

March 2024

The Promise Scotland

NEWSLETTER

▶ Reflecting and Moving Forward

A Message from Fraser McKinlay,
Chief Executive of The Promise Scotland

As we come to the end of March and the Scottish Parliament enters their recess, I hope many of you are looking forward to a spring break or at least a chance to reflect in the midst of a very challenging start to the year. As was discussed in the [Lived and Professional Panel](#) during the Stories of Change Conference, we cannot pour from an empty cup. We cannot care if we do not care for ourselves.

This time of year provides an opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are headed for the rest of 2024. This latest version of The Promise Scotland newsletter updates you on a whole host of things that the organisation has been up to over the last few months, and what is coming up. Please do get in touch about any of it.

As I said in my closing remarks at the conference in February, we need to move forward with real honesty about the size of the challenge ahead, as well as with hope and expectation that things are improving. The development of Plan 24-30 is well underway, and this will clearly be a critically important milestone in Scotland's ambitions to keep the promise.

The complex process of changing a 'care system' that is generations in the making will take time. But it is also urgent – there are still too many children, young people, adults and families for whom the promise isn't yet a reality in their daily lives. This is what drives me and the team at The Promise Scotland and thank you all again for your support and challenge as we work together to keep the promise.

► Things You Might Have Missed

- [Fiona Duncan: Plan 24-30 and Voice](#)

Independent Strategic Advisor on the promise, Fiona Duncan, writes about the core foundations of voice and how Plan 24-30 will remain rooted in the needs and aspirations of the care community, children, adults and families.

- [Moving forward with honesty, hope, and persistence - Fraser McKinlay writes for Care Day](#)

In his blog for Care Day 2024, ThePromise Scotland Chief Executive Fraser McKinlay reflects on the recent Stories for Change Conference and the need for honesty, hope, expectation and perseverance.

- [Lived Experience of Care and Working for Change](#)

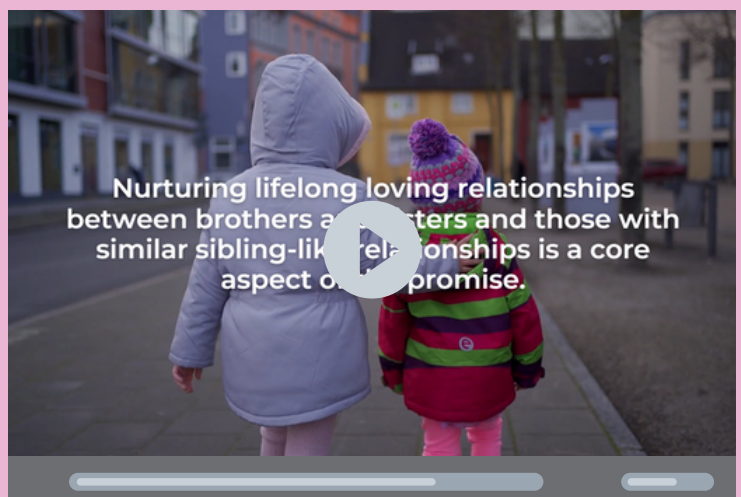
Many people with lived experience of care now work in the "system" to bring change— and the Lived and Professional Experience Panel from the Stories of Change Conference heard from some.

- [One Parent Families Scotland: Supporting Families with Experience of Care](#)

In this guest blog, Chief Executive of One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS), Satwat Rehman, writes on the organisation's work to better understand the families they work with. [You can also listen to a podcast on this subject here,](#) with OPFS and The Promise Scotland's Policy Lead, Chloe Riddell.

► Community of Practice for Siblings Gathering

April 10th is Siblings Day and the [Siblings Community of Practice](#) invites you to celebrate through a collective show of support. Watch the video to learn more and [sign up to their newsletter here for more updates and information on how you can get involved.](#)



► The Oversight Board

The Oversight Board welcomed six new members in their first meeting of 2024. They are looking forward to working together on the development of The Oversight Board Report: THREE. [Click here to read more about the members of The Oversight Board.](#)

The Oversight Board is an independent group to which The Promise Scotland provides secretariat support. If you would like more information or have questions, please get in touch at hello@thepromise.scot.



► Plan 21-24 Independent Evaluation

Evaluating the progress Scotland has made against Plan 21-24 is a crucial part of understanding and monitoring the journey to #KeepThePromise, and a key factor in the creation of Plan 24-30.

The Promise Scotland put the call out for the right team to lead this evaluation. After careful consideration, the contract has been awarded to the Diffley Partnership, a team of skilled research and insight professionals focused on high quality evidence and analysis.

The final evaluation will be completed in May in preparation for the publication of Plan 24-30. If you have any questions, please reach out to hello@thepromise.scot.



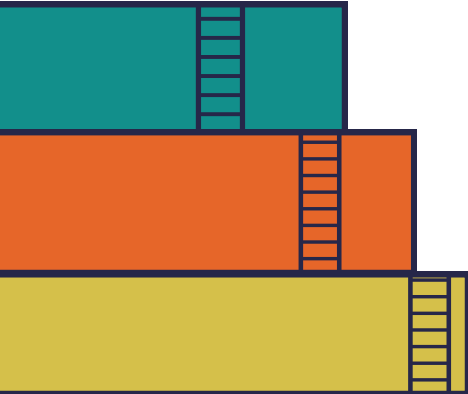


▶ On the Radar

In January, The Promise Scotland published its response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the proposed 'Care Leaver Payment'. The Promise Scotland welcomes the intent and aspiration of this payment in aiming to alleviate some of the financial stress experienced by young people when leaving care.

