



the promise  
**Learning**  
**Collaboratives**

**Family**



Livingston, West Lothian  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Programme	
10:00 – 10:20	Welcome, and registration / World Café conversations
10:20 – 10:30	House Keeping & introduction
10:30 – 12:00	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Presentations (10.30-11:15)</p> <p>Discussions (11.15-12:00)</p>
12:00 – 12:30	World Café conversations – using the feedback from registration around the challenges
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch / Break / Networking
13:30 – 13:45	World Café conversations – reflections
13:45 – 15:15	<p>Session 2</p> <p>Presentations (13.45-14:30)</p> <p>Discussions (14:30-15:15)</p>
15:15 – 15:30	Final questions and finish





and having fun as a whole family.

# West Lothian Kinship service

A partnership between West Lothian Council and Children First

# Voice

- ▶ *“Our children have been through more than most adults have ever had to experience. They need to feel accepted and cared for - organisations can do more for these kids if they take the time to get to know the families and create a supportive environment. Kinship carers can’t usually get a break when they need one, family support is limited, and this can make it hard to work a job and be the carer at the same time depending on the child’s needs as we may need more time off work for meetings or to care for the child when things are hard. We don’t get any paid leave and sometimes have to completely change our lives overnight. Financially this is very hard too. We may not be able to keep up with friends or activities we used to” (kinship carer 2025)*
- ▶ “I worry so much about the future, about if something happens to me - there is no back up for these children, I am the back up” (kinship carer 2025)
- ▶ “Kinship carers are treated like second class foster carers, they get everything and even though we don’t choose to be in this position we are just expected to get on with it.....because we are family”
- ▶ “I didn’t really know I was a kinship carer, I just want to be her gran, but I can’t just do the things other gran’s do cause I need to be her mum, dad, gran and everyone else. It changes everything” (Kinship Carer 2024)
- ▶ “I went from being an auntie to a mum overnight, everything about my life and hers changed. I lost my sense of self, who I am, who I was, I was completely consumed by her needs because she had been so let down, I didn’t have time to process the loss of my life, my vision for the future” (kinship Carer 2025)
- ▶ “Having a kinship worker I can speak to really helps. To have a professional that is only for us and some one you can talk openly to at your most frustrated times without worrying about the fall out from it has been a great help. Most of all being able to watch the 3 little girls flourish and grow has filled our hearts.” (Kinship Carer 2024)

# Who is a Kinship carer ?

- ▶ Anyone caring for a relative/ family friends child/ young person- sibling , grand parent, aunt/uncle, family friend
- ▶ This may be as a result of family crisis - mental ill health/ health, separation, bereavement, trauma.
- ▶ Strengths - Young people remain within their family/ communities, continuity of care and connection to their wider family and friends, better outcomes for young people living within their family.
- ▶ Challenges- Complex family relationships, finance, housing, education, health/ age

# Why we need Kinship Services

- ▶ 34% of Scotland Looked after children live within Kinship Arrangements
- ▶ Approximately 34% of West Lothian's looked after children are living within Kinship arrangements.
- ▶ Kinship care is considered to be one of the most stable forms of permanence for children who require alternatives away from home.
- ▶ Recent research indicates that one third of looked after children have long term health issues (Permanently Progressing Dr Helen Whincup)
- ▶ Emotional and behavioural issues were 5 times higher than the general population and within Stage 2 of the longitudinal study this had doubled since stage 1 (Permanently Progressing Dr Helen Whincup)
- ▶ This reinforces the need for longterm, sustained support throughout children's lifetimes - in all aspects of their care and support.
- ▶ Kinship Carers report the high levels of isolation from family and friends.

# West Lothian Kinship Service

- ▶ We are a partnership between West Lothian Council Kinship team and Children First Kinship Service
- ▶ We have been supporting kinship families within West Lothian for a number of years but have come together in a partnership in 2024 funded through the WFWF.
- ▶ We have 2 part time Kinship Social Workers, 3 part time family support workers and 1 Children First Project worker



# What we do

- ▶ West Lothian Council Kinship service undertakes formal kinship assessments and review assessed Kinship placements
- ▶ The partnership offers whole family support via coffee mornings to carers, planned family and individual support ,family activities, financial and legal advice.
- ▶ This support is flexible responding to carers / young person needs- can be intensive or low level group support.

