all relevant Scottish Government policy areas there needs to be meaningful and co-ordinated actions held together by a credible implementation infrastructure. *The Scottish Government’s implementation plan*, published by ministers, focused too much on reiterating statements of commitment to #KeepThePromise and not enough on outlining the specific actions that the Scottish Government will take to enable it to be kept. We eagerly await *The Promise Bill*, due to be introduced in parliament before the next election.

We welcome the government committing £500 million to the *Whole Family Wellbeing Fund* for Scottish councils over the course of this parliament to 2026. This has an aim of investing at least 5% of all community-based health and social care spend in preventative whole family support measures by 2030. It offers the potential to significantly reform public services so they wrap around families, providing the help and support they need, where and when they need it. However, this must be seen in the context of the challenging financial landscape facing local authorities, which means the money may simply end up mitigating cuts to existing services – rather than upscaling to meet the aims of the promise. There must be full transparency and greater evidence that this funding is being used as intended and not simply mitigating cuts. It is essential that a clear timeline for reaching the 5% threshold is made available.

Further, there must be a medium to long-term investment strategy to deliver change across the entirety of Scotland’s ‘care system’. This cannot be based on five-year election cycles. By investing

in preventative public services today, Scotland can avoid the need for costly crisis interventions tomorrow. Changes made now can have a lifelong impact. A detailed examination of how budgets can be truly invested in improving people’s lives is needed, and this should have happened by now.

If the Scottish Government implemented its commitment to wellbeing budgeting and alignment with the National Performance Framework, it would go some way to taking a longer-term investment approach across most policy areas, including keeping the promise.

Work now needs to be taken forward at pace to ensure there are effective governance arrangements in place across both national and local ‘systems’ that provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities for delivering change, enable effective decision making, and appropriately hold all partners to account for playing their part in keeping the promise to Scotland’s children and young people.

Partnership approach

The Scottish Government, all 32 local authorities and each national agency referenced in Plan 21-24 either have stand-alone plans to #KeepThePromise or have this commitment embedded in their corporate plans. This is a positive step. This sustained commitment within individual organisations is welcome, however – with some exceptions – there continues to be inadequate cross-sector, multi-agency collaboration. What is of paramount importance is that changes are felt in the day-to-day lives of children and families, and there needs to be greater partnership working to deliver this.

The Hearings System Working Group *‘Redesign Report’* published on 25 May 2023. It is about long-term change to make sure that Scotland’s Children’s Hearings System can be a place of listening, consistency, good decision-making and accountability for lives of children living in and around the ‘care system’. We thank the young people from *Our Hearings Our Voice* who worked with Sheriff David Mackie on this collaborative process. If accepted, these changes will increase the care, consideration and accountability for the lives of children in the ‘system’ for the long term. There are more than 90 recommendations, and the Scottish Government will respond by the end of the year. While it is important that the government takes time to make its determination, this deserves a swift consideration and response.

Following the commitment in the Scottish Government’s implementation plan, the *Promise Collective has been established*, co-chaired by the Scottish Government, COSLA and The Promise Scotland. This group has been convened as a strategic forum to ensure the alignment of all Scottish Government funded delivery and improvement initiatives that are working to #KeepThePromise. A group of core partners including CELCIS, the Improvement Service and Who Cares? Scotland have met to develop the remit.

The Improvement Service and COSLA published a report, *Delivering the Promise in Local Government*, in May 2023. The research identified potential case studies of good work being done in local authorities, which will be developed and shared in the coming months. The chief executive of COSLA has also joined The Promise Scotland’s board of directors in a non-executive capacity.

Fiona Duncan was appointed as the Independent Strategic Advisor for the promise last autumn.

At this time, a process to replace her as chair of the Promise Oversight Board commenced. She continues to be a member and shares its frustration about the absence of a route-map. Fiona has developed a planning framework to co-devise the plan that will succeed Plan 21-24, one that reflects the participatory approach she undertook while chairing the Independent Care Review. This is currently being consulted on, and we call on the many organisations responsible for change to offer their contributions then take part in the process.

