

The Promise Scotland NEWSLETTER

► A Note from Fraser McKinlay, Chief Executive of The Promise Scotland

It has proved to be a very busy start of the summer for our organisation and, I imagine, for many of you. It's been brilliant to be out and about a bit recently, visiting many organisations and attending events across Scotland that show the great work happening to #KeepThePromise and the clear dedication from so many communities. Thank you to everyone who has invited me and tolerated my daft laddie questions!

I have been reflecting on the importance of community in our work. Many of the things that we know help build cohesive, tolerant and resilient communities are also the things which make it easier for families to stay together, preventing children and young people being looked after away from home.

I share more of my thoughts on this in my guest blog in the Scottish Community Safety Network's monthly roundup which you can read in full [here](#). The main point I try to emphasise is that we must shift our collective public resources toward communities, rather than systems, and toward families, rather than institutions. I know this is easier said than done, especially in the difficult context that many of you are operating in. But I believe with the right leadership and a shift in these fundamental conversations, we can make real change.

I am confident that Scotland can do this and keep its promise to children, young people, families and care experienced adults. The next few years are critical in terms of delivery. Plan 24-30 will show Scotland the way forward, and I am delighted that The Promise Scotland team has been able to support Fiona Duncan, in her role as Independent Strategic Adviser, in its development. With Plan 24-30 setting out the route map, I believe Scotland can deliver the change needed. Our job, collectively, is to get on and make the changes that the care community rightfully expects and deserves.

As always, I thank you for your commitment, support and challenge as we work together to #KeepThePromise by 2030.

► Things You Might Have Missed

- [Siblings Day, April 10: Community of Practice for Siblings](#)

Karen Morrison, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Siblings Reunited (STAR), speaks about her experience as a member of the Community of Practice for Siblings.

- [Creating and Checking: Phase two of devising Plan 24-30 together](#)

Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor - the promise, sets out some of the early themes emerging out of work on Plan 24-30.

- [How the Children \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Bill will help Scotland to #KeepThePromise](#)

With the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill passing the final stage of scrutiny in the Scottish Parliament, here are key ways it will help to #KeepThePromise.

- [Devising Plan 24-30 together: Creating a dynamic plan of action](#)

Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor - the promise, sets out the timescales for Plan 24-30's launch as a dynamic website.

► One Year On: Hearings For Children Redesign Report

May 25, 2024 was the one-year anniversary of the publication of the Hearings System Working Group's Redesign Report: Hearings for Children. [In this blog](#), Sheriff David Mackie discusses progress and the work still needed to bring transformational change to the Children's Hearings System. Watch this video for a recap and progress update.



► **Plan 24-30: Scotland's Plan to #KeepThePromise**

Plan 24-30 will launch as a dedicated website on June 20, 2024. This is being built right now as a dynamic plan of action to lay out the changes needed to reach 2030 with the promise being kept. This approach will support continued collaborative work towards Scotland's collective ambition, placing the experience of children, young people, and their families in and on the edge of the 'care system', and care experienced adults, at the very heart.

An evolution:

Plan 24-30 is an evolution of Plan 21-24, Scotland's route map to keeping the promise by 2030. It details who needs to do what by when to make sure the promise made to care experienced children, families and adults is kept in full. It is organised around the five foundations of the promise; voice, family, care, people, scaffolding. Some of these actions have a clear route and progress is underway, others the journey is partially known or dependent on another area of work. There are some actions where the route to progress is still to be agreed.

Devised Together:

The development of Plan 24-30 has been done in consultation with stakeholders including the care community, the 'care system' and will continue to be shaped in response to feedback from, and the actions of, those partners.

Dynamic and iterative:

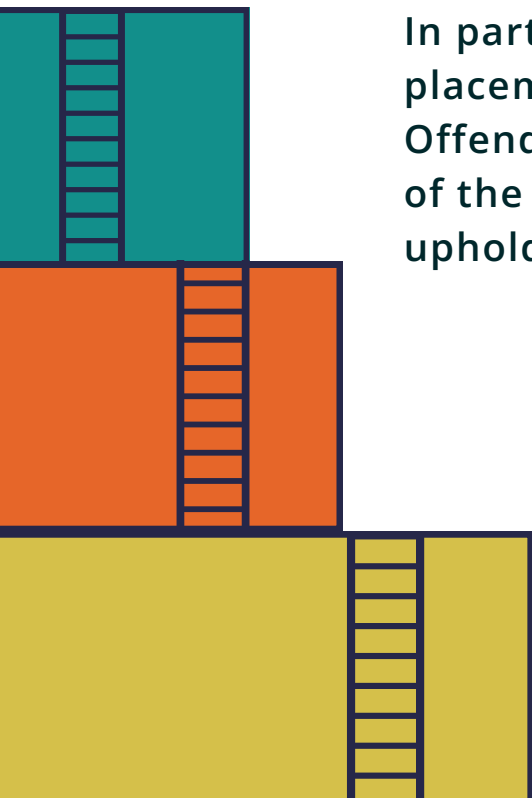
The Plan 24-30 website means it is clear which organisations must work towards change, on who is doing what, where collaboration must happen, so progress can continue at pace. Plan 24-30 must be kept up to date to capture work underway and work needed, so it evolves and remains clear on who / what / where / how and provide a shared understanding of progress.