# Key Themes of Support

- ▶ Lifestory work
- ▶ Navigating family time
- ▶ Benefits advice
- ▶ Signposting - bereavement, benefits, education,
- ▶ Managing teenage behaviour
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Parenting advice and strategies
- ▶ Supporting family relationships
- ▶ Self Care and Carer Wellbeing
- ▶ Connection

# Strengths of the partnership

- ▶ Wider reach within West Lothian
- ▶ More flexibility of support - areas / days coffee mornings
- ▶ Better planning and access to support - moving between third sector and statutory agencies
- ▶ Closer working relationship between Statutory and Third sector

# Challenges for the partnership

- ▶ Lack of knowledge / understanding around Kinship and their challenges within Statutory and wider organisations
- ▶ Long term funding

# How to reach us

- ▶ Call West Lothian Kinship service -01506 284296
- or
- ▶ Children First - 01506 652436
- ▶ You can email Claire Quinn, West Lothian Council -[kinship@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:kinship@westlothian.gov.uk)
- ▶ Or
- ▶ Caroline Millar, Children First - [westlothian@children1st.org.uk](mailto:westlothian@children1st.org.uk)

# Questions

- ▶ 1 If you went home tonight and were asked to care for a relatives child, what would you need from -
- ▶ Your employer
- ▶ Financially
- ▶ Family
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Housing

# Questions

- ▶ What could you or your organisations do to support Kinship carers and young people?



**DADS ROCK**

**CHILDREN THRIVE WHEN DADS  
THRIVE**



# CONTEXT



HAD A BABY!

STARTED AS A PLAYGROUP

EDINBURGH, GLASGOW

NORTH AYRSHIRE, ONLINE

AND NOW...DUNDEE!

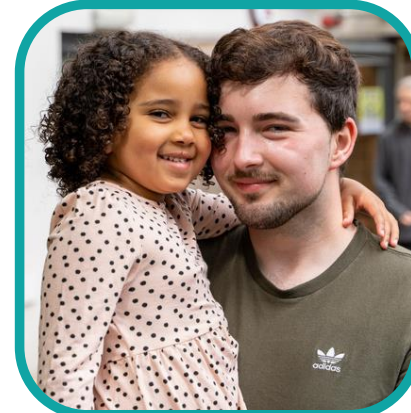
# OUTPUTS



1-1 Support



workshops



young dads



Dad AND  
CHILD GROUPs



Peer Support  
(vIA wHATSAPP)



sOCIAL SUPPORT &  
ACTIVITIES



Peer Support  
(national)

# NUMBERS



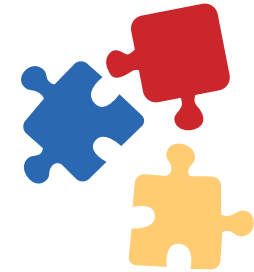
3000 PEOPLE WORKED WITH US IN 2024

600 + IN OUR WHATSAPP COMMUNITY

8 STAFF MEMBERS

4 STAFF IN EDIN, 2 NA, 1 GLAS + 1 DUNDEE

# PARTNERSHIPS



# PARTNERSHIPS



- NORTH AYRSHIRE - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP
- A SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW FOUND BETTER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FATHER MAY HAVE PREVENTED THE CHILD DEATH
- OCT 2023 - 2 DADS WORKERS -FULLY EMBEDDED IN THE NHS TEAMS
- FUNDED BY THE WFWF
- 98 FAMILIES SUPPORTED TO DATE!

# HOW?



“Healthy  
barriers”



“flexible  
communication”



“practical  
support”



“Child Focused”



# IMPACT AREAS



- PARENTAL SKILLS
- ANTENATAL PREP
- RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ISOLATION
- LIFE SKILLS
- PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH
- DOMESTIC ABUSE
- WHOLE FAMILY SUPPORT
- CHILD MENTAL HEALTH
- HOUSING AND BENEFITS
- AND MANY MORE...