Workforce capacity

Keeping the promise depends on the capacity of the workforce to form trusted and meaningful relationships with the children and families they work with, and to refocus energy on what matters to them. However, there is a workforce crisis in care and social work in Scotland, as there is in other sectors. Against a backdrop of public finance constraints, Covid-19, and the cost of living crisis, the workforce is over-stretched and under-resourced. Organisations are struggling to recruit and retain staff, and this risks significantly undermining progress to #KeepThePromise.

We are aware that some organisations are implementing what changes they can to support their workforce, including staff training and development, investment in time-saving software, mental health support, and co-designed 'nurture policies'. It is welcome that organisations recognise the importance of nurturing their workers. We reiterate our thanks to all the practitioners delivering change. Increasing workforce capacity must be part of both a short-term and a long-term investment strategy from the Scottish Government.

Data gaps and maps

One of the most critical elements highlighted in our first report was the lack of data to assess

progress towards the promise. Data gaps still remain. This continues to make it difficult to understand children's experiences and identify change, and – more importantly – it makes it harder to #KeepThePromise. As in Report ONE, it is still not possible to 'see' Isla in the data that is collected.

But that does not mean that the care and love Scotland gives to children like Isla can be delayed. Closing the data gap is a necessary step to #KeepThePromise. Everyone who has a responsibility to support children and their families must work to make sure the data they record and use is reflective of their whole lives and experiences.

However, data on its own is not enough. There must be effective mechanisms for analysing and reporting on it that enable organisations to understand where their priority opportunities for improvement are, and whether the changes they are making are delivering the change that is needed.

The Promise Data Map software's first full phase of development was completed in summer 2022. Work is underway to test and improve the useability and develop the 'front end' of the tool, which will enable organisations to search and visualise the information. An update is available on a recently released *podcast*.

Early deaths

For many, the most upsetting part of our *first report* was the tragic reality of the avoidable early deaths of children and young people. The *Care Inspectorate's report* on the deaths of 'looked after' children in Scotland between 2012 and 2018 found that 61 children died in the care of Scottish local authorities prior to their 18th birthday over that period. But there was no information on their lives or the circumstances of their deaths. That is because this information is not collected. Since our last report there has been no further release of data, and we understand there are no plans to repeat the exercise.

The Scottish Government has published a *Suicide Prevention Strategy* for 2022-23. However, care experience is not discussed in the strategy, nor in *Public Health Scotland's report on the strategy*. Not enough is being done to understand the circumstances of the lives of young people who die so tragically. There remains no way of understanding how many individuals with experience of care die prematurely as a result of suicide.

These continued failures mean it is not possible to monitor progress towards the elimination of early death. This misses the chance to learn and prevents the tragic loss of life. *Healthcare Improvement Scotland*, in collaboration with the Care Inspectorate, co-hosts the National Hub for Reviewing and Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People, and we call for vital information on early deaths to be collected.

Physical restraint

All care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation. A *consultation on draft guidance on physical intervention in schools* took place in 2022, and the Scottish Government's response and guidance should be published soon. The draft guidance seeks to ensure that the use of restrictive practices in schools is used minimally. But the government has not confirmed which body has responsibility for monitoring the use of seclusion and restraint in schools, and ensuring that staff training is in place. More worryingly, the timeline is concerning. Once implemented, there could be a 12-month wait for a review, and it will be 2025 before the guidance is statutory.

While there is an ongoing commitment to pursue culture change across the residential care sector for children and young people, this effort is not consistent across provision and children's experiences with restraint continue to differ. Responses to the consultation on physical intervention in school highlighted the challenges

around consistency of recording, and there is no single agency taking responsibility for data on the use of restraint.

The Care Inspectorate now requires all providers to report incidents that adhere to a *wider definition of restraint*. The broader definition means that the use of seclusion and restrictive practice should be reported to the Care Inspectorate within 48 hours.

