

Keeping the promise: A local perspective



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Introduction

Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor – the promise

On 5 February 2020, when the Independent Care Review concluded its work, responsibility to #KeepThePromise was handed over to the many and varied custodians of the 'care system'—and the wider 'systems' that shape the lives of children, young people, families, and care-experienced adults.

Since then, the care community,
who gave so much to the Review,
has been waiting for the promise to be kept.

The care community was clear that keeping the promise does not rely on any single institution or organisation – it is all of us, every day.

So, although hundreds of pages long, detailing an enormous amount of change, this report does not come close to capturing the breadth of the work happening every day across Scotland; it is merely a snapshot of progress made by Scotland's 32 local areas and all the partner organisations who work within them.

It is intended to be useful to drive further change.

At the risk of putting you off reading on... here are some of the limitations:

- While responsibility for a significant amount of the change demanded by the Independent Care Review does sit with local authorities – their duties alone are very far from the entirety of the change needed - meaning this snapshot report offers only a partial account of Scotland's progress.
- Whilst this report is published at the approximate mid-point of Scotland's commitment to #KeepThePromise (February 2020 to December 2030), as data collection, reporting and publication structures lag and are not aligned, this snapshot report cannot be viewed as marking progress at half-way.
- As a snapshot report, it captures data taken from a moment in time – and therefore does not illustrate trends over years.

- It could also be argued that as this report relies on information in the public domain and reports published by local authorities - content may be biased.
- Most importantly, this report is not an account of how the care community feels about the change – the only measure that really matters.

Data alone is not enough to tell meaningful stories about people's lives. In partnership with COSLA and Scottish Government The Promise Scotland has been developing [The Promise Story of Progress](#). It is this approach that blends experience, national and local change that will truly help understand progress.

Whilst recognising its limitations, there is still a lot to take from this report. Years after the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and Scotland making its promise, commitment remains strong, driving local changes tailored to meet local needs.

The report also gives a sense of the range of work including - and beyond - what is traditionally considered 'children's services' – and reasons to celebrate positive changes taking place in classrooms, health services, within the police, across third sector organisations and communities – I could go on. And on.

Commitment to #KeepThePromise continues to grow across Scotland.

With the paid and unpaid workforce working incredibly hard every day, with compassion and humility, to support children, young people and families.

It is people that are changing the way services work - both nationally and locally – to make a real difference to the lives of children, families, and care experienced adults. They're making concerted efforts to listen closely to what families say they need and to respond wherever they can; they're working with new partners to co-design holistic ways of doing things; they're rethinking the language they use; they're challenging stigma, systems and colleagues that getting in the way.

Some local authorities have made changes their local planning, reporting and accountability structures – and are demonstrating what changes to legislation and national approaches are needed to enhance their efforts.

The detail in this report reinforces that, although they may have been difficult to achieve, a lot of the changes that have been made are the more straightforward ones. And firmly backs-up [The Oversight Board's](#) assessment in [Report THREE](#) that Scotland is on the right path, but pace of change is not as fast as it should be.

This leaves a lot of ground to be made up over the coming 5½ years.

This report offers some insights into what must happen right now that isn't. Including that, over the coming years, Scotland needs to wade much deeper into the hard stuff, be much braver and bolder when tackling the more complex, seemingly intractable, challenges. That way, the barriers will be overcome and become bridges.

Lack of consistency comes through strongly.

However, it is important to read each local area profile in its own context. They all contain key information about demographics, with examples of what is working well. Direct comparisons between them would overlook the distinct opportunities and challenges within each place.

That said, keeping the promise cannot remain a postcode lottery, and local authorities do need to learn from one another about what is working where, and why – and maybe how. With leadership brave enough to face any hard truths about why, in other parts of Scotland, life for children, families and care experienced adults is better, and change is happening faster. And doing all they can within their gift – such as allocate resources, empower staff to make decisions, and engender the right culture.

Cuts to public services have put real pressure on staff. The workforce plays a vital role in making sure children, families and care experienced adults get the right support, especially when they've built strong relationships and have an understanding of trauma. It is becoming harder to recruit and keep people with teams talking about burnout and being overloaded with work, which makes it challenging to ensure children, families and care experienced adults get the consistent, relationship-based support that they need, and that Scotland promised them.

Recruitment crisis does not refer simply to the traditional 'workforce' with localities reporting the need for more foster carers, especially in the context of keeping brothers and sisters together and in their local community.

Leadership at every level is essential, people need to be trusted to use their judgement, and do what's right for the children, families and care experienced adults they work for.

A well-supported and well-resourced workforce can – and wants – to deliver on the promise; an overstretched, overworked and under-resourced workforce cannot.

Reading the profiles shows just how much the burden on local authorities' workforce is compounded by the sheer volume and duplication of reporting requirements in mechanisms that all relate to the 'care system'. A streamlined approach to reporting will bring a much-needed reduction in bureaucracy and enable the workforce to focus on delivery. Something that needs to be reflected in how services are scrutinised and what is meant by 'performance measures'.

As well as devastating families, the global pandemic had an impact at the very moment when implementation of the Independent Care Review's conclusions was due to start. With the cost-of-living crisis making it even harder for so many already on their knees to get back up. Today the looming changes to welfare benefits are causing further concern.

The impact of poverty on Scotland's communities is getting in the way of the promise being kept. The local area profiles throughout this report demonstrate the pervasive impact of poverty on children and families. Living in poverty can mean facing impossible choices, where families are forced to sacrifice one essential need for another, making it incredibly difficult to meet all of their children's basic needs and support their wellbeing.

The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have contributed to why too many local authorities report that their resources continue to be dedicated to responding to children, families, and care experienced adults who are experiencing crisis, with scant remaining to dedicate to anything else. In part it is these two catastrophes, both unforeseen five years ago, that has meant the shift towards prevention that was expected by this point, and remains necessary for the promise to be kept, has not yet happened.

Prevention sounds so simple: making sure appropriate, non-stigmatising support is available to children, families, and care experienced adults when they

need it – before life gets so complicated, and issues have become urgent – and for as long as it is needed.

Keeping the promise requires coordination across public services, including local and national government. Adapting service models to respond to the changing needs of children, families, and care experienced adults requires resourcing as well as well-trained, skilled, and confident staff. This demands multi-agency, cross-sector planning and working – something this report makes clear is still too often the exception and not the rule - despite 30 Children's Services Planning Partnerships with this as their remit.

The risks of not doing this are considerably greater than the risks of doing so. As well as the moral argument, the 'cost avoidance' argument cannot be refuted - having more families staying safe together and fewer children living outside their family, and the subsequent reduction in 'failure demand' make financial sense.

Scotland must expect, as a direct consequence of the success of the Scottish Government's Whole Family Wellbeing approach, two significant changes:

- Services designed to meet the needs of children, families, and care experienced adults, realised through greater collaboration to better plan, deliver and assess holistic approaches that reflect real lives - backed up with data that focuses on what matters and is shared, as appropriate across services and organisations.
- Consequently, more children staying with their families wherever safe to do so, resulting in a smaller, more specialised 'care system'.

One that is specifically designed to love and care for the children and young people who, after all options of staying with their family have been exhausted either on a permanent or temporary basis, rely on the state, that becomes their family.

The vision is that one day, keeping the promise will be "just what Scotland does".

However, real and persistent barriers remain. In addition to those not predicted when the promise was made, stubborn, deep-rooted system-wide issues continue to slow progress. Analysis of the local area profiles highlight some of these issues that must be addressed for change to happen. Whilst some do

require involvement from the Scottish Government, local authorities must be clear on their role and responsibility to drive change.

You will see later in this report analysis of what is helping and what is getting in the way of change. The findings reflect the five recurring issues identified whilst devising Plan 24-30. Public Sector Reform levers that manifest themselves across the entire 'pipeline' of decision-making: policy to data to money to scrutiny to risk.

They are interlinked with both a national and a local aspect and have a seismic impact on whether services are available to those who need them, when they need them. They affect how these services are experienced – and not just within local authorities, or just in the 'care sector'.

If Public Sector Reform interests you, please read more about these in the Meeting in the Middle section of this report which analyses what has been learned – bear in mind again, using partial information.

[Plan 24-30](#) delves deeper into systemic bridges and barriers and has connected programmes of work across the five change levers demonstrating how they need to – and can - shift from thwarting Scotland's ability to change to accelerating it.

One of my responsibilities is to tell the hard truths.

This work surfaced stories not far enough away from the ones heard that led to the Independent Care Review, and those that were heard during it – the very reasons the review was necessary.

Yes, these are increasingly less frequent, more isolated - but not sufficiently dissimilar.

Despite efforts, 'systems' are not yet universally listening to needs and then changing what they do to meet these - the voices of the care community are not yet universally at the heart of change. Resulting in a disconnect between organisations' stated commitment to #KeepThePromise and the experience of children, families, and care experienced adults.

Not buying a Granny a bed so she can look after her grandchild, or a Mum a washing machine so her children can have clean clothes, not paying for a sports kit or the fee for a school holiday, not supporting a young person to stay with

their foster family beyond their 18th / 19th /20th birthday, not finding a safe place to stay when they are leaving care are all clear examples of not keeping the promise.

It is unacceptable that a Granny or a child is sleeping on a floor, that children are ashamed because they're dirty, are deprived of important childhood moments, making special memories with their friends, that a youngster isn't living with the family they love and who loves them, is scared, lonely, unsafe.

Some readers from local authorities will recognise these examples, I'm sure.

And know of others.

Some will be devastated that their 'systems' prevent them accessing a few hundred pounds to make life easier and better. Others will be concerned that 'adjacent' systems - like housing or mental health or justice – do not yet fully understand what is needed, or do not have the stock to meet needs.

The voices of care experienced babies, children, young people, and care experienced adults are not in this report –this is the next phase of the Story of Progress work. How the care community feels is the most important issue of all, and they may have many more of these stories to tell.

Children, families and care experienced adults continue to be held to account by the 'systems', every day for what they do and don't do – often with devastating, life-changing consequences. Yet, no equivalent mechanism to hold the system to account exists.

Not only are the examples above real, they also highlight the corrosive impact of that seemingly nebulous 'cultural' barrier. Of what happens when someone does not care enough about the things that matter most to children, families, and care experienced adults, so does not make decisions that reflect the promise.

There is a saying "culture eats strategy for breakfast". For keeping the promise to become the "way we do things around here", across Scotland, every day, barriers must be removed – there can be no excuses for behaviours that are not values-led.

Being at the 'top' of an organisational hierarchy comes with its own set of responsibilities, but leadership is not the sole domain of seniority – so my plea to everyone committed to keep the promise is please do all that you can to be the change and drive the change.

All of us need to be in this together.

Keeping the promise depends on you.

About this document

Fraser McKinlay, Chief Executive,

The Promise Scotland

What this document is - and is not

'Keeping the promise: A local perspective' provides a high-level snapshot of activity to keep the promise. It is designed to bring greater visibility to just some of the work, curated in one place, that is happening across Scotland to keep the promise by 2030. It is by no means exhaustive - indeed it will only scratch the surface – but it does at least provide a picture of the commitment and activity that exists across Scotland to improve the lives of children, young people, families and care experienced adults.

This output has been created by The Promise Scotland in a relatively short time frame, and I am very grateful to colleagues who have re-prioritised work to deliver it. The timescales have also meant we haven't been able to share or test its contents with local areas - that process will now happen, engaging with colleagues in local areas to check accuracy and receive feedback.

The area profiles are descriptive and should not be used to try and compare progress or performance across areas. The report draws only on the most relevant local data that is publicly available and which, without a much fuller understanding of local context, cannot be used to reach judgments on how things are going in a particular place.

Most importantly, because it relies on existing publicly available data, the report does not reflect the views and experiences of children, young people, families and adults with experience of the 'care system'. In the end, the extent to which the promise is being kept will be felt in people's lives, and this work is not able to reflect that. That is still to come, through the further development of The Promise Story Progress (see below).

Whether the overall numbers of children and young people in the 'care system' go up or down, what Scotland really needs to be sure of is that every single child and young person is in the best place for them, with the care they need. That requires a shift away from counting numbers to meeting needs; and perceptions that any movement in numbers upwards or downwards are 'positive' or 'negative'.

The report should, however, be used to stimulate questions; encourage courageous conversations; and support further learning and improvement. Everyone has something to learn from everyone else. While the Promise Scotland has been involved in lots of the work captured here, we have also learned a lot during this process and we will consider how that learning will be reflected in our work to support Scotland to keep the promise in the weeks and months ahead.

How has this document been developed?

There are a few things to say about how The Promise Scotland has gone about curating this report:

- We have used primarily publicly available information and data – this was to avoid asking an already stretched workforce to provide more information, but it does mean that there may be some gaps or some of the narrative may be a little out of date.
- It also means that the local area profiles have drawn on information primary from local authority areas. That is because the majority of local data and information relevant to the promise is gathered and reported on the basis of Scotland's 32 local authority areas, and councils tend to put more of their information into the public domain through committee reporting etc. We had hoped to pull together profiles based on 14 territorial health board areas, but it was simply too challenging to do in the time available.
- It also means that the information presented here is predominantly about children and families, as that is where the bulk of the required data and reporting is focused. We are therefore acutely aware that data and information on the experiences of care experienced adults is not well represented.

- The area profiles are, by design, not entirely consistent – much depends on what local places report themselves and, to some extent, the fact that different members of The Promise Scotland team were involved in the writing, depending on who was most familiar with the area.
- It does not capture the breadth of work carried out by the full range of partners of local areas, particularly the third sector, health, colleges, universities, police, fire and rescue and other national bodies operating locally.
- The local area profiles make use of the [What Matters Questions](#), to consider examples in the context of what the Independent Care Review heard.
- The local area profiles provide links to many local strategies, reports and other information, and readers are encouraged to make use of these to explore the breadth and depth of activity. Apart from anything else, this report shines a light on the enormous amount of time, energy and resource that goes into the creation of strategies, plans and reports. It surely points to an opportunity to declutter a very busy governance and accountability landscape for local partners.

How does this document link to the work of The Promise Scotland?

The Promise Scotland's job is to support and monitor the change required by the Independent Care Review, so that Scotland keeps the promise by 2030. Since being incorporated in 2021, The Promise Scotland has worked hard to establish strong, trusted relationships with national and local bodies across Scotland. Consequently, those with responsibility for keeping the promise feel able to share the obstacles and barriers they face, as well as their successes and bridges.

As we reach the midway point for keeping the promise by 2030, The Promise Scotland will continue to provide support and challenge, locally and nationally, in a way that drives change, improvement and consistency.

[The Promise Scotland's Strategic Work Programme](#) for 2025/26 sets out our priorities for the next 12-18 months or so. This local visibility work will be helpful

as we progress the Plan 24-30 route maps and the further development of the Promise Story of Progress.

Plan 24-30

[Plan 24-30](#) is Scotland's route map to keep the promise by 2030. It has a static destination— to keep the promise by 2030. Since its launch in June 2024, it has continued to be updated as Scotland makes progress across the five foundations of the promise. We have used the themes under the five foundations to cluster some of the examples of activity in the local area profiles:

- [VOICE](#)
 - The themes under voice are about ensuring the voices of the care community is prioritised. Voice underpins the entirety of Plan 24-30 and is essential to the promise being kept.
- [FAMILY](#)
 - The themes under this foundation are about supporting families to stay together, wherever it is safe to do so.
- [CARE](#)
 - The themes under this foundation are about ensuring that children and families' experiences of the 'care system' are positive and supportive.
- [PEOPLE](#)
 - The themes under this foundation are about supporting the workforce and the system around them.
- [SCAFFOLDING](#)
 - The themes under this foundation are about the ways in the 'care system' relates to, and is dependent on, other systems and structures.

The development of this 'local perspective' document will support the ongoing work to develop route maps, and readers are encouraged to collaborate on this work by connecting via plan2430@thepromise.scot. Scotland's journey to 2030 is not the work of a single organisation: collaboration is key.

Understanding Progress – [The Promise](#)

[Story of Progress](#)

In December 2024, the [Promise Progress Framework](#) was published, populated with national level data across 10 vision statements, 18 outcomes and 49 indicators. Taken together, this information helps answer the question: how is Scotland doing in its progress with the promise? This was the first part of the Story of Progress; the remaining two questions are set out in the diagram below:



As a result of this work, Scotland will have an agreed way of tracking progress and a clear route to ensuring it is felt in the lives and experiences of children, families, and the care experienced community. Understanding progress across the breadth and depth of the promise requires very different types of data, collected and analysed at different levels, at different frequencies, and in different ways. That means all three questions need to be answered for Scotland to say it understands progress. Scotland will only be able to tell a different story of care when it has developed an understanding of the real lives of the children behind the statistics.

COSLA, The Scottish Government and The Promise Scotland are committed to developing the mechanisms required to answer the organisational level question and the care community impact question. The intention is that these mechanisms can be added to the Promise Progress Framework and all data contained within it can then be used to understand the Promise Story of Progress at all levels on an ongoing basis.

Finally, The Promise Scotland provides secretariat support for [The Oversight Board](#), the body responsible for monitoring, tracking and reporting on Scotland's progress to keep the promise. Increasingly, the Oversight Board will draw on the data that becomes available through the Story of Progress development, enabling them to make even more rounded assessments on progress, locally and nationally.