# BROKEN RECORD



- DADS ROCK STARTED IN 2012
- HOW HAVE WE IMPROVED SUPPORT FOR DADS IN THAT TIME?
- I FEEL LIKE A BROKEN RECORD
- FOR THE SAKE OF ALL OF OUR BAIRNS, AND FAMILIES WE NEED TO CHANGE
- IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE



# BREAKING THE CYCLE



- WE SUPPORT CARE EXPERIENCED FAMILIES ACROSS SCOTLAND
- THE CYCLE JUST REPEATS...PARENTS ARE CARE EXPERIENCED, THEIR CHILDREN BECOME CARE EXPERIENCED
- CAR CRASH/FIRE FIGHTING - CHOOSE YOUR METAPHOR
- WE STILL NEED MORE EARLY INTERVENTION

WE NEED TO ENGAGE WITH **ALL** THE FAMILY

# WHAT FAMILIES SAY



“

Being raised by my aunt and not feeling like I had a proper family and when me and my partner had our kid I felt like I finally had that and wanted to cling to it so badly. I feel like I was living with PTSD around it and now that I've lost that it's like living through the trauma again

”

# CHILD DEATHS



- THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL HUB

- A National Hub for Child Death Reviews has been created

In 2021, the National Hub for Child Death Reviews (CDR) was created to make sure a review took place after every death of a child in Scotland.

The Hub's focus is to use evidence to inform practice, so that fewer children and young people die.

# CHILD DEATHS



- “SCOTLAND HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST MORTALITY RATES FOR UNDER-18S IN WESTERN EUROPE, WITH AROUND 300 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DYING EACH YEAR”
- “IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT AROUND A QUARTER OF THOSE DEATHS COULD BE PREVENTED”
- 75 YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COULD BE HERE TODAY

# DADS SURVEY

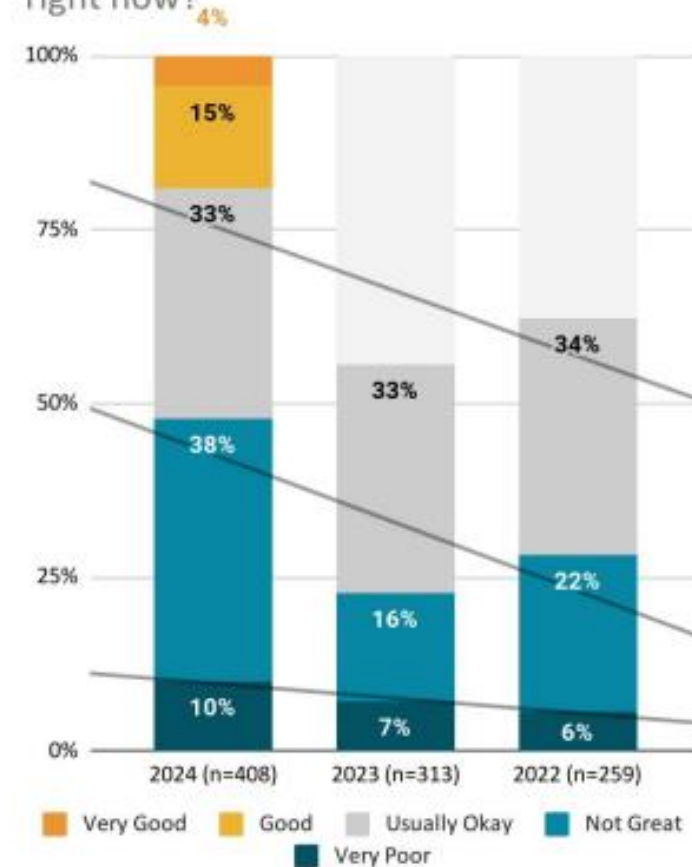


## Dads Mental Health

Dads' mental health appears to have deteriorated significantly over the last two years.

- 48% - My mental health is 'not great' or 'very poor'.

How would you rate your mental health right now?



# DADS SURVEY



## Dads not living with their child(ren's) other parent

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The stress of a strained relationship was often exacerbated by the public services responsible for ensuring child welfare after a separation:

“Not seeing my children and being accused of all sorts in the court system has had a very negative impact on my mental health.”

“Having to pay court fees and solicitor fees has basically crippled me. Debt is too much”

Many are struggling as a direct result of being separated from their children:

“Seeing my son every second weekend has killed my self worth as a dad. I can't do anything about it even though I'm trying so hard. It's impacting my self worth, career, social interactions. I am as a person who strives to achieve the best for myself and for the people I love. I lose hope every time I don't see my son.”



# SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEWS



- FINDINGS OF A 2021 SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

“THE FATHER AVOIDED PROFESSIONALS BY CLAIMING TO ALWAYS BE WORKING AND PROFESSIONALS DID NOT MAKE ENOUGH EFFORT TO ENGAGE WITH HIM.”