A *'Rethinking Restraint' collaborative* funded by *The Promise Partnership* has also been launched to support others in actively achieving the vision of the Independent Care Review.

The 'Rethinking Restraint' pilot has been able to demonstrate impact on two levels: use of restraint is reducing in the pilot organisations; and it is shining a light on the levers of change that are held by Scottish Government and must be deployed for Scotland to be a nation that does not restrain its children. We urge sectors from justice to education to use the learning from the pilot.

Mental health provisions

Over the last two *reporting years*, around 30% of children and young people waited longer than 18 weeks to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This means that treatment standards are not being met and there continue to be barriers to both understanding and accessing mental health services across Scotland.

Accessing services can also prove challenging beyond waiting times: children aged 16 and 17 years old are treated as adults by the *Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003*. In 2022, the independent *Scottish Mental Health Law Review* recommended extensive reform of relevant legislation to ensure compliance with human rights law and for CAMHS minimum core obligations to include availability to children up to 18. To date this has not been enacted.

Outside of CAMHS service provision, it is also clear that the number of inter-linked work programmes relating to poverty, mental health,

drugs deaths, violence against women and girls, education, family support and other areas are often operating in parallel to each other and with similar policies and initiatives intended to help the same families. At local authority level some areas are not able to identify all the relevant funding streams relating to family support services. In one local authority, there are more than 150 different family support services.

Additional updates

Polmont Young Offenders Institute

The *Children's Care and Justice Bill* was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in December 2022. This should positively impact on all care experienced young people. If passed, it will also outlaw the 'placement' of children in young offenders institutions. Stage one of the legal process is due to be completed before the parliamentary summer recess. The Bill will also seek to ensure that 16 and 17-year-olds go to the Children's Hearing System rather than the sheriff court, although there will still be some offences so serious that there is no alternative to the criminal courts.

We are very pleased that this change is on course to be delivered.

National Care Service

There is ongoing uncertainty surrounding the scope of the proposed *National Care Service* (NCS), including how accountability and overall governance will shift from local authorities to the Scottish Government. It is still unclear as to whether children's services are within the scope of the NCS. The Scottish Government set up an *independent steering group* in summer 2022 to oversee and direct research into "how best to deliver children's services in the context of the National Care Service". This is chaired by Professor Brigid Daniel and will run until autumn 2023. Separately, in autumn 2022, the Scottish Government announced that Dame Sue Bruce

would conduct an *independent review of the way social care is regulated*, as outlined in the findings of the *Independent Review of Adult Social Care*. Its report is due to be published in September 2023.

We are concerned that continued delay and uncertainty is getting in the way of delivering the promise.

Independent review of children's social care (England)

The publication of the *English care review* last year identified two recommendations that relate to children in Scotland: 'cross-border placements'; and for 'care experience' to become a protected characteristic. Since the publication of the review, the UK Government issued a response for consultation: *'stable homes, built on love'*. In this response, the UK Government said it will not be taking forward the recommendation around care as a protected characteristic and will instead prioritise proposals to extend corporate parenting responsibilities. We acknowledge the local authorities that have voted to apply care experience as a protected characteristic, and we will watch their progress towards keeping the promise to see if this makes a positive difference.

On the issue of 'cross-border placements', the UK Government has stated an intent to co-design with regional care cooperatives with the sector and run two pathfinder models prior to any legislative work. Despite these intents published in February 2023, there is concern around delay to reform in England. This means children and young people continue to be sent far from their families and communities to secure care in Scotland. While there has been a 3% reduction in the number of young people in secure care nationally, it is a 13% decrease in children from Scotland going into secure care that has driven this overall reduction. Over the same time-period, there was a 14% increase of children from outside the country. The different legislative systems in England and Scotland can pose a barrier to receiving necessary support.

We call for an end to 'cross-border placements', unless there is no alternative.

Long distance 'placements'

Some children are forced to live too far from their home, in places that do not provide the support or facilities they need, and that often separate them from their brothers and sisters. While this is different to 'cross-border placements', the distances involved can still be considerable.