A note on Language

"Scotland must change the language of care. Language must be easily understood, be positive and must not create or compound stigma." (the promise, page 87)

The Independent Care Review heard from children and young people that language can compound a sense of being different, exacerbate low self-esteem and is stigmatising. Many of Scotland's data collections use these words as they are established in law to reflect a legal process or in reference to a specific dataset.

In developing this report, effort has been made to avoid using acronyms and terms that are disrespectful and stigmatising. Doing so has required a two-step process applied throughout the report, as outlined below:

1. In narrative sections of this report, written by The Promise Scotland, the terms below are used instead of the 'system' language usually in place. The table below provides a key for this language to avoid any ambiguity:

'Looked after' child or young person: child or young person cared for by the local authority

Placement: Home

Placed: Living

Starting to be 'looked after': Entering the 'care system'

Care leavers: Care experienced young people and adults

Children 'looked after' at home: Children cared for by the local authority at home

Special schools: Additional support needs schools

2. In the local area profiles the data presented uses the language used by the 'system'. To avoid confusion on data terms and what they relate to, single quotation marks have been used to highlight where there is language in published data that must change. To make clear how what is written relates to data collection and reporting, sources are provided throughout.
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Local area profiles

A note

Each local area profile contains a suite of publicly available data relevant to the promise. To aid understanding, the citations below detail where this has been sourced from. The citations include details of the data’s source: column name, table name, title of the published document or file, publisher, date of publication, and weblink.

The data includes both the most recent published figures (as of 22 April 2025) and the figures for 2020 (or the nearest year available), to align with the commitment to the promise. The 2020 figures, however, reflect the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so are not a direct comparison.

In some instances, data is available, but the numbers involved are so small that there is a potential risk of identification. In these cases, despite the data existing in the public domain, this report does not contain these numbers.

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

Indicator	Data Citations
Number and rate of children in the ‘care system’ in Scotland during the year	'Children looked after on 31 July 2024; 'Children looked after on 31 July 2024 as a percentage of the population ' on 'Table 3.1 Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after during the year and comparison of reported and derived counts of looked after children on 31 July ': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/

	'Children looked after on 31 July 2020; Children looked after on 31 July 2019 as a percentage of the 0-17 population' ' on 'Table 3.1: Children starting and ceasing to be looked after, by local authority, 2019-20': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number of children (0-17 years) entering the 'care system' during the year	'Number of children starting to be looked after between 01 August 2023 to 31 July 2024' on 'Table 3.1 Number of children starting and ceasing to be looked after during the year and comparison of reported and derived counts of looked after children on 31 July ': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'Starting to be looked after during 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020' on 'Table 3.1: Children starting and ceasing to be looked after, by local authority, 2019-20': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and percentage of children in the 'care system' who are living at home with parents each year	'At home with parents; Total' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'At home with parents; Total' on 'Table 3.3: Children looked after by type of accommodation and local authority, 31st July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021.

	https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and percentage of children in the 'care system' living in the community each year	'At home with parents; With friends / relatives; With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA; In other community; Total' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'At home with parents; With friends / relatives; With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA; In other community; Total' on 'Table 3.3: Children looked after by type of accommodation and local authority, 31st July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and percentage of children who are living in kinship care each year	'With friends / relatives; Total' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'With friends / relatives; Total' on 'Table 3.3: Children looked after by type of accommodation and local authority, 31st July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and percentage of children who are living in	'With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA; Total' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish

foster care each year	Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA; Total' on 'Table 3.3: Children looked after by type of accommodation and local authority, 31st July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and percentage of children who are living in residential care each year	'In local authority home/ Voluntary Home; In other residential care; Total' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'In local authority home/ Voluntary Home; In other residential care; Total' on 'Table 3.3: Children looked after by type of accommodation and local authority, 31st July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Rate of registrations to the child protection register from initial and pre-birth Case Conferences during the year	'Registrations from initial and pre-birth Planning Meetings Rate p/1,000 (0-17 years); Initial and Pre-Birth Planning Meetings; Registrations from initial and pre-birth Planning Meetings' on 'Table 1.3a Number and rate per 1,000 children of Child Protection Inter-Agency Referral Discussions (IRD), initial and pre-birth Planning Meetings and associated registrations by local authority 2023-24': 'Child Protection Statistics 2023-24 Publication Tables'. Scottish Government. 25 Mar 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-child-protection-2023-24/documents/

per 1,000 0-15 year olds	
Percentage of children with a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 months, 27-30 months, and 4-5 year reviews	'2022/23' on 'Table 4 - Child development at 13-15 month review: developmental concerns by Local Authority (Data file: 13 to 15 month data tables)': 'Early Child Development: Scotland 2022 to 2023'. Public Health Scotland. 23 Apr 2024. https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/early-child-development/early-child-development-statistics-scotland-2022-to-2023/ '2019/20' on 'Table 4 - Child development at 13-15 month review: developmental concerns by Local Authority (Data file: 13 to 15 month data tables)': 'Early Child Development: Scotland 2019-20'. Public Health Scotland. 27 Apr 2021. https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/early-child-development/early-child-development-scotland-201920/
Number and percentage of children living in temporary accommodation	'2024 30 Sep' on 'Table 19a: Number of children in temporary accommodation, by local authority on Worksheet 19: Number of children in temporary accommodation, by local authority': 'Tables - Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2024'. Scottish Government. 05 Feb 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2024/documents/ '2020' on 'Table 31: Number of children in temporary accommodation as 31 March, by local authority: 2002 to 2020': 'Homelessness in Scotland: 2019 to 2020'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2020. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2019-2020/documents/
Three year averaged estimate of the number and proportion of	'Average of columns: (Number of children) FYE 2022, 2023, and 2024' on 'Table 3: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK

children living
in relative
poverty after
housing costs

Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024>

'Average of columns: (Percentage of children) FYE 2022, 2023, and 2024' on 'Table 3: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024>

'Average of columns: (Number) 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22' on 'Local Authority': 'Local child poverty indicators 2021/22– estimates of rates, after housing costs'. End Child Poverty. 01 Jun 2023. <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2023/>

'Average of columns: (Percentage) 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22' on 'Local Authority': 'Local child poverty indicators 2021/22– estimates of rates, after housing costs'. End Child Poverty. 01 Jun 2023. <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty-2023/>

'Average of columns: (Number of children) FYE 2018, 2019, and 2020' on 'Table 3: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024>

'Average of columns: (Percentage of children) FYE 2018, 2019, and 2020' on 'Table 3: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United

	Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024
Three year averaged estimate of the number and proportion of children living in absolute poverty after housing costs	'Average of columns: (Number of children) FYE 2022, 2023, and 2024' on 'Table 4: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024 'Average of columns: (Number of children) FYE 2018, 2019, and 2020' on 'Table 4: Number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, Local Authority, FYE 2015 to 2024, United Kingdom': 'Children in low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2024'. UK Government (DWP/HMRC). 27 Mar 2025. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2024
Number of children on the Child Protection Register, with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified	'Domestic abuse' on 'Table 1.10 Number of concerns identified at Case Conferences of children who were on the Child Protection Register, on 31 July 2024': 'Child Protection Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 25 Mar 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-child-protection-2023-24/documents/ 'Domestic abuse' on 'Table 4.4: Concerns identified at the case conferences of children who were on the child protection register at 31 July 2020, by age, ethnicity, disability status and religion': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021.

	https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
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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.

Indicator	Data Citations
Rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year	'Total' on 'Table 4.4: Percentage attendance for children looked after within the last year by local authority and sex, 2022/23': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2022-23 - Table'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2024. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2022-23/documents/ 'total' on 'Table 3.4: Percentage attendance for children looked after within the last year by local authority and gender, 2020/21 ': 'Educational outcomes of looked after children 2020/21'. Scottish Government. 28 Jul 2022. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/documents/
Cases of exclusions per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year	' Exclusion Cases; Exclusions case rate per 1,000 pupils who were looked after' on 'Table 5.5: Cases and rates of exclusion for all children looked after within the last year, by local authority, 2022/23': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2022-23 - Table'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2024. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2022-23/documents/ 'Total; Exclusions case rate per 1000 pupils who were looked after' on 'Table 4.5: Cases and rates of exclusion for all children looked after within the last year, by local authority, 2020/21': 'Educational outcomes of looked after children 2020/21'. Scottish Government. 28 Jul 2022.

	https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/documents/
Percentage of school leavers who experienced care during their last year at school achieving at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better).	'Percentage with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5' on 'Table 1.5: Number and percentage of school leavers looked after within the last year by local authority and highest level of attainment achieved, 2023': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2022-23 - Table'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2024. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2022-23/documents/ 'Percentage with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5' on 'Table 1.5: Number and percentage of school leavers looked after within the last year by local authority and highest level of attainment achieved, 2022': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2021/22 Publication tables'. Scottish Government. 15 Aug 2023. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2021-22/documents/
Percentage of school leavers who experienced care during their last year at school achieving at least 1 SCQF level 6 qualification (or better).	'Percentage with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6' on 'Table 1.5: Number and percentage of school leavers looked after within the last year by local authority and highest level of attainment achieved, 2023': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2022-23 - Table'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2024. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2022-23/documents/ 'Percentage with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 6' on 'Table 1.5: Number and percentage of school leavers looked after within the last year by local authority and highest level of attainment achieved, 2022': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2021/22 Publication tables'. Scottish Government. 15 Aug 2023. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2021-22/documents/

Percentage of school leavers who experienced care during their last year at school entering a positive destination 9 months after leaving school.	'Initial Survey - Percentage in a positive destination; Follow-up Survey - Percentage in a positive destination' on 'Table 2.4a: Number and percentage of looked after school leavers in a positive initial and follow-up destination by local authority, 2022/23': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2022-23 - Table'. Scottish Government. 27 Aug 2024. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-for-looked-after-children-2022-23/documents/ 'Initial Survey - Percentage in a positive destination; Follow-up Survey - Percentage in a positive destination' on 'Table 2.4: Positive initial and follow-up destinations school leavers looked after for the full year by local authority, 2019/20': 'Education Outcomes for Looked After Children - 2019/20'. Scottish Government. 15 Jun 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2019-20/pages/3/
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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.

Indicator	Data Citations
The number and proportion of children 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers.	'With friends / relatives; With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA' on 'Table 3.3 Number of children looked after by placement type, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'With friends / relatives; With foster carers provided by LA; With foster carers purchased by LA' on 'Table 2.2: Number of children looked after by type of accommodation, 2002-2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021.

	https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number of children 'placed' in secure care at 31st July by Scottish local authorities, and as proportion of all children who are 'looked after'.	'2024 Number' on 'Table 2 Number and rate per 1,000 of children admitted to secure care during the year by local authority, 2013-2024': 'Secure Care Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 25 Feb 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-secure-care-2023-24/ '2020 Number' on 'Table 5.4: Number and rate of young people admitted to secure care accommodation by local authority, 2013-2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

Indicator	Data Citations
Number of referrals to the children's reporter on offence grounds	'Offence' on 'Table 1c - Children referred by referral type and local authority': 'SCRA's Online Statistics from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024'. Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). 10 Jun 2024. https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/official-statistics/ 'Offence' on 'Summary Table 1b- Children and young people referred by grounds of referral': 'Online Statistics 2019-20'. Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). 30 Jul 2020. https://www.scra.gov.uk/resources_articles_category/official-statistics/

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

Indicator	Data Citations
Proportion of young people who are eligible for aftercare services who are receiving services	'Percentage Receiving' on 'Table 4.5 Number of young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training by local authority, 31 July 2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'Percent receiving aftercare services' on 'Table 3.5: Young people eligible for aftercare services, percentage receiving aftercare and percentage in employment, education or training, by local authority, 31 July 2020': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/
Number and proportion of eligible young people who are going on to continuing care	'2024 Number; 2024 Rate per 1000' on 'Table 1.12 Number and rate per 1,000 young people ceasing to be looked after with a destination of Continuing Care by local authority, 2021-2024': 'Looked After Children Statistics 2023-24 Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 22 Apr 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-looked-after-children-2023-24/documents/ 'Continuing care' on 'Table 3.6: Number of children and young people ceasing to be looked after, by destination and local authority, 2019-20': 'Children's Social Work Statistics 2019-20 - Additional Tables'. Scottish Government. 30 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2019-20/

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

Indicator	Data Citations
Number of households living in temporary accommodation	'2024 30 Sep' on 'Table 17a: Households in temporary accommodation, by local authority': 'Tables - Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2024'. Scottish Government. 05 Feb 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2024/documents/ '2020 30-Sep' on 'Table 16a: Number of children in temporary accommodation, by local authority': 'Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2020'. Scottish Government. 23 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-update-30-september-2020/
Number and proportion of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness and as a proportion of all households assessed.	'2024 Year to end Sep' on 'Table 9a: Households assessed as homeless, by local authority': 'Tables - Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2024'. Scottish Government. 05 Feb 2025. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2024/documents/ '2019-20' on 'Table 8a: Households assessed as homeless, by local authority': 'Homelessness in Scotland: update to 30 September 2020'. Scottish Government. 23 Mar 2021. https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-update-30-september-2020/

Aberdeen City

Local Context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Aberdeen City has a [population](#) of approximately 224,000, including around 35,000 babies, children and young people aged 0 -15. Economically, Aberdeen is a hub for the energy sector, particularly oil and gas, and increasingly for renewable energy, making it one of the most [economically significant cities in the UK outside of London](#).

Aberdeen has [11 secondary schools, 48 primary schools, and several specialist support schools to meet a range of educational needs](#). There are 29 GP practices in the City of Aberdeen. It is also home to North East Scotland College (NESCol) and two universities - The University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University - both of which offer strong links to industries like engineering, technology, business and healthcare. The city blends a strong academic presence with cultural heritage and economic innovation, making it a unique environment for children and young people to grow and learn. Aberdeen City is part of the [North East Police Division](#), which is comprised of 40 police stations, and is served by [6 hospitals](#).

For children growing up in Aberdeen City, there are a wide range of accessible spaces for play, learning, and community connection. Parks, green spaces, and local community centres provide opportunities for children to play and for parents and carers to meet and connect. Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with organisations such as Aberdeen Play Forum and Aberlour, promotes play as a vital part of early development and family wellbeing. [The Family Learning and Parental Engagement Team](#) works to support families through play-based learning sessions, stay-and-play groups, and parenting workshops across the city. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there

are [1369 third sector organisations operating in Aberdeen City, including 385 dedicated to social care](#).

The local [Child Poverty Action Plan](#) identifies a significant number of children living in poverty, 22%, with around 1 in 5 children, around 5,500, affected by low income and material deprivation. [Nearly 13%](#) of children and young people live in the most deprived data zones in the area. Families living in areas of multiple deprivation in Aberdeen experience a range of difficulties, including higher-than-national-average [unemployment rates](#), health inequalities, and increasing pressures from the rising cost of living. The city has also seen a growing demand for social services, compounded by funding restrictions and the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the economic effects of Brexit continue to influence various sectors, including the oil and gas industry, which is a major part of the city's economy. In 2022, [78.5% of the working-age population in Aberdeen were employed](#), slightly above the national average of 74.5%, with an average gross weekly pay (by place of residence) of £599.40; slightly higher than the Scottish average of £577.70.

Local Government Benchmarking data [evidences](#) that a very high proportion of children (97%) are meeting their developmental milestones according to the 27-30 month review undertaken by Health Visitors. This is higher than the national figure which sits at 85%. However, only 83.05% of children were reviewed compared to the national average of over 90% due to the impact of the pandemic and shortages in qualified health visitors.

There has been a rise in primary school attendance, with the attendance of pupils who are cared for by the local authority increasing at a faster rate than their peers. Local attendance levels mirror the national level (92.3% locally in 2023 compared to 92.2% nationally). Over the last 5 years the number of young people of secondary school age [registered for free school meals has risen steadily](#), this rising trend is likely to be partially due to amended local registration arrangements and changes in family circumstances. The percentage of young people of secondary school age who are registered for free school meals is now, for the first time, in keeping with the national average. In 2023/2024, 1,983 secondary pupils were registered for free school meals, this is nearly double the number registered in 2018/19. The [number of young people](#) sitting National 5 exams increased to 11,236 in 2024 from 10,660 in 2023, an increase of 576 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At

National 5 in S4, the average number of exams sat by each pupil showing a slight increase, from 5.22 in 2023 to 5.49 in 2024.

Key reporting in Aberdeen City

- [Children's Services Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Child Poverty Action Report 2022-23](#)
- [HSCP Strategic Plan 2025-29](#)
- [HSCP Strategic Plan 2022-25](#)
- [Aberdeen City LOIP](#)
- [Keeping the Promise Year 3 Evaluation Report March 2025](#)
- [Aberdeen City Population Needs Assessment October 2023](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Aberdeen City September 2019](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 454 children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 18 per 1000 children in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 566 children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 15 per 1000 children in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 143 children who entered the 'care system' in Aberdeen City from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 144 children who entered the 'care system' in Aberdeen City between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

60 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This is 13.2% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024.

120 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This is 21.2% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020.

There were 385 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This is 84.8% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024.

There were 505 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This is 89.2% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020.