- FINDINGS OF A 2019 SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

“THERE WAS SCANT INFORMATION ON THE FATHER’S PAST BECAUSE HE WAS NOT SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT PERSON IN THE LIVES OF EITHER THE MOTHER OR THE BABY.”

# SCAFFOLD



## DADS SCAFFOLD CHILDREN

76% OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRISON HAVE AN ABSENT FATHER

“LIVING IN A HOME WITHOUT A DAD IS MORE HIGHLY CORRELATED WITH SUICIDE  
AMONG CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS THAN ANY OTHER FACTOR”

## THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT INVOLVING DADS



# CHALLENGES



## NARRATIVE

“aww, thats a nice thing  
for dads.”

“dads deserve support  
too”

“dads are hard to reach”

“children thrive when  
dads thrive”

“dads are valuable  
members of a family”

“supporting dad is  
supporting mum”

# STILL GOT HOPE



- WE'RE ALL HERE TODAY BECAUSE WE WANT OUR SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES TO BE BETTER
- WE STILL HAVE HOPE
- THIS IS WHAT THE PROMISE IS ABOUT

“THERE IS LIGHT,  
BUT THERE'S A TUNNEL TO CRAWL THROUGH”

SCOTT HUTCHISON (FRIGHTENED RABBIT)



TIME TO WORK!