▶ On the Radar

On March 27, 2024, the Education, Children and Young People Committee met with 37 care experienced young people to discuss progress on keeping the promise, organised in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland. The young people highlighted some good practice, however, shared issues around social work resources, a lack of support when moving on from care, and not being aware of their rights. The group also reinforced their desire to be listened to and directly engage with the First Minister and other members of the Scottish Government. You can read the full meeting note [here](#) and the Committee's recent letter to the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise [here](#).

On April 25, 2024, the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament which will see some of the core conclusions of the Independent Care Review be realised and is a significant step forward for Scotland to #KeepThePromise.



In particular, provisions to end the inappropriate placement of 16- and 17-year-olds in Young Offenders Institutions and extending provisions of the Children's Hearings System to further uphold the rights of older children.

CYCJ have published a short and helpful series named '[Scotland's on the cusp of something very special](#)', led by Debbie Nolan, Practice Development Advisor, which provides readers with further information on what the Bill will bring, why it is needed and how it will be implemented.



► On the Radar continued

In order to ensure effective implementation of the Bill, particular attention must be paid to supporting the workforce, ensuring adequate investment and resourcing, and ensuring provisions within the Bill are carefully and thoughtfully sequenced. You can find further detail [here](#) about The Promise Scotland's views on the Bill in the briefing prepared ahead of Stage 3 of the Bill.

In May, The Promise Scotland published its response to the Housing (Scotland) Bill [call for views](#) jointly launched by the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and the Social Justice and Social Security Committee.

The Promise Scotland welcomes the stated policy objective of the Bill in being ambitious in responding to the need to improve housing outcomes, but raised several points for consideration by the Committee's and the Scottish Government, including; ensuring a laser-sharp focus on implementation and resourcing, adequate financing, leadership, and joined up working around areas such as poverty, transitions out of care and mental health support. You can read the full response [here](#).



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 continue to scope what conclusions of the Independent Care Review and recommendations outlined in the promise will need to be legislated for, while also preparing for the launch of consultations across the summer to inform its development.

► Upcoming and of Note

- [Save the Children and Joseph Rowntree Foundation Understanding public attitudes to child poverty](#)

This event will give you the opportunity to hear about the new data from a national survey on public attitudes to child poverty and connect with a growing 'community of practice' who are interested in shaping public narratives to end child poverty.

- [Parenting Across Scotland Webinar](#)

Join this webinar on Tuesday 4 June, 1:30-2:30pm to mark the launch of the commissioned research report by The Lines Between and hear about the research from 2023 focusing on the lived experience of over 4000 parents and carers across Scotland. To join, email: info@parentingacrossscotland.org

► Community of Practice for Siblings

The [Community of Practice for Siblings](#) continues to grow as a nationwide network of connection, learning and energy as Scotland works to #KeepThePromise to sisters and brothers and those with similar sibling-like relationships of loving connection.

The Community meets regularly, both on-line and in person, and over 70 Community members joined the May event, with a focus on supporting sibling relationships in kinship care settings and how we support sibling relationships when families are affected by imprisonment.

You can **register [here](#)** for the next Community gathering, in-person at [STAR, Siblings Reunited](#) on 25 June. You can also sign up for the Community of Practice's Newsletter **[here](#)**.

What I took away from joining the Community of Practice event is that community really is at its heart. We heard from carers and professional then had the time and space to talk, learning from each other. I believe this is a space where meaningful change can be made.

- Member of the Community

► Upcoming and of Note

- Keeping the promise for Dads?

If you are interested in, or currently working with Dads, then join Dads Rock for this free, interactive event to explore what Dads need and how we can support them.

- Project Esperanza: Fostering Equality: Addressing Bias in Scottish Child Protection Practices

Senior decision-makers & managers from across Scotland's Care System are invited to join Project Esperanza for a day of dialogue and learning from the Lived Experience of Black Children & Families and the expertise of Black workers.