There were 95 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This is 20.9% of children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024.

There were 105 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This is 18.6% of children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020.

209 children were living in foster care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This represents 46.0% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024.

262 children were living in foster care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This represents 46.3% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020.

There were 69 children living in residential care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This is 15.2% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024.

There were 61 children living in residential care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This is 10.8% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 170 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Aberdeen City, 133 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

8.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Aberdeen City during 2022/23. 10.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Aberdeen City during 2022/23. 17.2% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Aberdeen City during 2022/23.

1.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Aberdeen City during 2019/20. 3.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Aberdeen City during 2019/20. 2.3% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Aberdeen City during 2019/20.

130 children were living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeen City on 30 September 2024.

75 children were living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeen City on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4816 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeen City. This represents an average of 13.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 7071 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Aberdeen City. This represents an average of 21.6% of children in Aberdeen City.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5292 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeen City. This represents an average of 15.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3794 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeen City. This represents an average of 10.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4285 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeen City. This represents an average of 12.2% children.

In Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024, there were 18 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020, there were 44 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 88.4% in Aberdeen City.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 89.0% in Aberdeen City (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Aberdeen City, 61 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 were excluded. This is a rate of 164 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

34.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Aberdeen City.

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.

39.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Aberdeen City.

12.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Aberdeen City.

10.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Aberdeen City.

93.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Aberdeen City. 81.3% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Aberdeen City during 2023.

73.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Aberdeen City. 63.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Aberdeen City.

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.

304 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. This represents 67% of all children who were 'looked after' in Aberdeen City on that day.

367 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020. This represents 65% of all children who were 'looked after' in Aberdeen City on that day.

5 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Aberdeen City.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

121 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Aberdeen City.

114 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Aberdeen City.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

67.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

68.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Aberdeen City on 31 July 2020

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Aberdeen City between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 24 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.4 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Aberdeen City between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 22 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 384 households living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeen City.

On 30 September 2020, there were 347 households living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeen City.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 1422 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Aberdeen City.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 1280 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Aberdeen City.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE: Listening

How are you making sure that my experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on?

Bright Spots

Through the latter part of 2023/24, children's social work entered a partnership with CELCIS and Coram Voice to initiate their widest reaching participatory activity with the care experienced community to determine the extent to which children and young people experience a good childhood and have the right supports in place.

'[Bright Spots](#)' is a research and service improvement project set up by Coram Voice to understand what is important to care experienced children and young people and share learning about what makes life good for them by measuring subjective well-being. Having demonstrated strategic buy in and commitment to embedding the voice of children in local decision-making processes, 2 cohorts were surveyed.

Your Life, Your Care (for those aged 4-17 years)

The 'Your Life Your Care' survey was presented to 345 children/young people aged 4 – 17 years, and 'Your Life Beyond Care' to 227 young people aged 16 – 26 years. The initial findings and areas for consideration and improvement are detailed below.

249 children in care responded to the survey from a total eligible population of 345: a response rate of 72%.

Key findings include:

- More than half of children and young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen had the same social worker over the last year and significantly fewer children and young people had three or more social workers in this period compared to the Bright Spots comparator group.

- 70% of young people gave high or very high scores (7 to 10) for happiness with the way they look. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the Bright Spots comparator group (61%).
- Six out of seven (86%) children and young people in care (8-17yrs) felt their lives were getting better.
- 61% of all children aged 8-11yrs with brothers and sisters felt that the time they were able to spend with them was 'just the right amount', higher than the Bright Spots comparator group (47%).
- Almost all (99%) of young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen felt that they had an adult who they trusted and who sticks by them no matter what; a significantly higher percentage than the average (91%) of the Bright Spots comparator group of local authorities.
- All of the youngest children (4 -7yrs) trusted the adults they lived with, and all children aged 8-11yrs trusted the adults they live with 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'.
- 95% of 8-11yrs and 94% of 11-17yrs indicated that the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'.
- 93% of children and young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen always felt safe where they lived, this is significantly higher than the percentage of the Bright Spots comparator group (86%). Unusually, this is also higher than the percentage for the youngest children (4-7yrs) in Aberdeen (87%).
- The proportion of children and young people in Aberdeen City who spent time outdoors in nature more than once a week (88% of children (8-11yrs) and 89% of young people (11-17yrs) was higher than the general Scottish population (67%).
- 92% of 8-11yrs 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' felt listened to when decisions were made about their lives, and this was even higher for young people (11- 17yrs) (94%).

Life Beyond Care (for those aged 16-26)

156 young people responded to the survey from a care experienced population of 227: a response rate of 69%.

Key findings included:

- Two-thirds (66%) of comments about Youth Team Workers or Social Workers were very positive. 43% of care experienced young people had a pet, which is a significantly greater proportion than the 28% of the Bright

Spots comparator group. Over half (54%) of care leavers with pets felt they were a source of emotional support.

- More than nine in ten of care experienced young people (92%) who answered felt that they had a person who they trusted, who helped them and stuck by them no matter what. This is significantly above the proportion for the Bright Spots comparator group (86%). 96% had a person who listened to them. 90% had a person who believed they would be a success. 88% had a person who told them when they'd done well.
- Care experienced young people (94%) in Aberdeen more often had access to the internet at home compared to young people (83%) in the Bright Spots comparator group.

Family: Universal Family Support

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life.

Family Support through Fit Like? Hubs

[The Fit Like? Hub](#), a multi-disciplinary rights based and family first service established in 2022, continues to help ensure that families can access early and preventative support. Fit Like Hubs have supported 1043 families with an increasing percentage of self-referrals (currently 10%). In April 2023 401 young people/families were engaging with the service and 146 of the 401 are families who were being supported for the first time.

There is evidence that engagement with the service means:

- Parents feeling supported to manage their anxieties and worries
- Parents/carers and children and young people feeling listened to and heard
- Strengthened family relationships
- Improved child mental health and wellbeing.

Those accessing the service report that it feels like a bespoke service and that it is the first time support has 'felt right', and there is confidence in the ability to deliver high quality, rights based integrated services that adapt based on what children and families tell services in Aberdeen City. This feedback is helping to shape the work to establish a Bairns Hoose which will open in 2025.

Mental health support

Schools are working in partnership with Fit Like? Aberdeen and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to further develop [LIAM \(Let's Introduce Anxiety Management\)](#) supports. This multi-agency collaboration will continue to build on the current supports in place across many schools to strengthen the universal offer to children and families. All school nurses are currently trained to deliver LIAM, as are some Fit Like? staff. 25 schools also have trained staff with 23 further staff currently being trained.

Supporting the prevention and early help model has seen Sport Aberdeen commit to increasing the accessibility of sport and physical activity, ensuring that barriers to participation are removed for care experienced children, young people, their families and support networks. This has included a commitment to offering free 'Get Active' memberships to care experienced children, siblings, parents and carers, with over 600 distributed to date. The introduction of an Active Schools Coordinator has improved access to Active Schools extra-curricular and leadership programmes, with work being undertaken with sports clubs and organisations to bridge the gap into universal services. This places emphasis on working in partnership with children, young people and their families to access community-based sport and physical activity, building connections and promoting wider wellbeing, whilst reducing the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences and trauma.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding supporting Pupil and Family Wellbeing

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding continues to be targeted to support the wellbeing of pupils and families. For 2024-25, [Strategic Equity funding of £955,190](#) is allocated to continue providing youth workers, family learning workers, and Financial Inclusion Team support to schools, children, young people, and families across the city. Data from the yearly school wellbeing survey suggests that the supports in place are making a difference to children and young people.

Youth work funding primarily focuses on early help and support and specifically targets children, young people, and families identified to be most likely not to engage with education, particularly at points of transition. By collaborating with school staff and partners, the focus areas include improving attendance, reducing exclusions, increasing engagement, and raising attainment and

achievement. Transition continues to be significant focus, with many effective programmes supporting primary-secondary transition, offering young people opportunities for social development, skill-building activities, and confidence-building in working with new people.

The Family Learning Team partners with schools, local community groups, and other agencies to engage parents, carers, and their children in learning activities that positively impact the whole family. These activities include outdoor learning, cooking classes, and parenting workshops, fostering positive attitudes towards lifelong learning. Individual and targeted support is also provided for behaviour, school attendance, helping parents to support their child's learning or providing advice and support for families whose children have additional support needs. The family learning team has developed strong relationships with various partner agencies to ensure families access the right support at the right time.

Families may be signposted or self-refer to the Financial Inclusion Team. Engagement with this service has led to significant financial gains for families across the city and has helped remove some of the barriers to school attendance experienced by families living in poverty such as access to suitable clothing. A Support for Families booklet detailing sources of support is updated regularly and issued electronically to all families with children in city schools three times each year. Hard copies are also available in all city schools

In the City Programmes

In line with the aims of the previous '[In the City holiday programmes](#)', the main focus remains to encourage participation and to maximise the positive opportunities available to young people and their families with a particular focus on those within the Tackling Child Poverty Plan priority groupings.

The programme targets the 5-14 years age group with some activities still being made available for those not in this age range. Bookable opportunities for priority families have taken the form of short, family, half-day and full-day sessions.

Since summer 2021, the programmes have provided more than 64,000 bookable opportunities, including weeklong/multi-day camps and childcare camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums, galleries and local communities and bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs.

The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the Summer 2024 programme was 9.7 out of 10. This rating was consistent with the previous programme.

SCAFFOLDING: JUSTICE

If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing, and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by the contact.

Establishment of a Bairns Hoose

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) identified the need to prioritise those who have experienced multiple trauma and recognise the establishment of a [Bairns Hoose](#) will help reform ways of working with and for this group.

The Bairns Hoose will maximise the potential to fully incorporate the Justice element. This will include having distinct space for Age of Criminal Responsibility interviews, but also a remote court suite that enables children and young people to give evidence to Court. This builds on Aberdeen City's strong response to the change in legislation around the age of criminal responsibility and their contributions to the national guidance. Discussions with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) have also identified opportunities for Hearings including the reincarnation of these outlined in Hearings for Children: The Redesign Report.

The Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration is led by the Council and extends across NHS Grampian, University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University. It will work with our commissioned external research contractor to support evaluation activity around the Bairns Hoose.

Using Data

Through the work of the Whole System Approach Lead Officer, there has been extensive thought and planning on the implementation of new Children's (Care & Justice) Act, utilising data to promote change and improvement.

Partners in Aberdeen City have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Secured funding from Scottish Government through Fairer Futures Partnership, developed a high-level implementation plan and appointed a Lead Officer to help drive the changes forward.
- Progress has been made in pooling resource across universal services with examples of health and education co-designing and delivering services to vulnerable groups and health funding early help for mental health support by Place2Be in a local primary school as a test of change.
- Helped develop a national team around the person toolkit as part of the involvement in the Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) national pathfinder.
- Initiated a whole system approach to healthy weight in response to findings from the last Annual Report, and secured the support of a range of partners to help us address this risk.
- Through engagement with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline, a 12% increase in uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2s has been realised.
- Current focus remains on child poverty; safe sleeping; attendance (particularly at primary 1) attainment; addressing variation; and improving transitions between child and adult services.
- This to ensure the Corporate Parenting Group aim that; “95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026”.
- Several Improvement Projects are dedicated to help realise this aim. These include those designed to:
 - Reduce by 5% the number of children entering the ‘care system’ by 2024.
 - Ensure that 100% of children and young people leaving ‘care’ are offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024.
 - Reduce the number of children being permanently removed from parents with care experience.
 - Ensure that 80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.

- A local review of the most recent Children's Services Plan highlighted a disparity in outcomes at community level. Different thinking is required about how partners work with and for families in need of help and support. This will be progressed through the planned Fairer Futures Pathfinder.
- Continuing to look for ways to join data sets and look at community level data and particular groups to ensure a shared and clear understanding of the problems local communities face.
- A New Scots Team has been developed to provide a responsive, person-centre approach supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. This has involved significant collaboration with several local partners including Housing, DWP, NESCOL and 3rd sector providers. The model of support is continually developing practice to respond to issues as they arise.
- There has been significant work to develop the Kinship Service which has included significant multi-agency collaboration developing a 'Help me I'm a Kinship Carer' parenting programme devised and facilitated by the Family Learning Service. This provides a more tailored and responsive approach to supporting kinship carers to manage and facilitate family time and maintain relationships that are important to children and young people.
- ACIS Youth is a confidential counselling service, offering children and young people free confidential therapeutic counselling in Aberdeen City area who are aged 12-18 years. The service gives a safe space and a chance to talk in confidence, to a qualified professional, about things which may be worrying them or affecting their day to day lives, they will be encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings about their problems, to help better understand themselves and their behaviour.

Aberdeenshire

Local Context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Aberdeenshire has a [population of approximately](#) 263,900, making it the 6th largest council area in Scotland, with a slight increase in population observed over recent years. In 2021, there were more females (50.3%) than males (49.7%), with higher percentages of both children aged 0-15 (18.5%) and individuals aged 65 and over (20.4%) compared to the national average. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased to a greater extent than the Scottish average over the same 20-year period whilst the proportion population aged 0-15 years has increased against a national reduction.

There are [147 primary schools](#), 82 of which have a nursery unit. These primary schools serve over 20,000 pupils, [whilst 17 secondary schools serve almost 16,000 pupils from S1 to S6](#). Aberdeenshire has 40 GP practices. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [2190 third sector organisations operating in Aberdeenshire, including 631 dedicated to social care](#).

Aberdeenshire Council is part of the [North East Police Division](#), which has 40 police stations.

Schools work in close partnership with North East Scotland College (NESCol) and benefits from proximity to the two universities based in Aberdeen. The region places a strong emphasis on community, outdoor learning, and nurturing environments that support children and young people to flourish both academically and personally.

Aberdeenshire Council, in partnership with a range of partner organisations, promotes play as a fundamental part of children's development and family wellbeing. [The Family Learning and Engagement Team](#) delivers play-based learning sessions, stay-and-play groups, and parenting support programmes in towns and rural areas across the region. These sessions are often held in accessible community venues and tailored to meet the needs of local families.

Additionally, [Aberdeenshire's Youth Work Service](#) provides a range of youth-focused initiatives including school-based programmes, youth cafes, mental health and wellbeing projects, and creative and physical activity groups. These services help young people build confidence, develop new skills, and connect with peers in safe, inclusive environments.

This network of services and community efforts reflects Aberdeenshire's commitment to supporting children and families through inclusive, play-rich environments that encourage wellbeing, learning, and positive relationships.

Aberdeenshire, while often perceived as a predominantly affluent area, [also faces pockets of deprivation that impact children and families](#). Although levels of poverty are generally lower than the national average, they are not evenly distributed across the region.

According to data from the [End Child Poverty coalition](#), certain areas experience notably higher rates of children living in relative low-income families. For example, in Fraserburgh and District, around 28.2% of children live in poverty, with approximately 1,046 children affected. In Peterhead North and Rattray, the figure is similarly high at 27.4%, equating to roughly 923 children. Other wards such as Peterhead South and Cruden (23.5%) and Banff and District (21.7%) also show elevated levels of child poverty ([Child Poverty Local Action Report 2023-2024](#)).

In contrast, more rural or affluent areas such as Banchory and Mid-Deeside (8.4%) and Westhill and District (9.3%) report significantly lower percentages. These figures highlight the geographic variation in child poverty within Aberdeenshire and underline the importance of targeted support for communities facing the greatest challenges ([Child Poverty Local Action Report 2023-2024](#)).

SIMD data shows that Aberdeenshire has 2.6% of data zones falling within the 20% most deprived in Scotland. However, this measure struggles to accurately capture rural poverty due to its dispersed nature. 149 (44%) of Aberdeenshire's data zones are within the 20% most deprived in Scotland when it comes to access to services i.e., average drive times and public transport times to key services, and average broadband speeds; and 52 of these (15.3%) are considered within the 5% most deprived.

Aberdeenshire's [employment rate](#) was higher than across Scotland as a whole in the year ending December 2023. Of people aged 16 to 64 years living in Aberdeenshire, 84.1% were employed in the year ending December 2023. This is an increase compared with the year ending December 2022 when the local rate

was 78.1%. [Home-Start North East Aberdeenshire](#) supports families with children under 5 in the areas with the highest levels of child poverty – Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Banff, Rattray and Cruden. Home-Start NEA secured funding which supported 68 families with food, money to reduce their energy bills or at least not increase their fuel debt, warm clothes and items such as slow cookers.

Aberdeenshire is served by 11 hospitals. In [Aberdeenshire](#) 83.3% of children had a healthy weight at birth against a Scotland average of 84.2% and 40.6% of babies exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks compared to a Scotland average of 31.8%. 8.6% of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27-30 month review against a Scotland average of 14.7%.

Key reporting in Aberdeenshire

- [Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24](#)
- [Aberdeenshire HSCP Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership LOIP 2023-24](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Thematic Group Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [Aberdeenshire JSNA 2023](#)
- [Aberdeenshire Chief Social Worker Report 2023-24](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Aberdeenshire community planning partnership](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 388 children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 24 per 1000 children in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 404 children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 7 per 1000 children in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 128 children who entered the 'care system' in Aberdeenshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 110 children who entered the 'care system' in Aberdeenshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

49 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This is 12.6% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024.