# QUESTIONS



1. WHAT'S STOPPING US AS A COUNTRY FROM ENGAGING WITH DADS/MEN?

2. WHAT WILL YOU DO TO MOVE SCOTLAND FORWARD AND ENGAGE WITH DADS/MEN?



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DISCUSSIONS





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**WORLD CAFÉ - CHALLENGES**



# LUNCH & NETWORKING





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WORLD CAFÉ - REFLECTIONS





## The Promise

Childrens Rights and Youth Justice

**“Distressed not disruptive”**

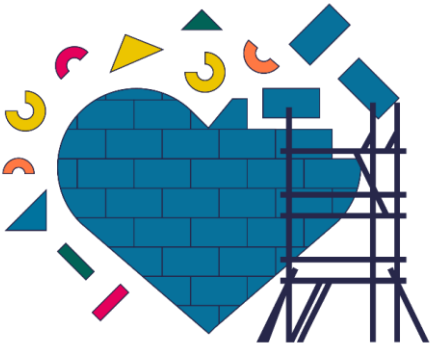


**What is the Promise?**

**How does the 'system' evolve?**



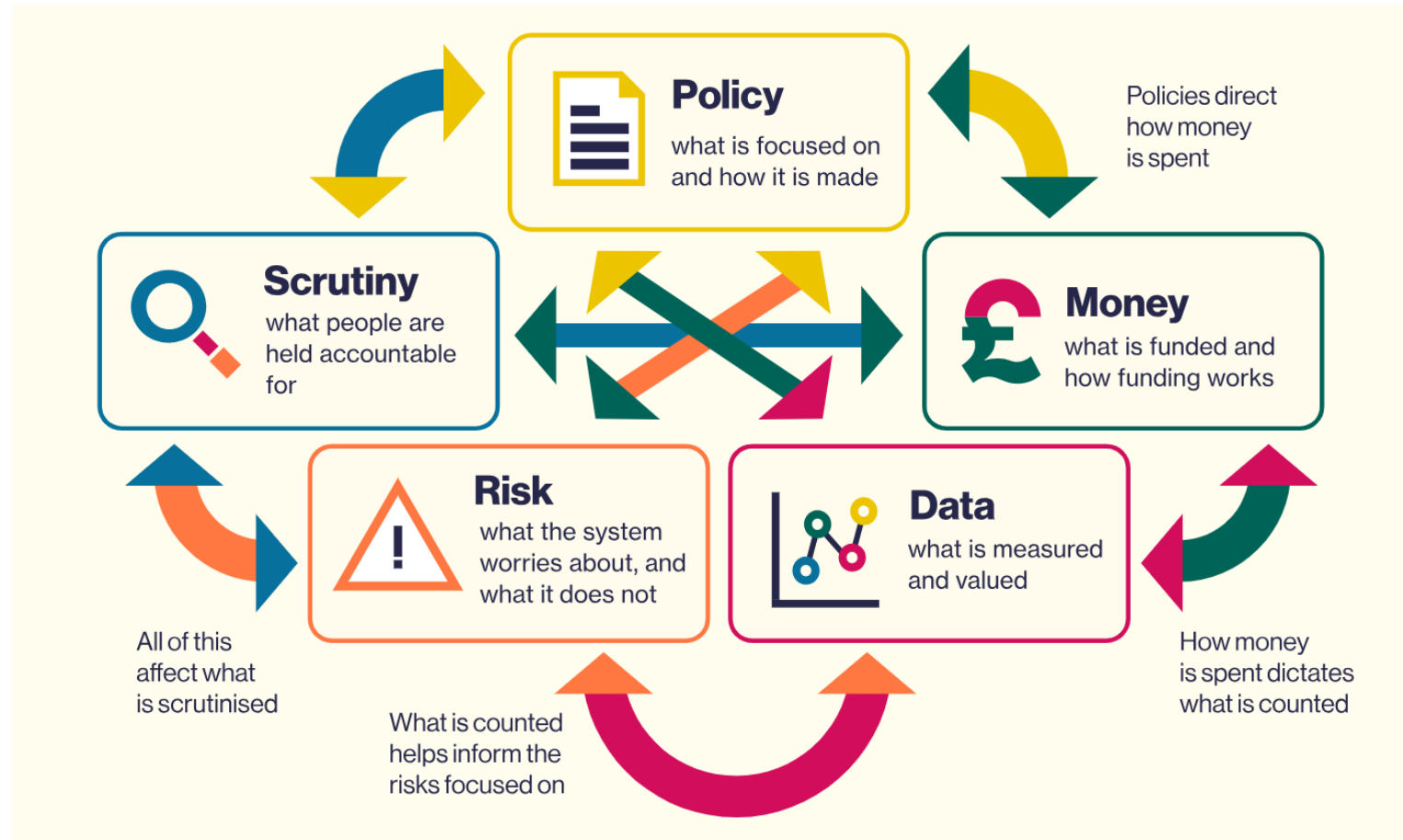
**A common knowledge, common understanding and a common intention!**



- Family engagement and participation –  
an example of Must, Should and Could  
Language  
Neurodiversity  
Rights  
Preparation for meetings  
Poverty

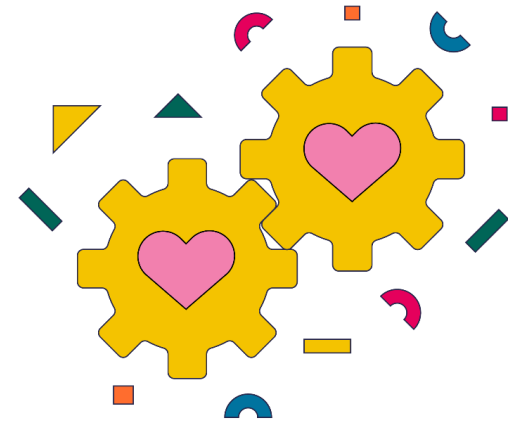


So what? What now?