- The Young Women's Movement cost-of-living crisis survey

The Young Women's Movement is researching the issues affecting young women in Scotland as a result of the cost of living crisis. Learn more at the link.

- The Fostering Network's 2024 State of the Nations' Foster Care survey

Established in 2014, The Fostering Network's State of the Nations' Foster Care survey is the largest and most comprehensive study of the UK's fostering sector, representing the voices, thoughts and opinions of foster carers across the four nations.

- Our Hearings Our Voice - Articulate Animation

The Articulate Animation is co-written, designed and voiced by members of the Our Hearings Our Voice Board and brings to life the language principles developed by the Language Leaders Group to ensure children hear and read language that they can understand, that includes them in decisions about their lives and that protects them from re-traumatisation or stigma.



► Spotlight: Highland Language Guide

By The Highland Child Protection Committee and Partners

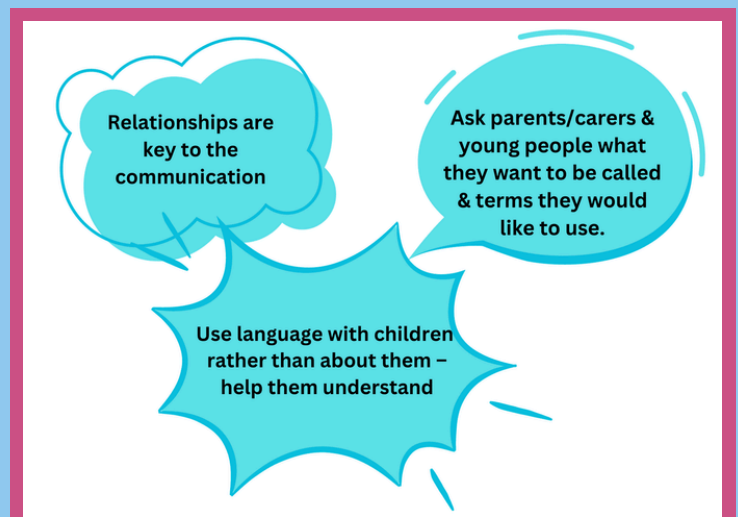
The promise is clear that the language used by those supporting and interacting with children, young people, and families must change to avoid stigmatisation and othering. To change the system language, and more importantly, the practice associated with that language, the workforce must be supported to make informed and intentional changes. That is exactly what Highland Council and our partners seek to do with our new pro-active language guide launched this month.

How did it start?

We heard from partners that they were concerned about the language they were using because it often felt stigmatising and not trauma-informed. They knew they needed to change this language but they didn't know how to start. So we created a language subgroup to find out how we could make a meaningful difference for the children and families in our community.

What we found is that there was already change happening. For example, social workers were beginning to write case notes as if they were speaking directly to the child to encourage compassion and connection. What was missing was real analyses of if these changes were the right thing for children and families – if they were making a real difference. That led us to undergo tests of change in two residential homes so we could see what kind of guidelines were needed to help prompt positive shifts in language while being sensitive to the unique needs of different settings and individual children. The result of those tests of change are still underway but we gained valuable insight, that along with input from Each and Every Child, other partners, and care experienced people, came to inform the language guide.

This guide is not meant to be a yes/no list or a strict one-way system, it provides context and choices to help guide practitioners and organisation to more trauma-informed, person-centered language.



► Spotlight: Highland Language Guide

Partnership

Partnership was key. We knew that it wouldn't make a difference if only one organisation in isolation made these changes. We needed to work together. Our partners were engaged and committed to creating this change and it made for a collaborative space where real progress could be made.

Challenges

The process wasn't without its challenges. There were a lot of different voices and perspectives to consider, and it was difficult to ensure that they were all represented. However, this helped make the guide inclusive and informed the focus of our launch event Mind your Ps and Qs?. The event had fantastic representation from across the Highlands and the afternoon was spent in meaningful group discussion that provided new perspectives for all involved. It was clear there is joint energy and passion to do better.

What's next?

This guide is not the finished product but rather a stepping stone on the way to keeping the promise to the children, young people, and families in the Highlands. We are continued to work with the tests of change to learn more, find out how to replicate this good practice across the area, and share with the rest of Scotland. Collaboration is essential. We look forward to working together to use language for the better.

Access the Language Guide [here](#). For more information or to get involved contact CP.Training@highland.gov.uk.

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If you have any questions or feedback, please reach out to hello@thepromise.scot.