71 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This is 17.6% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 307 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This is 79.1% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 333 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This is 82.4% of children who were experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 77 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This is 19.8% of children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 81 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This is 20.0% of children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020.

147 children were living in foster care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 37.9% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024.

174 children were living in foster care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 43.1% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 81 children living in residential care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This is 20.9% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 71 children living in residential care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This is 17.6% of all children experiencing care in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 143 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Aberdeenshire, 119 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 2 per 1,000).

11.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Aberdeenshire during 2022/23. 10.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Aberdeenshire during 2022/23. 8.7% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Aberdeenshire during 2022/23.

1.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Aberdeenshire during 2019/20. 2.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Aberdeenshire during 2019/20. 1.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Aberdeenshire during 2019/20.

50 children were living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire on 30 September 2024.

115 children were living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4668 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeenshire. This represents an average of 9.7% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 8798 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Aberdeenshire. This represents an average of 16.7% of children in Aberdeenshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5044 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeenshire. This represents an average of 10.4% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3652 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeenshire. This represents an average of 7.5% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4130 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Aberdeenshire. This represents an average of 8.5% children.

In Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024, there were 32 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020, there were 24 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 85.9% in Aberdeenshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 92.0% in Aberdeenshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Aberdeenshire, 99 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 291 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

34.2% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Aberdeenshire.

61.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Aberdeenshire.

13.2% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Aberdeenshire.

20.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Aberdeenshire.

86.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Aberdeenshire. 71.1% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Aberdeenshire during 2023.

85.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Aberdeenshire. 74.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Aberdeenshire.

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.

224 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 58% of all children who were 'looked after' in Aberdeenshire on that day.

255 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 63% of all children who were 'looked after' in Aberdeenshire on that day.

9 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Aberdeenshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

115 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Aberdeenshire.

92 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Aberdeenshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

63.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

62.3% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Aberdeenshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Aberdeenshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 6 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.4 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Aberdeenshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 7 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 83 households living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 251 households living in temporary accommodation in Aberdeenshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 670 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Aberdeenshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 921 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Aberdeenshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available, having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise.

VOICE: Participation and Engagement

I am supported to understand what my rights and entitlements are

Aberdeenshire's Children's Rights Service plays an intrinsic role in enabling children and young people to know their rights and have their voice heard. During 2023/24 132 referrals were received for children's rights support in respect of 67 individual young people. 32 of these young people are new to the service and a questionnaire is sent out to all young people who use the service inviting their feedback on the support received.

Additionally, a new service within children's rights supporting children and young people in child protection has taken off and 28 referrals in respect of 20 young people have so far been received. All but two of these young people are new to the children's rights service. The children's rights officers feed into a number of strategic groups within the council and ensure that the voice of care experienced young people are at the centre of service developments. Children's rights officers support the Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group (YPOC) members to attend Twilight Sessions with their corporate parenting leads and where possible support YPOC Group members to meet directly with corporate parents and councillors. The team also provide training for other professionals on children's rights and ensure young people's voice underpins this.

Bright Spots

CELCIS (the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) partnered with Coram Voice to bring '[Bright Spots](#)' to Scotland with a plan to pilot surveys for children cared for by the local authority and care leavers with three pilot local authorities. After applying, Aberdeenshire was one of the three local authorities chosen as a pilot site. The Bright Spots Programme seeks to measure children's subjective wellbeing, ensuring their voices are heard and properly represented. In February/March 2022 all children in care aged 4-18yrs and young people who have left care were asked to take part in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives. 203 children in care responded to the survey from a total

eligible population of 298: a response rate of 68%. Children and young people with different living arrangements were all well represented in the survey, with 43% living with foster carers, 23% living with kin, 17% in care at home, and 13% living in residential settings. 64 young people responded to the survey from a care leaver population of 156: a response rate of 41%.

The areas where improvements were identified helped inform Aberdeenshire's updated corporate parenting plan, and action has already been taken to address some of the key issues highlighted. For example, young people who have left care said that transitions, particularly those involving leaving care, continue to be challenging and require improvement. A working group has been formed to review the transition process, ensuring each young person experiences a transition that is tailored to their needs, at a time when they are ready, that they have equal opportunities to resources and are fully supported by workers they share trusting relationships with.

Children and young people in care reported that although many have had their social worker for over 1 year, relationships could be improved, particularly in the aspect of nurturing trust. This has resulted in a piece of work being progressed which will focus on the relationships shared between children and their workers and the quality time spent with one another.

[A video](#) was produced with the help of care experienced young people to share the results of the Bright Spots survey in a child-friendly and easily understood way.

CARE: Moving on and lifelong support

[All my transitions are planned out with me, and I know what to expect.](#)

In the 2023/24 [Corporate Parenting report](#) it was highlighted that a new checklist had been developed, co-produced by children and young people, on coming into care and moving. This came on the back of the Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group's campaign on this area. The checklist covers areas that young people have said are important to them when coming into care or moving somewhere new, such as this having been discussed with them in advance, being consulted about staying at the same school or moving to a new one, ensuring they have all of their important belongings with them when they move.

There is an expectation the checklist is used every time a child is received into care or move somewhere new, and data is gathered on the use of this through monitoring forms which are completed for each child review for children cared for by the local authority. This information highlights there is still further work to do to ensure use of the checklist is fully embedded.

In line with what young people reported while working with social work staff to complete the "Coming Into Care and Moving Placements" checklist, young people feeling as prepared as possible for moving to a new home is crucial. With this in mind the ambition within Aberdeenshire's corporate parenting plan is for all foster carers to have family friendly profiles of themselves which can be shared with young people in advance of them moving to foster care. This is always an ongoing process as new fostering households are approved. However, there has been a focus on ensuring the profiles could be made available to children and young people having to move to a foster family in an emergency at weekends or in evenings when there wasn't the chance for them to visit and become familiar with where they were going to stay.

All current out of hours foster carers on the rota have a family friendly profile, most of these are paper based but can be sent as an attachment to the young person's mobile phone or printed off. Out of hours staff have access to the profiles. Some of the carers are considering videos and exploration is also underway as to audio files being added to the paper profiles as this was suggested by a foster carer.

Staff within children's homes have also been exploring alternative ways of preparing young people for moving to their care. Listening to young people as to the mediums and platforms they currently use has been crucial to this. For example, at one of Aberdeenshire's children's homes, young people reported that TikTok was their preferred platform and therefore staff have worked to develop short (1-2 minute) TikTok videos introducing themselves, the living environment, the manager, the aims and objectives of the service. These will only be accessible to young people who are in the process of moving to the home and will not be able to be viewed publicly.

CARE: Relationships

I am given support to keep in touch, and have meaningful interaction with, any brothers and sisters I don't live with.

Review of Family Time Arrangements

Through the Bright Spots surveys, young people said they were not always being able to spend time with key people who are important to them. Aberdeenshire's corporate parenting plan therefore contains a commitment to review the ways in which it is understood who the key people are for children and young people who live away from home, and how arrangements are made for them to spend time with these people, where it is safe to do so.

Work on this area is at an early stage and will connect to the work being undertaken in relation to Brothers and Sisters.

It is acknowledged there are occasions where it will not be possible for brothers and sisters to live together. However, in these instances, it is also recognised there is a need to do more to promote positive relationships, allow meaningful time together, and work to heal and restore loving relationships between brothers and sisters.

A collaboration between [Aberdeenshire Council and Barnardo's](#) is currently taking forward a proposal for a project to support this area. The vision of this project is to establish a mobile resource which will enable the transformation of community venues into environments where brothers and sisters can come together to have fun and enjoy activities that reflect their needs and interests, and which promotes them to restore and maintain loving relationships with each other. Alongside this, locations will be chosen where a separate environment can be created for their carers to meet and have opportunity to develop their relationships with each other and feel valued. This recognises the central role which carers of children and young people play in promoting relationships between brothers and sisters who do not live together.

SCAFFOLDING: JUSTICE

[If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing, and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by the contact.](#)

Bespoke Children's Hearings

One example of a test of change being undertaken locally in the Grampian area is with regards to bespoke children's hearings. When scheduling children's Hearings in Grampian, Reporters/Assistant Reporters have liaised primarily with

the child's allocated Social Worker, to gather information on the means by which children and their families would prefer to join their hearing. Hearings have then been scheduled in accordance with these preferences, whereby children and their families have had the option to attend in person at a hearing centre or to join virtually from a location of their choice.

There are plans to build on the learning from this approach and a pilot is about to begin whereby SCRA staff will make contact with children and their families directly to discuss the options. Initially, this will happen for annual review hearings for Children aged 12 and over. It will enable those children and their families to have a greater input into not only the method by which they participate, but also to options around the day and time of the hearing, who else they would like to be invited and what other preferences they may have about the way the hearing will be managed on the day.

The information gathering form that will be completed with young people was co-designed with young people and reflects the information that they feel it is important to take account of.

Joint Training Events on Child Friendly Hearings

In 2023 the first joint training event on 'Child Friendly Hearings' was held. The focus of this was to bring professionals together to look at the ways hearings had changed during the pandemic and how these could be re-focused on the child. The ambition was to make hearings a less intimidating and more trauma informed, child friendly environment. Further virtual sessions on Child Friendly Hearings have been held this year and shared learning opportunities have progressed a step further by holding the first multi-agency, in-person mock hearing session. This has enabled newly qualified and Social Workers in training, panel members and other professionals to have an opportunity to observe a Children's Hearing and ask questions about what they observed, thus preparing them for attending live Children's Hearings further down the line.

SCAFFOLDING: Education

[I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.](#)

Aberdeenshire has employed a [Virtual Head Teacher for Care Experienced Young People](#). There are now 43 Promise groups in primary and secondary

schools across Aberdeenshire, and they have created the, 'We Care Aberdeenshire' Instagram page which has gained followers from young people, partner providers, families and education and children's services. There is continued investment in trauma informed practice to inform an approach supportive to all children and young people, particularly the refresher in DDP. Funding has also been secured for the establishment and running of Promise Group projects from organisations including CORRA, Moniack Mhor and Step into the Arts funds.

Partners in Aberdeenshire have embarked on a number of change projects including:

- Co-production of a child protection advocacy service, where 11 young people worked with the children's rights service to direct what the service should look like. Their key priorities were the service being for all young people in Aberdeenshire and being available right at the start of child protection processes. Additional funding was secured from the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities fund, in order to provide this service on the basis of what young people said was important.
- Securing £84,000 from the CORRA Foundation to work in partnership with Wildbird, a community organisation specialising in the arts. Young people within local care groups will be supported to embark on arts-based projects such as the successful project described here: [Talented Huntly 'Care Group' shares captivating film \(agcc.co.uk\)](https://agcc.co.uk/talented-huntly-care-group-shares-captivating-film)
- Continued development of Twilight Sessions, where young people have the opportunity to engage with corporate parents. Recent successful events have been held in partnership with University of Aberdeen, Children's Hearings Scotland and Skills Development Scotland.
- The continued work of Aberdeenshire's Young People's Organising and Campaigning Group (YPOC), as referenced in the annual report.
- Holding a Celebrating Success Awards Ceremony for Care Experienced Young People in October 2023, recognising their achievements and ensuring these were celebrated in suitable style.
- A number of partnership projects having been developed using the Whole Family Wellbeing funding e.g. with Barnardo's to develop the Staying Connected service, supporting brothers and sisters who do not live together to have meaningful time together

- Partnerships with the Why Not Trust have enabled supports to be developed for care experienced parents and parents whose children have been permanently accommodated away from home.
- Family Group Decision Making - supporting young people to be able to remain at home with their families, with their families being empowered in relation to the planning around this. This successful pilot and positive impact have resulted in funding to employ a second worker.
- Therapeutic Transitions Worker - ensuring that children moving from foster care to adoption, and the team around them, are prepared for this in the best way possible. CELCIS recently produced an article on the good practice around this: [Developing a child-centred, relational approach to adoption](#) which was recognised as sector leading in an recent inspection. This work has resulted in a number of areas being graded as 6 (Excellent): [InspectionReport-322703 \(1\).pdf](#)
- Young People's Housing Worker - recognising that there are some young people who require a much higher level of support to successfully manage their own tenancies when they move on to independence.
- Utilising the allocation of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to develop pilot wellbeing hubs in Peterhead and Fraserburgh, two areas of highest deprivation and social need, to deliver early help and support services.
- Joint working with third sector partners (Siblings Together and Barnardo's) to develop a transformative approach to supporting brothers and sisters who do not live together, to spend meaningful time together outwith the confines of formal arrangements put in place by social work.
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of Aberdeenshire's children's homes, which has included removal of restraint as a practice within homes and commitment to the principles of Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy as an underpinning alternative model of care. This has led to transformation plans to enhance the availability of local residential care services for young people rather than them moving to other areas of the country to access this, often at considerable distance from family, friends and community.
- Recognising the challenging landscape of fostering at the current time, a Fostering Project Manager has been employed for a two year period, to lead a thorough review of the fostering service in Aberdeenshire to ensure that alternative family care is provided, which is consistent with all of the principles of the Promise.
- Acknowledgment that there is a need to transform the services provided for young people aged 16 and 17, through this being identified as one of

the 5 priority areas in the Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26. Work is underway to redevelop services for young people in this age range who are in conflict with the law, recognising the significant focus on this area in drivers such as the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill.

- Work to improve young people's experiences of transitions from care to independence. This was identified by young people in the Bright Spots surveys and is also an area of focus through the Moving On Change Programme being led by the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum and The Promise Scotland.
 - The Aberdeenshire Children and Young People Services' Plan 2023-26 recognises the central importance of leadership across partners in relation to the promise, and the collective ambition to ensure that it is implemented in its entirety by 2030. This is felt locally at a number of levels, from the strong multi-agency contribution to Aberdeenshire's Corporate Parenting Leads Group, to the role of the Chief Executive in chairing the Local Government Programme Board for the Promise, to the establishment of Aberdeenshire Promise Champions.
 - This has attracted champions from all areas of Aberdeenshire including leisure assistants, administrative staff, social workers, school nurses, housing, schools, and many others.
-

Angus

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information do not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[Angus is located within 842 square miles on the East Coast of Scotland.](#) The population is estimated at 116,520 (2.2% of Scottish population) with children making up 16.7% of the population with an estimated 21,862 (0–18-year-olds) living in Angus. There are 53,142 households in Angus (around 80% in private sector accommodation and the remainder in local authority or housing association property). There are 51 primary schools and eight secondary schools in Angus. There are 16 GP practices, and the area is served by [3 hospitals](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [807 third sector organisations operating in Angus, including 266 dedicated to social care](#). Angus is part of the Tayside Police division, which has 19 police stations.

[21.2%](#) of Angus children aged 0-15 are living in relative low-income households compared to 15.9% of children in all Scottish families. In Angus, 24.9% of children were reported to be living in poverty after housing costs in 2022-23, an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous year. [In 2024 Angus Council partnered with](#) the Poverty Alliance, Home Start and Home Energy Scotland to hold a range of roadshows which shared information and resources to help families struggling with income or money worries. There is also information on [further resources on the Angus Council website](#) and the Angus Vibrant Communities Team can help people communicate with providers. Anyone can use their public computers, or the team can help people use their own device or mobile.

Health indicators for children in Angus show mixed outcomes when compared to national figures. The percentage of children born at a healthy weight is 77.8%, which is lower than the Scottish average of 84.2%, and fewer babies are

exclusively breastfed at 6–8 weeks (28.8%). [Breast Buddies Angus is part of Voluntary Action Angus and one of the main aims](#) is to increase breastfeeding rates in Angus by providing timely, evidence based and empathetic support to breastfeeding families. Breast Buddies volunteers are mothers that have breastfed their own babies and have also received breastfeeding peer support training. [17.1%](#) of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27–30-month review against a Scotland mean of 16.7% of children.

[Public playparks in Angus are developed depending on their accessibility and the play opportunities they offer.](#) The smallest type of playpark is a 'Door Step Play Area' (DSPA) which has up to 2 play activities for children aged up to 6 years and should be available within a short 2-minute walking distance from homes. 'Neighbourhood Play Areas' (NPA) are for the junior age group and should be available at 375 metres distance with 3 to 6 play activities with areas for informal play and running around. 'Burgh Play Area' (BPA) should be 750 meters away from homes and have 6 to 12 different play activities and sports facilities such as BMX tracks and pitches. They are mainly for older children but offer some play opportunities for younger children too. Finally, 'Destination Play Areas' (DPA) are for all age groups and these have more than 15 different play activities and other facilities such as car parks, crazy golf, pitch & putt, café and public toilets. These play areas are often located in larger parks, as part of country parks or at the seaside. Their aim is to attract families and groups for a longer visit and visitors might travel up to 20km to reach them. All towns should have an even spread of all levels of play provision, but this would be very difficult to achieve. It is understood that a larger play park would also cover the requirements of a smaller type. There are a total of 71 play parks and areas within Angus.