**Thank You**

**Questions?**



Kerry Watson, Mediation and Whole Family Support      &      Jim Gray, SCCR

# Systemic Family Practice in Midlothian





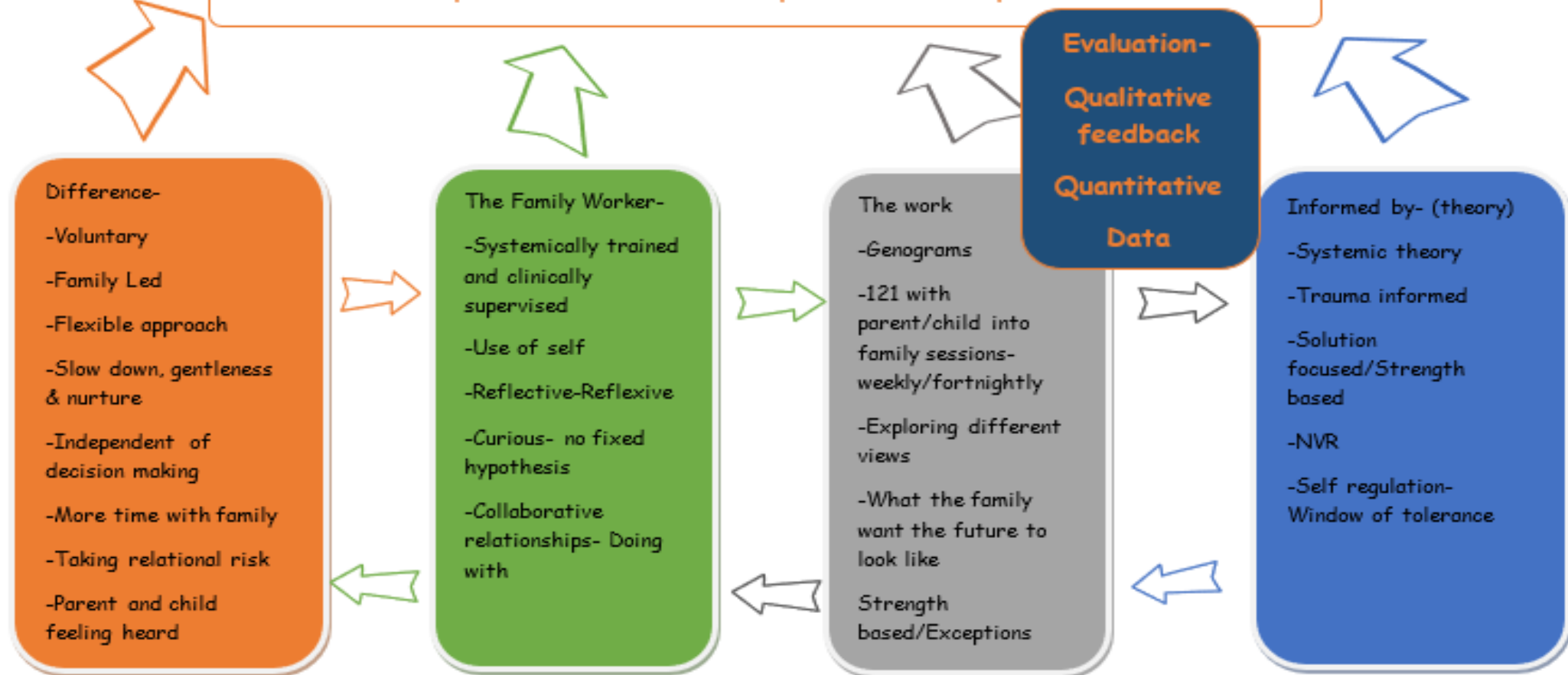
## Context and background

- Systemically trained workers based in CP team- Wanting to do things differently
- The Promise- focus on therapeutic family support- intensive in nature
- Started with 0.8 FTE worker and developed to 1.8FTE
- Broad range of families supported. Support tailored to their needs
- Focus on whole family wherever possible through Family Sessions

# Systemic Family Framework

What we see depends on how we look at it

**Outcomes-** Improve Communication- Improve relationships- Reduce conflict-



## Family Sessions offer families•

- Space to talk- A safe space to talk, connect and communicate with one another
- Family led change-The opportunity for family to work together and explore helpful ways of working through a worry or problem which are led by the family.
- Relationships, communication and connection- A space to safely explore relationships and think about how everyone communicates with one another



# What we currently offer

- **Family Sessions offer families:**

- **Space to talk-** A safe space to talk, connect and communicate with one another
- **Family led change-** The opportunity for family to work together and explore helpful ways of working through a worry or problem which are led by the family.
- **Relationships, communication and connection-** A space to safely explore relationships and think about how everyone communicates with one another

- **Family Workers are:**

- **Independent-** Family Workers are independent workers and are not there to tell a family what to do. They do not make decisions and will not replace other professionals such as a social worker or health visitors. The family worker will remain neutral by not only focusing on one family member, but making sure all family members have their voice heard in sessions.
- **Family Focused-** Family Workers believe that families are best placed to make their own changes, knowing themselves best and finding their own solutions to any difficulties they face. At times may just need some support and an opportunity to explore issues and worries.
- **NVR and Systemic blend-** Calm and connected groupwork

# Strengths and Challenges

## Strengths

Systemically and NVR trained

Independent of decision making

Relational risk- less task  
orientated and family led

Voluntary

Based in Children's services-  
visible/accessible

Different approach to engage  
families

## Challenges

New service- not been done  
before- Not therapy!