We are aware of the devastating impact this can have on a child or young person, and we continue to call for its end, unless essential to the child's safety.

Appendix **two**: The Promise Oversight Board

The Promise Oversight Board was established in January 2021. We were recruited based on a set of agreed values that reflect those under which the Independent Care Review operated, and we continue to reflect and hold to those values in how we undertake our work:

- Committed to realising the vision of the Independent Care Review.
- Determined to support change.
- Brave, with a willingness to hold those with responsibility to account.
- Dynamic and flexible.
- Approachable.
- Compassionate, with a willingness and ability to listen carefully to alternative perspectives.
- Honest, with very high levels of personal integrity.

As a board, we have responsibility for the task of monitoring, tracking and reporting on Scotland's progress to keep the promise. There are real challenges in how we undertake our monitoring and reporting task and what information we use to assess progress, but our commitment is to be honest about our assessments while maintaining our belief that the task can be achieved.

In undertaking our role, we are supported by The Promise Scotland, a non-statutory company set up to support the work of change. The Promise Scotland has work underway that will support us in monitoring, tracking and reporting. We do not have governance responsibility for those projects, but the organisation helps us as we fulfil our role.

Since April 2023, the Promise Oversight Board has been co-chaired by David Anderson and Fiona Duncan.

Board members

Anna Fowlie

Ashely Cameron Resigned 18 April 2023

Carrie McLaughlan

David Anderson Co-chair from 18 April 2023

Euan Currie

Ewan Aitken

Fiona Duncan Chair to 18 April 2023;
Co-chair from 18 April 2023

Dr Helen Whincup

Iain MacRitchie

Jasmin-Kasaya Pilling

Jemma Kerr

Kezia Dugdale

Maria McGill

Professor Morag Treanor

Neil Squires

Dr Patricia Watts

Ruth Glassborow

Ryan McCuaig Resigned 1 February 2023

Sharon McGhee

Taliah Drayak

Tracey McFall

Ashley Cameron helped develop and finalise Report TWO. She and **Ryan McCuaig** resigned during the year and we thank them immensely for their insight and ideas.

All members of the Promise Oversight Board have a connection with the 'care system', whether that is lived experience and/or expertise. You can see details of our financial and non-financial interests on our [Register of Interests](#). It is inevitable that there will times when those interests come into conflict with the Promise Oversight Board's purpose – to report on Scotland's progress to keep the promise. We have a robust process to identify and manage conflicts in our meetings and in the writing of this report.

Appendix three: Timeline

The Promise Oversight Board was established in January 2021. The Promise Scotland's *set up year report* sets out key milestones to May 2022 and a forthcoming review will update work to summer 2023.

Appendix four: Key references

The Promise Oversight Board

- Report ONE: <https://thepromise.scot/resources/2022/promise-oversight-board-report-one.pdf>
- Minutes: <https://thepromise.scot/oversight-board/reports-and-minutes>

The Independent Care Review

- Website: www.carereview.scot
- The promise report: https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Promise_v7.pdf
- The pinky promise: <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pinky-Promise.pdf>
- The plan: https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Plan_pages.pdf
- The money: <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Money.pdf>
- Follow the money: <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Follow-the-money.pdf>
- The rules: https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Rules_pages.pdf
- The thank you: <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Thank-You-spreads-new.pdf>
- Composite stories: <https://www.carereview.scot/conclusions/composite-stories/>

The Promise Scotland

- Website: <https://thepromise.scot/the-promise-scotland/what-is-the-promise-scotland/>
- Plan 21-24: <https://thepromise.scot/plan-21-24-pdf-spread.pdf>
- Set up year: <https://thepromise.scot/resources/2022/promise-scotland-set-up-year.pdf>
- Minutes of The Promise Scotland directors: <https://thepromise.scot/the-promise-scotland/what-is-the-promise-scotland/directors>

Scottish Government

- Keeping the promise implementation plan: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/keeping-promise-implementation-plan/>
- The Promise Partnership: <https://thepromise.scot/the-promise-scotland/promise-partnership>