Key reporting in Angus

- [Children, Families and Justice Directorate Improvement Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [HSCP Profile – Angus Health and Social Care Partnership February 2023](#)
- [Angus integrated children's services 'the angus promise' progress report 2021– 2024](#)
- [Angus Community Planning Partnership – Our Bright Futures Report 2023-2024](#)

- [Tayside Plan for Infants, Children, Young People & Families 2023-2026 Report on Progress 2023-2024](#)
- [Angus Education Plan: Report on Progress 2023/4](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 245 children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 26 per 1000 children in Angus on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 265 children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 12 per 1000 children in Angus on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 91 children who entered the 'care system' in Angus from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 78 children who entered the 'care system' in Angus between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

25 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Angus on 31 July 2024. This is 10.2% of children who were experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024.

78 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Angus on 31 July 2020. This is 29.4% of children who were experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020.

There were 213 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Angus on 31 July 2024. This is 86.9% of children who were experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024.

There were 238 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Angus on 31 July 2020. This is 89.8% of children who were experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020.

There were 62 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Angus on 31 July 2024. This is 25.3% of children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024.

There were 57 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Angus on 31 July 2020. This is 21.5% of children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020.

111 children were living in foster care in Angus on 31 July 2024. This represents 45.3% of all children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024.

95 children were living in foster care in Angus on 31 July 2020. This represents 35.8% of all children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020.

There were 32 children living in residential care in Angus on 31 July 2024. This is 13.1% of all children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2024.

There were 27 children living in residential care in Angus on 31 July 2020. This is 10.2% of all children experiencing care in Angus on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 80 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Angus, 73 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

13.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Angus during 2022/23. 17.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Angus during 2022/23. 17.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Angus during 2022/23.

11.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Angus during 2019/20. 13.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Angus during 2019/20. 15.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Angus during 2019/20.

10 children were living in temporary accommodation in Angus on 30 September 2024.

20 children were living in temporary accommodation in Angus on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3132 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Angus. This represents an average of 17.1% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4916 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Angus. This represents an average of 23.8% of children in Angus.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3363 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Angus. This represents an average of 17.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2434 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Angus. This represents an average of 13.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2735 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Angus. This represents an average of 14.4% children.

In Angus on 31 July 2024, there were 19 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Angus on 31 July 2020, there were 9 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 82.8% in Angus.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 86.0% in Angus (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Angus, 46 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 279 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

15.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Angus.

55.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Angus.

5.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Angus.

11.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Angus.

70.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Angus. 70.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Angus during 2023.

79.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Angus. 79.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Angus.

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.

173 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Angus on 31 July 2024. This represents 71% of all children who were 'looked after' in Angus on that day.

152 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Angus on 31 July 2020. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in Angus on that day.

5 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Angus.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

44 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Angus.

74 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Angus.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

53.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Angus on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

98.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Angus on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Angus between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 4 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.6 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 97 households living in temporary accommodation in Angus.

On 30 September 2020, there were 130 households living in temporary accommodation in Angus.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 571 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Angus.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 340 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Angus.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise.

FAMILY: Poverty

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if and how my family are being affected by poverty, and provide us with help and support me if we are?

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us?

Angus has a range of initiatives and activities to support children and families to thrive, including:

- NHS Tayside scoped project work in 2023-24 through engagement with advice service providers, social work and community groups to develop food insecurity pathway to support families with infants under 12months old and supporting toolkit for community food providers
- Angus Council have dedicated web pages providing information on various support with the cost of living including information on warm spaces, welfare rights, and managing energy and other household bills.

These pages were promoted during winter 2023 by all partners and regularly updated throughout the reporting period. The website had 5,363 views over the reporting period.

- Citizens Advice and Tayside Council on Alcohol lead on the work to currently support 20 young people living in their own accommodation with organising their finances to reduce the risk of debt.
- The Maximise Angus referral pathway was used 78 times in 2023/24, resulting in £1,098,868 worth of financial gains being identified for families. However, due to the temporary nature of funding for Maximise Angus, the project was unable to retain its staff members and the Maximise Angus support within the school context has stopped. There has been a significant drop in financial gains for families. The lack of long-term funding for permanent posts and suitably qualified staff is a barrier to continuing the project.

VOICE: Participation and engagement / CARE: Decision making

How are you making sure that I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that will affect me?

How are you making sure that I can have fun – and do the things I enjoy- with the people that matter to me

In partnership with care experienced young people, a children and young people's group has been established named by the young people 'The Hangout'. The Promise Hangout is a safe place for care experienced children and young people (5 years old and above) to get together, build relationships and have fun. Young people have the opportunity to get involved with project work and provide their views. One example in 2023, was a focus group of young people who worked with a communications and media consultant for Child Protection Committees Scotland, contributing to the design, language, and content of the new Child Protection Committee Scotland "Keeping Safe" campaign. Young people came up with the idea of using Tik Tok adverts as a way of reaching larger amounts of young people.

Numbers of attendees at the Hangout grew during 2022/23 with between 18 and 28 young people attending each session; this is more than 10% of care experienced children over 5 in Angus attending regularly. Individuals from a number of agencies (Chief Social Worker, Social Work staff, Who Cares? Scotland, Angus Independent Advocacy, Active Schools, Children's Hearing Scotland,

Review Officers etc.) volunteer to support the group giving the young people opportunities to build relationships with their corporate parents.

SCAFFOLDING: Rights

How are you making sure that my rights are being upheld?

Angus continues to commission individual advocacy and group advocacy from Who Cares? Scotland. Young people's views gathered from this work have fed into the improvement work across all services involved in supporting care experienced children. The expansion of advocacy services will ensure that Angus continues to promote the rights of care experienced children and young people to express a view and have that view given due weight upholding United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, Article 12). Increased access to independent advocacy has been evident in social work assessments, reports, and attendance at care planning meetings where children's views have been supported by the use of independent advocacy. During 2022/23, 57 children and young people received a regular support service from [Angus Independent Advocacy](#) (AIA) with the average age being 10yrs old. The areas children requested advocacy support with were wide ranging and included family time, current placement and future planning, mental health support, education issues, and transitions.

To ensure that the voices of children, young people and families are heard, and they are able to influence decisions that impact them, funding has been increased for Independent Advocacy services throughout Angus. As part of the expansion of advocacy services, an additional £60,000 annual investment in advocacy for children, young people and families has allowed partnership work with Angus Independent Advocacy (AIA) to provide Family Advocacy as well as recruiting an additional young person advocate for children.

Partners in Angus have embarked on a number of change projects including:

- Angus revised their Corporate Parenting Board in 2020, renaming and refocusing to a multi-agency group, 'Leading the Promise'. The group meets quarterly with a focus on the delivery of 5 key Promises to young people made in the #AngusPromise Plan. Over the course of plan 2021 – 2024 Angus had a particular focus on two key areas; voice and relationships.

- At the beginning of 2023, the Angus promise team started a mapping project alongside Promise Scotland to assess local progress towards meeting the Plan 21-24 Calls to Action. This includes multi-agency input from social work, housing, health, education, police and third sector to determine where they need to focus their efforts to ensure they keep the promise to the children of Angus. This work is still ongoing but this information, alongside promise updates to committee and Children's Service Integrated Board, has been used to provide a summary of what is taking place in Angus.
- Dundee and Angus College (D&A) recruits c350 full-time care experienced learners each year, with this equating to around 8% of full-time student population. The success rates for care experienced learners are regularly above the average for all learners in Scotland. This supports learners to progress into employment or further course options at a higher level than the Scottish average and is instrumental in supporting these learners to create futures and careers that would otherwise be out of reach. The recruitment and success of care experience learners is one of the key measures that is monitored within the College, and the numbers of learners from care experience backgrounds has steadily increased since the College first signed up to the promise.
- The College has a Care Experienced Pledge. Through this annual pledge, the College guarantees to offer a course place to any care experienced learner from the D&A region applying before 31 March each year. The pledge ensures that all care experienced young people have a guaranteed place available to them and the College works closely with local schools and social work colleagues to ensure that potential care experienced learners (of any age) are aware of the options and opportunities available.
- The College works closely with social work through and after care services. The arrangements in place ensure that care experienced young people receive the transition support required to enter the College and to support their learning journey whilst at college. This support continues through the period that the learner is joining, studying and leaving college, including transition support onto and out from student funding entitlements (and their interaction with the benefits system) as well as the individual or learning support required to assist with the transition into employment or on to further study.
- The joint approach with schools and social work is key to ensuring that transitions are managed well and meet the needs of the learner. This includes fast-tracking care experienced learner funding applications to ensure that there is no gap in funding when starting college. Whilst on a course with the College, care experience learners have an identified

contact within our Student Services Team and have a designated Group Tutor within their course. Our Student Services Team liaise with social work to pick up on any needs that are identified.

- Work has taken place looking at the importance of relationships between brothers and sisters including development of training materials, guidance material on assessments, and improving our spaces for brothers and sisters and other family members to spend family time together.
- [Whole Family Wellbeing funding has been used in Angus](#) to take an enhanced focus on pregnant women and families with at least one child under 3. During this period consultation and engagement has taken place to inform a plan which includes enhanced welfare rights and housing support to pregnant women, extension of the Angus gender specific women's support service Glen Clova, enhanced early intervention support through a third sector contract and support to a third sector led project looking at choice points and access for families. Data measures have been developed. Updates and an annual report on the outcomes for families with a child under 3 will be reported to the Integrated Children's Services Board.
- [Since the Involving Dads Steering Group formed in April 2022](#), Angus has taken a wider focus on involving Dads in the lives of their children and considering factors which affect them. Relatively small changes to practice have been seen to gain momentum and start to embed in day-to-day practice locally. In addition, there have been some significant service developments across multiple sectors which have taken big steps in improving fathers' visibility and engagement for professionals supporting families. The multi-agency group continue to meet and will continue to focus on topical priorities for Dads and for services supporting them and their families, in order to direct and support the work of individual service specific subgroups. The group will continue to adopt a "what else can we do" when considering the question "what about Dad?"
- The Horizon Team (TCAC) in Angus has received and supported a number of young people who are living in a range of care settings including supported lodgings and supported tenancies. As part of the Horizon Justice remit, they work in partnership to ensure that no 16 or 17 year-old from Angus were in a Young Offenders Institute (YOI) for sentence or on remand. The overall approach and provision of diversion from prosecution services further helps to prevent the criminalisation of care experienced children and young people. In 2022/23, there were no 16 or 17-year-olds from Angus within in a YOI.

Argyll and Bute

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Argyll and Bute, located on the West coast of Scotland is the second largest local authority by area, covers approximately 9% of the total land area of Scotland with the third sparsest population density (0.12 persons per hectare). The population of around 86,000 is distributed across an area of just under 2,700 square miles. More than half of Argyll and Bute's population live in rural areas. A further 35% live in communities with populations between 3,000 and 10,000 people, designated as small towns. Less than a fifth of the population live in an urban area with a population of over 10,000 people. With 23 inhabited islands the geography provides challenges for service delivery, particularly in communications and transport. Argyll and Bute is part of the [Argyll and West Dunbartonshire](#) Police Division which has 11 police stations.

Argyll and Bute has 65 primary schools, five (2-18) schools, five secondary schools, one specialist school for pupils with complex additional needs and 10 Learning Centres within mainstream provision with a further two due to open in August 2025. Two of these centres are island based. There are also a variety of Early Learning and Childcare settings, Gaelic medium units and outdoor nurseries. Whilst not every setting currently has a learner with care experience, the staff continue to share information, training and resources to equip their teams to support any care experienced young person who may join their [learning community](#). There are 39 GP practices in Argyll and Bute, and the area is served by [7 hospitals](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1525 third sector organisations operating in Argyll and Bute, including 321 dedicated to social care](#).

[17.2% of children aged 0-15](#) are living in relative low-income families in Argyll and Bute compared to 15.9% of children in all Scottish families. [Argyll and Bute](#)

[became the first Council in Scotland to declare a housing emergency in June 2023](#), to be followed by other Councils and Scottish Government.

Argyll and Bute adopts a joined-up approach to early years that sees health professionals both working together and referring on to third sector and advice services. For example, Health Visitors and Midwives work with Bute advice centre to assist with welfare, benefits and rights advice and support. They also refer into the HELP Project, who work with young people under 25-years-old in Dunoon and on Bute. The HELP Project work with young people on issues like advice and support on issues such as housing, benefits, employment and wellbeing.

[Argyll and Bute's strategic Children's Services Partnership are working to ensure](#) young people have a voice, get the support that's right for them and, ensure all children get an education. There are lots of things to get involved with for children, young people and adults across Argyll and Bute through a variety of clubs and activities, experienced participation groups, a network of local care along with support for free childcare. There is also [free Story, Song and Rhyme sessions](#) for babies, toddlers, pre-school children and their families.

Key reporting in Argyll and Bute

- [Argyll & Bute Children and Young People's Service Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Argyll and Bute: council education community services committee 6 March 2025 care experienced children and young people](#)
- [Child Poverty Action Plan Review 2023 – 2024](#)
- [2023-2024 Argyll & Bute Child Poverty Action Plan Review](#)
- [Argyll & Bute Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Argyll and Bute March 2019](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 144 children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 17 per 1000 children in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 162 children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 11 per 1000 children in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 49 children who entered the 'care system' in Argyll and Bute from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 56 children who entered the 'care system' in Argyll and Bute between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

41 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This is 28.7% of children who were experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024.

48 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This is 29.6% of children who were experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020.

There were 111 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This is 77.6% of children who were experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024.

There were 132 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This is 81.5% of children who were experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020.

There were 41 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This is 28.7% of children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024.

There were 51 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This is 31.5% of children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020.

28 children were living in foster care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This represents 19.6% of all children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024.

33 children were living in foster care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This represents 20.4% of all children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020.

There were 32 children living in residential care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This is 22.4% of all children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024.

There were 24 children living in residential care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This is 14.8% of all children experiencing care in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 56 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Argyll and Bute, 44 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

9.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Argyll and Bute during 2022/23. 14.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Argyll and

Bute during 2022/23. 17.3% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Argyll and Bute during 2022/23.

13.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Argyll and Bute during 2019/20. 12.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Argyll and Bute during 2019/20.

45 children were living in temporary accommodation in Argyll and Bute on 30 September 2024.

55 children were living in temporary accommodation in Argyll and Bute on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1820 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Argyll and Bute. This represents an average of 14.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 3494 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Argyll and Bute. This represents an average of 23.2% of children in Argyll and Bute.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2149 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Argyll and Bute. This represents an average of 16.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1410 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Argyll and Bute. This represents an average of 11.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1696 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Argyll and Bute. This represents an average of 13.0% children.

In Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024, there were 16 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020, there were 32 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 85.6% in Argyll and Bute.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 91.0% in Argyll and Bute (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Argyll and Bute, 2 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 16 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

40.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Argyll and Bute.

62.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Argyll and Bute.

10.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Argyll and Bute.

25.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Argyll and Bute.

90.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Argyll and Bute. 80.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Argyll and Bute during 2023.

72.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Argyll and Bute. 72.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Argyll and Bute.

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.

69 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. This represents 48% of all children who were 'looked after' in Argyll and Bute on that day.

84 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020. This represents 52% of all children who were 'looked after' in Argyll and Bute on that day.

5 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Argyll and Bute.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

49 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Argyll and Bute.
45 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Argyll and Bute.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

89.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

100.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Argyll and Bute on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Argyll and Bute between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 2 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.4 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Argyll and Bute between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 5 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 120 households living in temporary accommodation in Argyll and Bute.

On 30 September 2020, there were 129 households living in temporary accommodation in Argyll and Bute.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 405 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Argyll and Bute.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 335 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Argyll and Bute.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

How are you making sure that there are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in the neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community?

[Argyll and Bute's strategic Children's Services Partnership are committed to delivering](#) an '80/20 focus' across services, to ensure that there are 80% universal general services and 20% for specialist services. One of the aims is to support families with babies and children; the Partnership will work together to increase the number of mothers supported to breastfeed in their communities and increase the number of children two years or younger accessing services to support them to reach their developmental milestones. Currently [44% of babies are exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks in Argyll and Bute whereas the](#) Scotland mean is 31.8%.

Another aim is that all children, young people and their families will have equal access to emotional wellbeing support in their communities, through more targeted support for parents and access to parenting programmes.

[The Community Learning Service works alongside communities and partners](#) to ensure individuals, groups and families reach their potential through lifelong learning, mutual self-help and strong community organisations.

[How are you making sure that I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life?](#)

[The Parent Project offers support for parents](#) who are concerned about their child's well-being with expert advice and guidance to families who are worried about their young people, helping navigate challenges together. The support is fully funded for parents and carers of children aged 4-18 living in Argyll & Bute. If this service doesn't offer support that's right for a family, families and partners work together with the team to find the support that matters most at that time.

[The cool2talk website is for young people aged 12-26.](#) It provides a safe space where they can get their questions answered accurately and without judgement. Research shows that providing accurate, non-judgemental responses to young people that are age and stage appropriate supports them to make safer choices.

VOICE: Participation & Engagement

[How are you making sure that I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that will affect me?](#)

[The following high-level, multi-agency objectives support the involvement of children and young people in Argyll and Bute:](#)

- The Young Peoples Advisory Panel and Participation Groups will work to ensure that all children and young people are actively engaged and involved in the development of future services.
- The multi-agency focus across schools and communities for children and young people will ensure maximum impact in key areas such as good mental health and wellbeing, personal skills, leadership, team building, and communication.
- Partners will ensure that children and young people have equal and equitable access to real and meaningful outcomes.
- Children and young people's feedback will ensure that multiagency service delivery and support are focused on what is most important to them.