As set out in our response we are clear that this payment must not exist in isolation, but as part of a broader package of care and support for those with care experience. Our response, which can be accessed [here](#), was informed by the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and the views and experiences of care experienced children, adults and families heard both throughout the Independent Care Review, and The Promise Scotland's 100 Days of Listening project with Staf. [More on this can be found here.](#)

In its Keeping The Promise Implementation Plan, the Scottish Government committed to support The Promise Scotland to scope a national lifelong advocacy service for care experienced people and their families. The Promise Scotland therefore worked alongside advocacy providers and others to produce the paper, which scopes what a national advocacy service for care experienced children, adults and families could look like and how the conclusions of the Independent Care Review with respect to advocacy could be operationalised.



The paper proposes a four phased approach to implementation, taking into account the other ongoing and interlinked work to develop and enhance access to independent advocacy across Scotland. More about the paper and the four phases can be found [here](#).



► On the Radar continued

The Promise Scotland recently attended the Scottish Government's Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill Implementation Group's fourth meeting. The Group are exploring system readiness across a range of professions and functions, and started to assess training requirements, models and costs for implementation of the Bill, if passed. The Group is cognisant of how this Bill would dovetail with wider policy and practice developments, including the recommendations from the Hearings System Working Group, and is thoughtful about careful consideration of prioritisation, sequencing, and commencement of the duties in a way that helps Scotland to keep the promise.

March 11th-15th was Kinship Care Week. Kinship Carers play a vitally important role in the lives of children, young people, and families across Scotland. The promise concluded that Scotland must ensure that children living in kinship care get the support they need to thrive. More on what the promise says about kinship care can be read here, informed by the stories shared by the many kinship families the Independent Care Review heard from.



With the commitment of a Promise Bill by the end of this Parliament, the policy team at The Promise Scotland will be working alongside Scottish Government colleagues as they begin scoping what will need to be included in the Bill. This will be considered alongside the upcoming publication of Plan 24-30, the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill, and the implementation of the Hearings for Children report recommendations.

► Upcoming and of Note

- Each and Every Child Framing Sessions

The Each and Every Child Framing Sessions will help you to understand what framing is, explore the evidence based framing recommendations and try practical exercises to support you to use framing in your own lives.

- Place2Be: Keeping The Promise through in-school mental health support

Liam Furby, Senior Influencing and Partnerships Manager, and Sophia Sives, Area Manager of North Scotland, shine a light on Place2Be's services in Aberdeen and Scotland as a whole. They share the impact of the charity's support amongst families, and how their work helps to #KeepThePromise.

- OPFS Research Report and Parent and Practitioner Guides

One Parent Families Scotland's (OPFS) research report and Parent and Practitioner guides for supporting families with children in or on the edges of care, commissioned by The Promise Scotland.

- Free Workshops for Kinship Carers in Scotland

A range of free workshops to support the health and wellbeing of Kinship Carers in Scotland and the children and young people in their care provided by Children's Health Scotland.

- Oor Lives, Oor Ane – Voices of parents whose children are care experienced

Supported by Children 1st, a group of parents formed the Good Ideas Group. The group co-designed and carried out research intended to help change the systems and support available to children and their families to #KeepThePromise.



► Feature: Keeping the Promise Across Scotland

By Rachel Keenan, Promise Delivery Partner

As part of our commitment to supporting people and organisations to #KeepThePromise, The Promise Scotland seeks to tell collective stories of change to support learning and momentum – to provide ideas, purpose, and most importantly, hope.

The Northern Promise Collaborative is a group of Local Authorities that span the North of Scotland who usually meet every 6 weeks online. The group is facilitated by Tom Boyd and myself (Promise Delivery Partners with The Promise Scotland) and has a shared purpose of partnership and support in their journey to keep the promise. The development day was the first time the group had come together face to face.

Highland Rugby Club was the venue for the development day on a beautiful sunny spring day. Despite travelling challenges Caren Rennie (Implementation Lead, The Promise Scotland) and I were joined by 12 representatives from across the north.



The day kicked off with a warm welcome from Carrie McLaughlin, Programme Manager: The Promise for Highland Council, and was followed by quick introductions. Initial focus of the day surrounded connecting to each other with colleagues sharing work that they were particularly proud of or something they were struggling with. This exercise focused on identifying their allies within the room, offering support and encouragement to overcome the challenges they face.

Pamela Davidson from Moray followed with an explanation on their upcoming project funded by the Keep The Promise Fund through the Corra Foundation. This project hopes to build the scaffolding required to ensure that those leaving care have sustained relationships with the people that are important to them.

► Feature: Keeping the Promise Across Scotland

Colleagues were asked to think of the barriers or challenges to supporting sustained relationships with the children, young people and families that they care for. Moving on from this activity we sought the parts of the system that we had the power to change and/or influence. The session before lunch was concluded by identifying those that would be needed to co-design this scaffolding.

Following lunch, the group spent some time considering how we evidence outcomes for relationships and the day ended with reflections and taking one thing with them that they would do differently.

Colleagues felt that the time spent together was useful and a great opportunity to make connections and share challenges and progress. People stated that they most enjoyed connecting with each other:

"I enjoying connecting with people across the North and hearing about how they are implementing the Promise in their areas"

"Connecting with others and sharing ideas"

Attendees did speak of the need for more regular time together with more people but also enjoyed the activities as this gave them practical tools to take back to support change work locally.

The day was a success with attendees stating that they would like to make days like this more regular and this would support them to #KeepThePromise.

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