Size and scope

Expectations from family and  
organisation

Based in Children's services-  
visible/accessible

Crisis vs planned work

# What families have said

## Parent/Carer Feedback on Calm and Connected

*"This group has helped me so much. It's been great talking and sharing my thoughts with others who aren't social workers. I've gained some confidence and reassurance that I'm not alone"*

**Where they started- George Family-** Fractured, on top of each other, we don't have space, can get on with each other sometimes but there is too much drama/emotion. Quick arguments, quick to temper

**Where they ended-** Calmer and have come a long way, we have grown up a bit, we can get on with each other now and are happier, I am a mum now and the children are children, still stressful but it is at an expected level. I have understood I have children with different needs so I'm more compassionate with myself.

# Working With African Families

Presentation - 27th March 2025

Visit Our Website

[www.passion4fusion.com](http://www.passion4fusion.com)





**the promise**  
**scotland**



## Who Are we?

Passion 4 Fusion is an organisation dedicated to enhancing the equality rights of diverse black and multiethnic families across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

This toolkit was produced in collaboration with IRISS, an organisation that gathers external research and knowledge to better the quality of Scotland's social service sector. They work alongside individuals, workers and organisations to explore new methods of working within the social service sphere.

The toolkit aims to fulfil the objectives of The Promise Scotland, an initiative that aims to progress the outcome of experiences lived by children and young people in the care system



# New Systems



Families who have moved from other countries are being exposed to a new system and legal guidelines

Parenting in their country of origin may look different

Not fully understanding the laws of a new environment can be disempowering for parents



# Lack of Knowledge, Racial Bias and Stigma

A lack of understanding one's cultural background and identity can greatly impact the relationship between families and their social workers

We found, through personal cases, that many families did not feel like social workers had the needed knowledge to best support them and felt like their culture was misunderstood

This means decisions that are not best suited to the welfare of the child could end up being made



# Goals and Objectives

## Who Will Use the Toolkit?

The aim is for this toolkit to be used by professional practitioners and workers in the social care field/Workforce

Anyone within this sector who wishes to deliver best practices to African Diaspora children and families

## What Does it Aim to Do?

Provide external background on the experiences of African Diaspora and multi-ethnic families that have been long ignored

Strengthen the relationship between the social services and multiethnic families

Toolkit guidance is not intended to replace protection guidance and best practices but to strengthen the knowledge to fill the gaps for the best outcome when supporting families in the system



# Strategy

The resources in the toolkit have been split into 4 individual categories:

## **PAUSE – Think About Cultural Safety**

The Cultural Safety Self-reflection tool is a guide that allows workers to reflect on the understanding of their own culture in order to determine how to face cultures that aren't their own

## **LEVEL – Build Trust with Families**

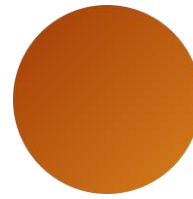
The promise states that 'Scotland must place trust in its workforce to develop and nurture relationships, enable their capacity to care and love and provide support to make this part of daily life'

## **LISTEN – Facilitate Supportive Conversation**

The two-house tool activity allows for professionals to listen and respect both experiences in a family's country of origin and new place of residence

## **LEARN – Reflect, Share and Shape the System**

The group discussion tool can be utilised for the LEARN objective and best used alongside colleagues in groups or pairs



## A case study:

Mr and Mrs Adewale and their three children aged 4, 7, and 10 migrated to Scotland from Nigeria five years ago in search of better opportunities. Ade (dad) works long hours in construction at night, while Funmi (mum) balances shift work with caring for the children. The family is deeply rooted in their cultural traditions and maintains strong ties with their religious beliefs. Mum expressed that they have to make sure their children are disciplined and must do as they are told.

In the past year, the Adewale family began facing increased stress due to financial difficulties and Ade's long working hours. Two times the children have not been picked up from school and the school has raised concerns with the parents but not supported them. One of their daughters has been reported to take other people's snacks at school while the other is exhibiting difficulty concentrating and increased irritability. When the children were not picked up the third time, A concerned teacher reported to social services, triggering an investigation because the home environment is 'high risk'

The situation escalated rapidly, and two of the children were temporarily placed in foster care.

The parents don't trust the system because of the way they have been treated. They also have got a lot of information from their community about Social Work systems which has furthered their mistrust



# Thank you

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[www.passion4fusion.com](http://www.passion4fusion.com)





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DISCUSSIONS





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# FINAL QUESTIONS