Across Argyll and Bute there [are a number of local Champions groups](#), where care experienced children and young people regularly come together to share experiences, have a fun time and identify issues they want the Corporate Parenting Board to address.

Representatives from the Champions groups attend the Corporate Parenting Board and are involved in all discussions and decisions. At every meeting there is time set aside for Champions to tell Corporate Parents about the work they are doing and share information about what issues need to be actioned. Four Children's Champions are members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Scaffolding: Education

[*How are you making sure that I have every support I need to stay in school and I'm not excluded?*](#)

In the 2023-24 academic year, [no care experienced children and young people \(CECYP\) were excluded in Argyll and Bute](#). The 2024-25 target is to have fewer than two care experienced children and young people excluded.

Argyll and Bute were one of the first authorities to deliver Education Scotland's Keeping The Promise Award. This professional learning programme is designed to support anyone working with children and young people, particularly those who are care experienced. The council's Chief Officers Group was the first local authority senior leadership team in Scotland to receive the 'We Promise Award' The Principal Teacher and Health and Wellbeing Officers help ensure that schools remain ambitious for their care experienced pupils, and that all care

experienced pupils who need it receive additional emotional and educational supports to thrive in school.

The Principal Teacher supports schools to track both attendance and attainment data for care experienced pupils and provides advice and support to ensure targeted early additional support where needed.

Partners in Argyll and Bute have embarked on a number of change projects including:

- The Promise is a centre theme of all multi agency strategic partnerships, and the priorities and fundamentals of the promise embedded within the strategic plans, rather than having another strategic plan to ensure the widest ownership and commitment.
- Appointed a Principal Teacher for Care Experienced Children and Young People in April 2023 to lead on improving educational outcomes to oversee their education.
- Appointment of Health and Wellbeing Liaison officers in each local area to provide intensive support for care experienced children and their families.
- Commenced implementing a Care Experienced CAMHS service.
- Improve multi-agency working party established. Scrutiny of crisis/emergency transitions. Case study planned to ensure robust communication around transitions. A data sharing agreement is currently being finalised to support sharing across partners.
- Improved the range and choice of flexible aftercare options for those who want it. There are increased aftercare options across two providers. Castlewood Court in Helensburgh has now changed to a Through & Aftercare resource for care experienced young people. There is also the Resettlement Programme set up specifically to support age 16+ unaccompanied asylum-seeking young adults.
- Expanded the availability for apprenticeships and work opportunities for care experienced young people and work is ongoing to promote opportunities via all Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) partners.
- Improved the supports for young people at risk of offending and custody and we are currently reviewing plans and pathways. Not at Home protocol implemented with the Police to avoid unnecessary criminalisation of care experienced young people.
- Training on trauma informed working has made a significant difference in a range of different settings

- Partnership working between Social Work, Education and Skills Development Scotland Improving care experienced pupils' destinations
 - 50% of schools have signed up for the Rights Respecting Schools Approach and are following the framework for awards and 26% of schools are involved in the Local Authority Nurture Strategy programme.
 - Reviewed how well brothers and sisters are being kept together; currently around 55% of brothers and sisters are growing up together. Brothers and sisters in care can only be separated following assessment and with the express agreement of the Head of Service.
 - Implemented "Together Apart" assessment training for social workers supporting brothers and sisters and revised permanence planning guidance to ensure greater weight is given to maintaining relationships.
 - Commenced a review of all brothers and sisters currently not living together to explore opportunities to reunite and where not possible ensure we are supporting and nurturing those crucial relationships.
-

City of Edinburgh Council

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[City of Edinburgh Council has a population of 525 470](#), and is the fastest growing city in Scotland, with more than 50,000 new residents expected over the next 20 years. 51% of the population is female, and Edinburgh is home to [87,551 children and young people](#) under the age of 18, equating to approximately 20% of Edinburgh's overall population. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [4188 third sector organisations operating in Edinburgh, including 988 dedicated to social care](#). It is part of the Edinburgh Police Division which has [12 police stations](#), and is served by [11 hospitals](#).

[Edinburgh Children's Partnership](#) is committed to supporting children, young people and families to access places within their local community and enabling and encouraging them to access the wide range of health-promoting places, including parks, libraries, museums and other cultural opportunities that exist across the city. [The children's partnership](#) will take forward a number of areas of collaborative work to ensure children's voices are included in place-making decisions, particularly in relation to 20-minute neighbourhoods, as well as to ensure children are supported to access the places, they need in their communities and beyond.

The latest available data shows that an estimated 17% of people in Edinburgh were living in poverty in the period to 2022, including 20% of all children. Within these high-level averages, analysis in 2023 has further deepened understanding of the higher risk of poverty among women, families with children, minority ethnic groups, and disabled families in the city. Poverty rates for some of these priority groups during 2022 were [more than double the average for all citizens](#).

There are 23 high schools and 92 primary schools in Edinburgh. Whilst educational outcomes across primary and secondary schools in Edinburgh have shown, in general, steady improvement over the years, the poverty related attainment gap persists. For example, the percentage of primary pupils achieving their expected Curriculum for Excellence level in Literacy in 2021/22 was at its highest at 77% though this was 87% for those least deprived compared to 62% for those most deprived pupils, a 25% variance. The gap is also evident in the levels of school attendance, for 2022/23, with 95% attendance in Primary schools for those least deprived compared to 89% for those most deprived and in Secondary schools 93% for those least deprived compared to 86% for those most deprived. This highlights the need for [targeted supports to promote equal opportunities for all](#).

Across the City of Edinburgh, there are significant inequalities between population groups, with poorer health outcomes seen for those living in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation. This is demonstrated by the fact that over 20% of pregnant women living in the most deprived areas are classified as obese, compared with less than 10% of those living in the [least deprived areas](#). The same trends are seen for other indicators, with nearly 20% of women in the most deprived areas smoking in pregnancy, compared with less than 1% in the least deprived areas. The proportion of babies reported to be exclusively breastfed at their 6–8-week check-up is 49%, this is higher than the Scottish proportion of 32%. This has been steadily increasing across the city since around 2012/13, in line with Scotland, although at a faster rate. Regarding developmental concerns recorded for children at their 27–30-month review, the percentage of children with one or more concerns recorded was 10% compared to the Scottish percentage of 15%.

[In Edinburgh, 73%](#) of children in primary 1 have a healthy weight, compared to 70% of children across Scotland, this has declined, however since 2018/19. Regarding oral health, 78% of P1 children were shown to have good dental health, this increases to 79% for children in P7. In both cases, this is higher than the percentage seen across Scotland. Local data from the 2021/2022 Health and Wellbeing Census Scotland survey, conducted with Primary 5 to Secondary 6 pupils, demonstrated the following in relation to education, mental health, neighbourhood, life at home and physical health for this age range living in Edinburgh:

- 81% strongly agreed or agreed they enjoyed learning new things
- 65% agreed that adults are good at listening to what they say
- 67% said the area in which they live is a good place to live
- 65% said they always have an adult in their life who they can trust and talk to about personal problems
- 63% of P7-S6 pupils said they never went to bed hungry

A priority for Edinburgh's Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) allocation was to develop a single point of access for mental health support, to ensure children and young people's mental health needs are identified and responded to as early as possible. To improve joined up commissioning of mental health support for children and young people, Edinburgh aligned its WFWF allocation with its Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. As a result of this work, a single point of access was created for referrals to mental health support, including for accessing systemic therapy, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and support from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Key reporting in City of Edinburgh

- [Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan](#)
- [Children's Services Plan](#)
- [Edinburgh Children's Partnership Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan](#)
- [Business Plan](#)
- [Poverty Annual Progress Report](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Annual Report](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in the City of Edinburgh June 2019](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 882 children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 18 per 1000 children in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 1180 children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 13 per 1000 children in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 209 children who entered the 'care system' in City of Edinburgh from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 262 children who entered the 'care system' in City of Edinburgh between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

168 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This is 19.0% of children who were experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024.

288 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This is 24.4% of children who were experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020.

There were 785 children experiencing care who were living in the community in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This is 89.0% of children who were experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024.

There were 1062 children experiencing care who were living in the community in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This is 90.0% of children who were experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020.

There were 178 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This is 20.2% of children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024.

There were 211 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This is 17.9% of children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020.

367 children were living in foster care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This represents 41.6% of all children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024.

519 children were living in foster care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This represents 44.0% of all children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020.

There were 97 children living in residential care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This is 11.0% of all children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024.

There were 118 children living in residential care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This is 10.0% of all children experiencing care in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 192 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in City of Edinburgh, 158 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 2 per 1,000).

10.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in City of Edinburgh during 2022/23. 11.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in City of Edinburgh during 2022/23. 11.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in City of Edinburgh during 2022/23.

9.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in City of Edinburgh during 2019/20. 10.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in City of

Edinburgh during 2019/20. 9.2% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in City of Edinburgh during 2019/20.

3290 children were living in temporary accommodation in City of Edinburgh on 30 September 2024.

1620 children were living in temporary accommodation in City of Edinburgh on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 9384 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in City of Edinburgh. This represents an average of 12.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 17371 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in City of Edinburgh. This represents an average of 20.2% of children in City of Edinburgh.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 9635 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in City of Edinburgh. This represents an average of 12.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 7281 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in City of Edinburgh. This represents an average of 9.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 7704 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in City of Edinburgh. This represents an average of 9.8% children.

In City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024, there were 44 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020, there were 40 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 85.7% in City of Edinburgh.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 89.0% in City of Edinburgh (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In City of Edinburgh, 46 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 63 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

41.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in City of Edinburgh.

48.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in City of Edinburgh.

15.2% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in City of Edinburgh.

19.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in City of Edinburgh.

85.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in City of Edinburgh. 70.5% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in City of Edinburgh during 2023.

82.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in City of Edinburgh. 72.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in City of Edinburgh.

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.

545 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. This represents 62% of all children who were 'looked after' in City of Edinburgh on that day.

730 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020. This represents 62% of all children who were 'looked after' in City of Edinburgh on that day.

11 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in City of Edinburgh.

32 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in City of Edinburgh.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

139 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in City of Edinburgh.
178 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in City of Edinburgh.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

66.5% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

81.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in City of Edinburgh on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by City of Edinburgh between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 0 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.0 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by City of Edinburgh between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 38 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 4112 households living in temporary accommodation in City of Edinburgh.

On 30 September 2020, there were 2190 households living in temporary accommodation in City of Edinburgh.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 3531 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in City of Edinburgh.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 2822 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in City of Edinburgh.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: POVERTY

The people who support me know if and how I am affected by poverty and provide us with the help and support we need if we are.

[The Edinburgh Poverty Commission](#) was established in 2017 and was designed to:

- Better understand the forces which drive almost one in four children in Edinburgh into poverty
- Listen to and learn from the voices of citizens in Edinburgh who are struggling to get by
- Build on what works well, but challenge the city to do better, and
- Design the changes we can make as a city to end poverty in Edinburgh.

The commission published its final report, [A Just Capital: Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh](#), in September 2020. The Commission was supported by the Edinburgh Partnership, City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government.

The 2024 [Poverty Annual Progress Report](#) reports on the key activities to end poverty in Edinburgh and sets out priorities for 2025.

Just one example of partnership work around poverty in Edinburgh the [Maximise!](#) service - delivered as a partnership between Community Health and Advice Initiative (CHAI) and Children First. Funded by the Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland City Region Deal and City of Edinburgh Council, the service offers a joined-up model of money advice, employability, and family support. The project works with families whose children attend Early Years Centres in 10 areas of concentrated poverty and deprivation in the city - Craigmillar, Granton, Greendykes, Fort, Moffat, Calderglen, Hailesland, Gilmerton, Sighthill and Stenhouse.

VOICE: Listening

[*My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted upon.*](#)

Edinburgh Champions Board provides a platform for care experienced young people to talk directly to their Corporate Parents and influence policy and practice change. Members of the Senior Champions Board have set key priorities for their own areas of work, with a focus on improved support with mental health, supporting and nurturing sibling relationships and better support into adulthood. These priorities are reflected in the plan. They also consulted on drafts of the plan and asked for certain changes to be made in terms of language and simplicity.

[Enhanced Data Sharing](#) Over the last 18 months a significant piece of work has been undertaken to review the existing (2015) Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between the NHS Lothian/City of Edinburgh Council and voluntary sector organisations working with children. The new DSA has been developed in line with the Edinburgh's Promise and the principles and data protection provisions of the GIRFEC refresh, recently published by the Scottish Government. Through this DSA, which sets out how the proportionate and timely sharing of relevant information will be managed. All organisations wishing to sign up to this Data Sharing Agreement will receive training on it and the standards they will be expected to meet, as well as being provided with operational guidance on what this may mean in practice for your organisation.

VOICE: Participation and Engagement

[My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted upon.](#)

Promise Partnership funding was secured with the plan to establish Edinburgh's first Family Advisory Panel. The aim is to recruit, support/mentor parents to play a greater role in the design and delivery of services. By listening to, training, and supporting parents to be peer mentors to families involved with children's services, a culture of parental participation will be developed.

Supported by feedback from families, work will begin with a test on critical areas of practice where there is the greatest potential for polarisation between families and professionals such as child protection and/or children coming into care.

Partners in City of Edinburgh have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- A recruitment drive throughout 2023 has increased Social Work Team capacity and Edinburgh started 2024 from a place of no Child Protection waiting lists and low vacancy levels.
- Edinburgh Children and Families Social Work is progressing a full-service redesign/review. Central to this are the drivers around The Promise and Whole Family Wellbeing, along with the voice of people with expertise through experience, to inform how services can be developed, organised and delivered in a way that better meets expectations and outcomes.

- [Edinburgh's Promise plan for 2021 to 2024](#) set out actions and priorities for key organisations in the Edinburgh Children's Partnership to keep the Promise.
 - 'Reframing Our Language': a document to highlight key phrases and communication styles that could be problematic and offering alternatives to help professionals communicate with and about children, young people and their families.
 - '5 Fundamentals': this document outlined what the fundamentals mean to Edinburgh, as well as explaining what it looks like when people, teams, services, and organisations act on these fundamentals.
 - 'Edinburgh's Promise Framework' – a document to be used by organisations, services, teams, and individuals who are involved in supporting children and young people, to aid meaningful participation in service delivery improvement as well as service design.
 - 'Children's Rights: A Framework for Understanding'. This document was designed to serve as Edinburgh's Framework for colleagues in relation to Children's Rights and a starting point for learning and implementation.
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Clackmannanshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Clackmannanshire is the smallest Council area in mainland Scotland and is semi-rural. Its population was 51,750 in 2022, around half of whom live in the main town and administrative centre, Alloa. This includes 8,697 children [under the age of 16](#). The population is projected to decrease by 1.7% in the next 10 years. The [population over 65](#) was 20.8%, which is slightly higher than the Scottish average. The population projections predict that the population aged 75+ in Clackmannanshire will increase by 41.5% from 2018-2028 (compared to a projection of 25.4% nationally), which suggests there will be an increased demand for health and social care services [in the future](#). It is part of the Forth Valley Police Division which has [11 Police Stations](#), and is served by [1 hospital](#).

Clackmannanshire council support children and young people via [3 secondary schools, 34 primary schools and 4 early learning centres](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [260 third sector organisations operating in Clackmannanshire, including 70 dedicated to social care](#).

[Clackmannanshire's Children's Services Plan](#) reports that overall in Clackmannanshire there is a high quality of life and people enjoy living there but there are challenges and significant variations across different communities.

Since the Independent Care Review published its conclusions [Clackmannanshire Council has pledged](#) that it will work to keep the promise, putting children and families at the heart of its work so that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential. The core principles of the promise are woven throughout [Clackmannanshire's Children's Services Plan](#), and reflect the themes heard by the Independent Care Review:

- What matters to children and families will be the highest priority and the cornerstone of how services will operate.
- Listening to children and families will be embedded into all practices and processes that engage with children and families.
- Poverty and a commitment to alleviating the impacts.
- Children's rights under the UNCRC will be consistently upheld.
- Language subscribes to an underpinning values base that does not stigmatise children and families.

In 2023/24, 121 children in Clackmannanshire were referred to the Children's Reporter, compared to 118 in 2022/23, 237 in 2013/14 and 718 in 2003/4. In 2023/24, 479 Children's Hearings were held in Clackmannanshire and 113 children were subject to a Compulsory Supervision order [on 31st March 2023](#).

Clackmannanshire has a Family Group Decision Making service and between April 2023 and March 2024 the Family Group Decision Making team [supported](#) 74 initial referral meetings, 47 family meetings, 6 emergency family meetings and 11 reviews.

[Clackmannanshire's Child Poverty Action Plan Report 2023-24](#) is the sixth report published under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Clackmannanshire's collective mission, articulated by its Tackling Poverty Partnership, is to improve health life expectancy by reducing inequality and child poverty. According to the Child Poverty Action Plan Report children and families in Clackmannanshire are facing the following circumstances:

- Child poverty rates in Clackmannanshire wards in 2023: Central—35.6%, an increase of 60 children; North—31%, an increase of 22 children; South—30.1%, an increase of 63 children; West—23.2%, a decrease of 6 children; and East—17.5%, an increase of 15 children.
- [25% of children](#) are entitled to free school meals.
- 25% of data zones are among the most deprived, with 8 zones having over a quarter of income-deprived residents. The Alloa South & East area stands out with 47% income deprivation. The area has 10% in the most deprived SIMD and 5% in the least deprived. The youngest age group is in the most deprived area.
- DWP figures indicate there were 451, 729 households on Universal Credit across Scotland in Jan 2024, which correlates to an increase of 9.3%, lower than the increase of 12% across Clackmannanshire.

- In 2022, 31% of households were estimated to be in fuel poverty, with 18.5% in extreme fuel poverty.
- Clackmannanshire has over a quarter of housing socially rented, with 21% by the local authority.
- Following awareness raising, Free School Meal Entitlement uptake has increased. 26.9% of all school pupils were approved for FSM in session 23/24. All pupils in p1-5 get this automatically For P6,7 and secondary exclusively FSM uptake is 60.2%

Family Group Decision Making and kinship support are key drivers in Clackmannanshire's [Early Help](#) team. These services are pivotal in delivering the aims of the promise and keeping children within their supported family network when it is safe to do so.

The rate of children who experience the 'care system' in Clackmannanshire is [24.7%](#). The [Keeping the Promise Plan 2023-26](#) states:

- The total number of current care experienced children and young people across Clackmannanshire is around 26.3% of the school roll population, based on July 2022 data.
- 43% of care experienced children and young people continue to be cared for by friends/ relatives in kinship care. 24% of care experienced children and young people are in authority provided foster care.
- There has been a reduction in the number of child protection registrations from 44 in 2021 to 19 in 2022 to 15 in 2023.
- Overall school attendance rate for care experienced children and young people was 86.7% in 2022/3 compared to the national rate of 88%.
- 16% of care experienced children and young people in Clackmannanshire are aged under five.
- Upon leaving school, 100% of care experienced children and young people entered a positive destination, compared to the national figure of 88%.
- Gender split of care experienced children and young people is 52% male and 48% female.

The numbers of care experienced children and young people in Clackmannanshire have not changed significantly, although there is a reduction in children in fostering and residential care, and an increase in children care for the local authority at home or where adoption is being progressed.

Clackmannanshire's [Chief Social Work Officer Report 2023-24 states](#) that in July 2023, 225 children were being cared for by the Council, representing 2.3% of under 18 year olds and higher than the Scottish rate of 1.2%. The rate of children on the Child Protection Register (per 1,000 children aged under 16) was 1.7, below the Scottish rate of 2.3.

During the reporting period 2023/24, children's services received 1,401 referrals (requests for assistance). This is a 16% increase from 2022/23 when there were 1,180 requests for assistance. The development of Clackmannanshire's Early Help team is the Council's front door service for early help and support and has enabled a preliminary screening of all initial contacts to children's social work. This ensures that only the most appropriate requests for assistance progress to locality practice teams for children who require statutory or specialised help and support.

During 2023/24, 153 initial referral discussions were undertaken compared to 171 initial referral discussions in 2022/23, a decrease of 11%. On 31 July 2023, Clackmannanshire's rate per 1,000 children (0-15 years) on the Child Protection Register was 1.7. This is a slight increase on the 31 July 2022 rate of 1.4 and is a notable reduction from the 2021 rate (4.6 per 1,000). This compares to the Scottish rate of 2.3 per 1,000 in 2023 and 2.2 per 1,000 [in 2022](#).

[Vacancy rates and turnover](#) vary by teams, however across all of Clackmannanshire's social work teams, vacancies for qualified social workers have been difficult to recruit to, with higher vacancy rates in adults and children's teams. Agency social workers have been recruited to address workforce gaps however this is not a sustainable option to address the challenges in social work recruitment, both locally and nationally. Clackmannanshire Council's qualified workforce within children's services has 60% newly qualified social workers currently in post.

Between January 2023 and June 2024 Clackmannanshire's Fostering Panel [reviewed](#) 17 fostering households, one new carer was registered, and one carer deregistered as a result of retirement maintaining the number of fostering households at nineteen. There continues to be a significant need for additional care provision within Clackmannanshire to ensure children can grow up and remain within their local community, foster carer recruitment is a key priority for the team. There were 79 children who were cared for by the local authority living outside of the Clackmannanshire area as at 31st July 2024 in a range of care

settings. This is a decrease of nine. Clackmannanshire have had no children or young people residing in [secure care provision](#).

The participation rate of 16–19-year-olds who are in education, training or employment is [89.3%](#). The academic attainment gap between the most and least deprived has reduced in Clackmannanshire. In primary schools, the Council is close to the Scottish average for numeracy and has the 4th lowest gap for literacy. In secondary schools, however, attainment remains [below average](#).

Key reporting in Clackmannanshire

- [Community Wellbeing Report](#)
- [Keeping the Promise Update Report December 2023](#)
- [Keeping the Promise Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-27](#)
- [Clackmannanshire Children's Services Plan 2021-24](#)
- [Clackmannanshire Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [Clackmannanshire Community Justice Plan 2023-28](#)
- [Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Plan 23-26](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan 18-21](#)

Clackmannanshire have submitted a number of reports to the People's Committee from their Chief Social Work Officer relating to the promise:

- [26th November 2020 providing a summary of the Independent Care Review and recommendations, including to approve the pledge to 'keep the promise'.](#)
- [27th May 2021 providing an update on work to keep the promise](#)
- [16th September 2021 providing an update on work to keep the promise](#)
- [10th August 2023 seeking approval for Clackmannanshire's Promise Plan 2023-26 and Language Policy](#)
- [8th February 2024 to provide an interim update on the progress across the 2023-26 Promise Plan](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer annual report, February 2024](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 212 children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 43 per 1000 children in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 248 children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 25 per 1000 children in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 68 children who entered the 'care system' in Clackmannanshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 84 children who entered the 'care system' in Clackmannanshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

41 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This is 19.3% of children who were experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024.

46 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This is 18.5% of children who were experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 199 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This is 93.9% of children who were experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 228 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This is 91.9% of children who were experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 82 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This is 38.7% of children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 97 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This is 39.1% of children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020.

70 children were living in foster care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 33.0% of all children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024.

85 children were living in foster care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 34.3% of all children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 13 children living in residential care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This is 6.1% of all children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 13 children living in residential care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This is 5.2% of all children experiencing care in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 78 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Clackmannanshire, 53 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 5 per 1,000).

15.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Clackmannanshire during 2022/23. 17.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in

Clackmannanshire during 2022/23. 20.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Clackmannanshire during 2022/23.

17.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Clackmannanshire during 2019/20. 13.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Clackmannanshire during 2019/20. 15.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Clackmannanshire during 2019/20.

65 children were living in temporary accommodation in Clackmannanshire on 30 September 2024.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in Clackmannanshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1870 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Clackmannanshire. This represents an average of 21.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 2584 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Clackmannanshire. This represents an average of 26.9% of children in Clackmannanshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1963 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Clackmannanshire. This represents an average of 22.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1483 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Clackmannanshire. This represents an average of 16.9% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1559 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Clackmannanshire. This represents an average of 17.5% children.

In Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024, there were 8 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020, there were 6 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 86.1% in Clackmannanshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in Clackmannanshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Clackmannanshire, 2 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 10 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

27.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Clackmannanshire.

61.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Clackmannanshire.

5.6% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Clackmannanshire.

14.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Clackmannanshire.

94.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Clackmannanshire. 83.3% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Clackmannanshire during 2023.

84.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Clackmannanshire. 76.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Clackmannanshire.

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.

152 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 72% of all children who were 'looked after' in Clackmannanshire on that day.

182 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 73% of all children who were 'looked after' in Clackmannanshire on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2023 in Clackmannanshire.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Clackmannanshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

33 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Clackmannanshire.

41 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Clackmannanshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

44.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

100.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Clackmannanshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Clackmannanshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 3 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.9 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Clackmannanshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 148 households living in temporary accommodation in Clackmannanshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 110 households living in temporary accommodation in Clackmannanshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 516 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Clackmannanshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 397 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Clackmannanshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY- Universal and Intensive Family Support

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life.

[There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community.](#)

[People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together.](#)

[When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together.](#)

The Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership was established in 2020. [A report, published jointly in November 2024 by Centre for Public Impact, The Hunter Foundation and Clackmannanshire Council](#), reflects on the lessons learned from this experience. was published in November 2024.

One of the key objectives in the Children's Services Plan is the development of a blueprint of family support to enable families to access the support they need, when they need it, ideally somewhere near their home. This work has been progressed alongside the Family Support Working Group and Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface. A Family Support Service map has been created alongside a [wider directory of third sector support](#).

Clackmannanshire's [allocation](#) of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for 2024/25 and 2025/26 is £0.410m, which has enabled the Council to grow family support services and upscale early help and support. Due to the current high numbers of children subject to statutory orders and cared for by the local authority living away from Clackmannanshire, the bulk of the award has been used to ensure that appropriate supports are available to support children to remain within their own families or return to Clackmannanshire. In year 1 (2022/23) of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund Clackmannanshire received £337,000, which was broken down as follows:

- Participation Development Officer: £39,000
- Aberlour Sustain – Intensive Support Service: £100,000 ('Sustain' is a new intensive support service, which became [operational in October 2023](#))
- Action for Children Additional Functional Family Therapy: £70,767 (A family based intensive intervention programme that builds on the existing strengths within family relationships aimed at improving the outcomes for children and young people aged 8-18 years. The FFT service supported 33 families, including 63 children and young people).
- Barnardo's Additional support for Young People returning from Care: £45,000

- Allocation of Award for Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface £82,336.18
- Homestart: Increase the Family Support Workers to 25 hours from 20. Cost for one year - £9058.
- Barnardos and Volunteering Matters: Two's Company is a befriending and mentoring service for young people who don't want a worker but someone 'alongside them'. Cost for one year - £24,000.
- Barnardos and Action for Children: Two's Company is befriending and mentoring service for young single parents, Mentoring single parents in Clackmannanshire to increase their mental health and Wellbeing focusing on parent skills and offers strategies to implement new ways of managing child's behaviour. Cost for one year - £20,000. This will be aligned to the service above.
- Community House: Family Link Worker – providing support to family members in a non-threatening way through a 'community link worker' model where senior staff who know the families can find community solutions to issues earlier. Funding approved: £14,000.
- Action for Children: Development of a crèche facility to support delivery of evidenced based parenting groups, for children 0-5years – up to 7 children in venues across Clacks. Cost for one year - £15,278.18.

CARE – Moving On

I have been properly prepared for and am supporting with living independently
I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage,
whenever I need it at different points in my life.

The Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund has been [invested in part funding](#) of the Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) role and embedding MCR Pathways; a programme that ensures care experienced young people, or those who have experienced disadvantage, have access to the same educational outcomes, career opportunities and life chances as every other young person. Over the 2023/2024 academic year, 174 young people were supported by MCR pathways, 68 of whom were care experienced.

Clackmannanshire is scoping and developing proposals to increase support for young people leaving care. A dedicated Independent Reviewing Officer is in place, providing oversight and quality assurance of pathway planning for care

experienced young people. This has been a priority area of improvement and the number of young people with pathway plans is [increasing](#).

Recruitment policies have been updated to extend guaranteed interview scheme to care experienced young people who have experienced care in [other local authorities](#).

As part of the Housing Redesign, the new Service Planning and Participation Coordinator is the promise champion for the housing service to ensure that the promise is embedded across housing workstreams and future policy considerations. The housing service has determined that a review of its allocations policy will be prioritised which will ensure that the Council's housing policy and protocols ensure all young people with care experience in the area are given [priority access](#) to housing.

Barnardo's offers a [Clacks Futures service](#) to support young people aged 16-26 who are care experienced and currently living or returning to live in the Clackmannanshire area.

SCAFFOLDING- Justice

[If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by that contact.](#)

The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) approach for joint investigative interviews with Forth Valley partners came into effect in February 2024. The Forth Valley Bairns' Hoose Strategic Group (a partnership with Police Scotland, NHS Forth Valley and the three Forth Valley local authorities) is at the early stage of development of creating a Bairns' Hoose model. In the absence of a standalone Forth Valley Bairns' Hoose, the Forth Valley SCIM Team are utilising 'The Meadows' in Larbert which brings together a number of services which provide support for people who have experienced trauma and provides children and young people with a comfortable, safe and supportive space to carry out joint investigative interviews. A Bairn's Hoose implementation subgroup has been established to progress this project during 2024/25 with oversight by the Forth Valley [Bairns' Hoose Strategic Group](#).

SCAFFOLDING- Governance

People who support me are all working together to share resources, to jointly make decisions, and to own and fix any problems together.

A Promise Cross Party Group was established following the publication of the conclusions of the Independent Care Review. The purpose of the Group is to ensure that the implementation of the promise in Clackmannanshire remains a key priority and achieves results and real change for Clackmannanshire's care experienced community.

Clackmannanshire Promise Implementation Group reports to the Children's Services Strategic Partnership, the cross-party Children and Young People's Board, and to wider Council. The [Oor Clacks Voices](#) participation group is designed to ensure that the promise is firmly in sight of all, and remains a key priority in achieving real change. Reports on progress are submitted to Clackmannanshire Council's People Committee.

Clackmannanshire are moving towards a One Plan, One Report approach. In 2024 the different reports were streamlined into [One Community Wellbeing Report](#), reflecting the duplication and overlap across the full range of People Plans. The report combines, for the first time, progress against:

- Children's Services Plan
- Community Learning and Development Plan
- Community Justice Plan
- Family Wellbeing Partnership Plan
- Local Child Poverty Action Plan
- National Improvement Framework
- Promise Plan
- Sport and Active Living Framework
- Violence Against Women and Girls Plan

Partners in Clackmannanshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Continued progress to reduce the number of external residential homes and developing more local services with an ongoing focus on the

development of local care-based provision with Family Group Decision Making, Restorative Practice and targeting of commissioned services combined with increased support to kinship and [foster carers](#).

- Language of Care Policy has been co-designed.
- A strong partnership developed with Vardy Foundation to develop models of care and support to increase the support available to care experienced children and young people within Clackmannanshire, with a view to developing a sustainable model which ensures children can remain within their local communities
- Virtual Head teacher Appointment – focus on the delivery of The Promise across all Clackmannanshire establishments. Bespoke tracking database created including attendance and attainment tracking. 1-1 support for individual families and young people across all Secondary schools from Virtual Head teacher.
- Partnership working opportunities being developed for Care Experienced Young people including partners such as Ochil Youth Community Improvement, Clacks Voices, Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface, Coach My Sport and Clackmannanshire Primaries and Early Learning Centres (35 young people) providing opportunities.
- Specific support of a Wellbeing Worker for all Care Experienced Young People in Clackmannanshire.
- Active schools monitoring participation of care experienced young people in sport and leisure opportunities.
- FLIP (Flexible Learning Independent Pathways), FLIP Plus and individual pathways created for those most at risk of being disengaged from education.
- Roll-out of NHS Education for Scotland Transforming Psychological Trauma materials across the Council workforce in collaboration with the Resilience Learning Partnership and led by the Educational Psychology Service, including piloting of a trauma-informed audit tool which will support service re-design.
- Development of a Participation Network to improve the current collaboration and participatory opportunities for care experienced children and young people and their families and carers to support Keeping The Promise across Clackmannanshire.
- Increased support to foster carers, kinship carers, and adopters through investment in “Family Placement Team” and focus on building the Care Community.

- Targeted financial support for care experienced families for activities during the summer holidays.
- Children's Services Redesign focusing on family wellbeing, early intervention, a community model of working, implementing a relationship-based approach to practice.
- Commissioning of intensive support provision to support children on the "edge of care" to remain supported at home with their family.
- Establishment of a brothers and sisters working group to develop policy, review procedures and build on keeping brothers and sisters connected training.
- Establishment of a Children and Young People's Suicide Prevention Group; which has the aim of re-developing Suicide and Self Harm policies for education staff.
- Established a Housing and Through Care After Care group to ensure improved pathway planning for care leavers preparing to live independently and maximise opportunities for care experienced young people to return and live closer to home.
- Joint working between Educational Psychology and Woodside Children's House to embed trauma informed therapeutic approaches to caring.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing in Clacks transformation project has implemented a Continuum of Support that offers both digital and face-to-face support for children and young people aged 5-26 years.
- Award of funding from The Lens following a successful bid created by young people at Woodside Children's House to design the spaces that matter to them.
- Strengthening support in Early Intervention for 0-2 through development of baby massage and groups at the Alloa Family Centre in partnership with health.
- Provision of flexible wrap around childcare supporting families.
- [Secured funding](#) for five-year programme '[Communities that Care](#)' delivered within schools and communities within Clackmannanshire.
- Develop a participation network to ensure voice of children and families is at the heart of service design.
- Develop a range of new local care provisions to ensure more children can stay in their community.
- Develop a hub for care experienced young people to support community and access a range of supports.

Comhairle Nan-Eileanan Siar

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

The Outer Hebrides is a group of 65 islands off the west coast of Scotland, [stretching 130 miles \(210 km\)](#) from Lewis in the north to the island of Barra Head in the south, the Outer Hebrides lie in a crescent about 40 miles (65 km) from the Scottish mainland. It is part of the Highlands and Islands Police Division which has [35 police stations](#), and is served by [3 hospitals](#).

[The area has experienced depopulation](#) (population decline) as people have moved away. 46,000 people lived on the islands in 1901, but the current population has dropped to below 27,000. Most people live on the Isle of Lewis. With limited opportunities, younger people have chosen to move away from the area in search of better-paid employment elsewhere.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has 4 secondary schools and 19 primary schools in which a Gaelic First Policy operates. This means that the default language stream for enrolment will be Gaelic Medium unless the choice is made during the enrolment process to opt for English Medium. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [669 third sector organisations operating in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, including 117 dedicated to social care](#).

[In 2022, a significant proportion of children aged 0 to 15 were living in families with a relative low-income](#) (15.9%), a figure the same as the national average of 15.9% for all Scottish children. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar reports that 23.2% of the population are aged 0-24 years, compared to 25.6% of the Highlands and Islands and 27.6% of Scotland's population and there are [4888 children aged 0-18](#). Health indicators for children show mixed outcomes when compared to national figures. More babies are exclusively breastfed at 6–8 weeks ([41.2%](#)), with the national mean standing at 31.8%. Additionally, a higher proportion of

children present with [one or more developmental concerns at their 27–30 month review](#) (25.3%), compared to the Scottish average of 14.7%.

[There are currently over 80 play areas](#) throughout the Outer Hebrides, with the standards and equipment at each varying widely from one area to the next. Through various grants received, funding from Western Isles Lottery and [local communities forming playpark committees to fundraise](#) and manage these parks, there has been refurbishment to make playparks safe spaces for children to [play and to have a communal place they can meet and enjoy playing with their peers](#).

Key reporting in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

- [Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24](#)
- [Corporate Strategy 2024-2027](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23 – Delivery Update November 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 40 children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 15 per 1000 children in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 50 children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 10 per 1000 children in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 14 children who entered the 'care system' in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 27 children who entered the 'care system' in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

25 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This is 62.5% of children who were experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024.

24 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This is 48.0% of children who were experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020.

There were 33 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This is 82.5% of children who were experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024.

There were 43 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This is 86.0% of children who were experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020.

There were 6 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This is 15.0% of children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024.

There were 14 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This is 28.0% of children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020.

2 children were living in foster care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This represents 5.0% of all children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024.

5 children were living in foster care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This represents 10.0% of all children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020.

There were 7 children living in residential care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This is 17.5% of all children experiencing care in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 38 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles), 14 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

14.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2022/23. 25.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2022/23. 12.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2022/23.

20.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2019/20. 18.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2019/20. 14.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2019/20.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 30 September 2024.

25 children were living in temporary accommodation in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 473 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). This represents an average of 12.0% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 1044 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). This represents an average of 19.7% of children in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 555 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). This represents an average of 13.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 378 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). This represents an average of 9.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 437 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). This represents an average of 10.3% children.

In Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024, there were 2 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 74.4% in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) , 10 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 256 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

16.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

0.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

0.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

0.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

83.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles). 66.7% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) during 2023.

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.

8 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. This represents 20% of all children who were 'looked after' in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on that day.

19 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020. This represents 38% of all children who were 'looked after' in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

26 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

13 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

62.5% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

40.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 1 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.7 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 50 households living in temporary accommodation in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

On 30 September 2020, there were 67 households living in temporary accommodation in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles).

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 113 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) .

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 120 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles) .

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

How will you make sure that people are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together?

Family Support Early Years

The Early Years Service (EYS) has increased staff team to four, enabling an expansion of service provision and support. This includes:

- Establishment of a baby bank
- Supporting the delivery of Pointer's Young Mums group,
- Delivering community engagement events throughout the islands including Family and Child events,

- Delivery of 'Bookbug' event sessions to the Young Mums group, parent and toddler groups, nursery stay and play sessions and Bookbug in the Home sessions,
- Delivery of a baby massage programme,
- Staff are now trained in the Peep and Ante-Natal Peep Programme, and all staff are now able to deliver Group Triple training.

Scaffolding: Education

How will you make sure that I am getting support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education?

A Wellbeing Service is provided across all Secondary schools to support pupils with their wellbeing, managing anxiety, low mood, exam stress and conflict with friends. Primary and secondary schools in Lewis and Harris have an established Youth Mentoring Service providing 1:1 support to pupils of all ages. Transitional support is provided to Primary pupils in advance of starting Secondary school. Drop-in 1:1 sessions are available on Thursdays at the Nicolson Institute to support pupils' wellbeing. There is a targeted focus on the care-experienced community via The Promise Project. *"The Wellbeing Service was a huge support for my daughter who was diagnosed with autism. It has also been a massive support to myself. As my daughter finds it difficult to attend school it is such a relief to receive the support in helping her find the confidence to re-attend."* – Parent

Care: Moving on and lifelong support

How will you make sure that I have been properly prepared for and am supported with living independently?

The Western Isles Housing Support Service aims to provide accessible, flexible and person-centred housing support services to young people aged 16-19 in the Western Isles. This includes Care Experienced children and young people, young people in critical need, or as part of a transition plan to enable them to secure, establish and/or maintain occupancy of appropriate accommodation.

Young people will typically have a support plan, and the service will take a holistic view to their needs. The aim of the service is to:

- Prevent youth homelessness,

- Prepare young people for independent living and help them maintain their housing independence,
- Assist and support young people to secure suitable, affordable, sustainable permanent accommodation, by providing high quality temporary accommodation to support this transition,
- To support the health, wellbeing and social integration of homeless young people. New accommodation has been developed at Keith Street in Stornoway to provide three rooms in the downstairs area of the property. The upstairs of the property has two – two-bedroom flats which are in the process of development for the use of young people. Keith Street house will operate in a step up / step down model, enabling reduced levels of support for young people as they are ready to support their independence.

Partners in Na h-Eileanan Siar have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- [Promise Partnership funding](#) to support improved attainment and achievement amongst care experienced children and young people, and those on the edges of care
- In April 2024, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) launched the [Understanding My Hearing](#) project in the Western Isles. The aim of this pilot is to provide enhanced support to children and young people to help them better prepare for their Hearings.
- Action for Children working with parents/carers of children involved in offending behaviours and alcohol/substance misuse within various families' projects. These projects seek to provide safe and secure spaces for discussions about offending, substance use, domestic abuse seeking to create safe families.
- Work to provide better support for care experienced learners within schools, particularly in times of transition. This includes:
 - Ending exclusions for care experienced learners.
 - Respond to the needs of young people rather than react to presenting behaviour.
 - Create safe and supported places for our care experienced children and young people to get support and mentoring, in and out of the school environment.
 - Secure additional space within the largest secondary school for this purpose.

- Give a commitment to continual development of these projects to maintain enthusiasm and momentum in keeping the Promise.
-

Dumfries and Galloway

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[Dumfries and Galloway](#) is the third largest region in Scotland, characterised by small settlements of 4,000 people or less spread across a large area. There is a total population of just over [145,000](#), and an estimated population of children and young people aged 0-21 of 25,712. Over a quarter of the population (28.6%) lives in an area considered to be remote (further than 30 minutes' drive away from a large town of population 10,000 or greater). The two largest towns are 75 miles apart and have different profiles: this affects both delivery of, and access to services. Dumfries and Galloway has [lower birth rates](#), as a rate per 1000 population (7.7 per 1000 in 2019) than Scotland (9.9 per 1000 in 2019). Birth rates are falling in Dumfries and Galloway and nationally. The local population is declining, and when surveyed, [55% of young people](#) said they intended to leave Dumfries and Galloway in future for work, study or travel. It is part of the Dumfries and Galloway Police Division which has [9 police stations](#) and is served by 2 hospitals.

Dumfries & Galloway saw 1252 [homelessness applications](#) in 2022/23 the highest level of applications for over 12 years and an increase of 25% on the previous year. 28% of these were from people under the age of 26. In response to increased homeless presentations and the increasing number of households threatened with homelessness due to the current Cost of Living crisis, resourcing within the Housing Options and Homeless Service is focussing on homelessness prevention and further development of partnership working to strengthen early support.

Dumfries and Galloway has the one of the [highest rates](#) of child poverty in Scotland, at 22.9%. This means that 5171 children were living in poverty. In the 2021/22 academic year, a total of 4,405 children were in receipt of free school

meals: 20.6% of all children of nursery and school age. Universal Credit claims rose sharply from 6,500 in January 2020 to 11,700 by the end of December 2020. By the end of December 2021, there were 11,400 Universal Credit Claims.

Earnings in [Dumfries and Galloway](#) are lower than the national average. In 2023, full time workers received an average of £580.80 per week compared with a Scottish average of £702.80, making it the lowest in Scotland. Economic inactivity in Dumfries and Galloway is higher than across Scotland and Great Britain. 27.4% of the population aged 16 to 64 years in Dumfries and Galloway were 'economically inactive' in the year ending June 2023. Unemployment is also higher in Dumfries and Galloway than across Scotland (3.5%) with an unemployment rate of 3.6%, however lower than Great Britain (3.7%).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1945 third sector organisations operating in Dumfries and Galloway, including 423 dedicated to social care.](#)

Dumfries and Galloway has [98 Primary Schools and 16 Secondary Schools](#), with 62% of schools are classified as Rural or Remote Rural, and 66% of Primary Schools having a shared Headteacher/in a partnership arrangement. In 2021-22 [in Dumfries and Galloway](#), there were: 10,092 children in primary schools and 8,594 children in secondary schools. 582 Primary pupils had a Child Plan, and 519 Secondary pupils had a Child Plan. At primary stage, 86.6% of those eligible took free school meals compared with 72.1% across Scotland: this is 63.7% against a Scotland-wide rate of 62.7% at secondary stage. Mental health and wellbeing scores from the 2022 Health and Wellbeing Survey [illustrated](#) that female learners were more likely than males to be in the 'low category' for mental wellbeing: 53% of female learners were in the low wellbeing category, 45% were in the average category and 2% were in the high wellbeing category. 29% of male learners were in the low wellbeing category, 64% were in the average category and 7% were in the high wellbeing category.

In [2023/2024](#) the number of children referred into the Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) decreased by 10% compared to the previous year. A total of 865 children were referred into Child MASH, with 487 children discussed at Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD). 296 Child Protection Investigations were undertaken resulting in 110 Child Protection Planning Meetings; an increase of 13% compared to that of 2022/23. A total of 48 children were newly registered under child protection in the current year, an increase of 118% compared to the

previous year. The proportion of children affected by domestic abuse increased from 33% in 2022/23 to 52% in 2023/24. As of 31st March 2024, there were 51 children on the Child Protection Register with the most prevalent risk factors being neglect, domestic abuse and emotional abuse.

Key reporting in Dumfries and Galloway

- [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan Annual Report](#)
- [Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan](#)
- [Children's Services Plan](#)
- [Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Poverty and Inequalities Strategy](#)
- [Chief Social Worker Annual Report](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 346 children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 25 per 1000 children in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 365 children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 14 per 1000 children in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 115 children who entered the 'care system' in Dumfries and Galloway from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 99 children who entered the 'care system' in Dumfries and Galloway between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

114 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This is 32.9% of children who were experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024.

125 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This is 34.2% of children who were experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020.

There were 315 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This is 91.0% of children who were experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024.

There were 333 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This is 91.2% of children who were experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020.

There were 85 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This is 24.6% of children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024.

There were 108 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This is 29.6% of children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020.

107 children were living in foster care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This represents 30.9% of all children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024.

100 children were living in foster care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This represents 27.4% of all children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020.

There were 31 children living in residential care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This is 9.0% of all children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024.

There were 24 children living in residential care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This is 6.6% of all children experiencing care in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 180 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Dumfries and Galloway , 102 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

26.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Dumfries and Galloway during 2022/23. 20.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Dumfries and Galloway during 2022/23. 16.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Dumfries and Galloway during 2022/23.

18.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Dumfries and Galloway during 2019/20. 15.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Dumfries and Galloway during 2019/20. 19.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Dumfries and Galloway during 2019/20.

70 children were living in temporary accommodation in Dumfries and Galloway on 30 September 2024.

90 children were living in temporary accommodation in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4318 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Dumfries and Galloway. This represents an average of 19.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 6758 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Dumfries and Galloway. This represents an average of 26.0% of children in Dumfries and Galloway.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4824 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dumfries and Galloway. This represents an average of 21.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3341 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dumfries and Galloway. This represents an average of 15.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3805 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dumfries and Galloway. This represents an average of 16.7% children.

In Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024, there were 20 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020, there were 14 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 82.1% in Dumfries and Galloway.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in Dumfries and Galloway (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Dumfries and Galloway , 33 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 135 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

29.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Dumfries and Galloway.

50.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Dumfries and Galloway.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Dumfries and Galloway.

9.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Dumfries and Galloway.

88.2% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Dumfries and Galloway. 76.5% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Dumfries and Galloway during 2023.

84.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Dumfries and Galloway. 69.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered

a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Dumfries and Galloway.

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.

192 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. This represents 55% of all children who were 'looked after' in Dumfries and Galloway on that day.

208 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in Dumfries and Galloway on that day.

6 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Dumfries and Galloway.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

80 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Dumfries and Galloway.

139 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Dumfries and Galloway.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

29.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

29.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Dumfries and Galloway on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Dumfries and Galloway between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 0 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.0 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 260 households living in temporary accommodation in Dumfries and Galloway.

On 30 September 2020, there were 209 households living in temporary accommodation in Dumfries and Galloway.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 914 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Dumfries and Galloway .

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 720 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Dumfries and Galloway .

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Poverty

The people who support me know if and how my family are being affected by poverty, and provide us with help and support me if we are.

Accessible Financial Wellbeing Support for Priority Families Project

Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS) has developed this pilot project as a proof of concept in conjunction with NHS Dumfries and Galloway. It is developing, implementing and evaluating measures to provide greater access to financial wellbeing support for priority families in family, children and community settings across Dumfries and Galloway. This is being achieved through the provision of 2 Financial Capability Advisers (covering East and West) who are linking closely and building relationships with community-based staff from NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway Council and the Third Sector to deliver financial wellbeing and wider advice and support.

DAGCAS will also work with specific staff groups to deliver this project such as NHS Community Link Workers and Dumfries and Galloway Council's Community Development Workers and Ward Workers and delivers:

- Outreach to schools as well as within NHS settings e.g. to parents at 9am after they have dropped the children off
- Partnership working with Aberlour, Quarriers, Family Placement team (who support kinship carers and foster carers)
- Outreach to independent Toddlers Groups, private nurseries

- Promotional work at local celebratory events such as gala days and village days.

SCAFFOLDING: Education

I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.

[Schools](#) have used Pupil Equity Funding to support specific Health and Wellbeing programmes and assessment including the use of PASS: Pupil Attitudes to Self and Schools Survey which allowed them to target pupil need through support and health and wellbeing programmes. This included developing pupil attitudes towards learning and beginning to break down barriers. Play therapy was also used and an integral part of this is contact with parents. Two partnership schools have implemented 'Emotion Works', an initiative where learner wellbeing is assessed using the Wellbeing Indicator (SHANARRI); offered breakfast clubs and activity clubs, targeted at children and young people in danger of missing out. One school reported a 50% increase in attendance at school of the pupils attending a breakfast club - the positive social gathering for pupils helped their ability to settle in and be ready to learn; another school tracked areas like behaviour support and family connection with the school and implemented appropriate help and support.

VOICE: Documenting Decisions

My views and experiences, and the views and experiences of people who are important in my life are recorded, included and acted on in a meaningful way.

Dumfries and Galloway are adopting a relationship-based practice approach to working with children and their families, known as [Signs of Safety](#). This model enables families to come up with their own solutions to the issues and barriers they face, with the aim of creating and developing more sustainable plans for children and young people to remain where possible with their families and siblings

A 2022 audit highlighted some key findings in relation to the implementation of the signs of safety approach in Dumfries and Galloway:

- Assessments of a higher quality with increasing use of tools with children and families.

- Overall auditors were impressed with the general standard of practice and language used in reports and recordings.
- Better involvement of children in development of plans and using child friendly versions.
- More direct work with children.
- When making service referrals, better evidence that the right people are involved at the right time.
- Evidence of wider networks and supports involving family and friends with clear roles identified/practical strategies in place.
- Significant improvement in the inclusion of family and network ideas and solutions within plans with friends of the child also being included in these.
- Of 23 parents who provided feedback on their experiences, 65% felt that their Social Worker listens to them/ wants to understand their family, 70% felt they and their worker agreed the key concerns and felt included in making their child's plans.
- Of the 9 children who feedback on their experiences, 78% felt their worker explained what was happening, 78% felt their worker listened to their feelings, 78% felt their worker helped them.

Partners in Dumfries and Galloway have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Introducing (from 01 April 2022) a fostering fee that has contributed to an increase in the number of people coming forward to be recruited and trained as foster carers
- A dedicated Dumfries and Galloway Fostering and Adoption Service website containing information about services, what it means to become a foster carer, the process and contact details. A 'buddy system' has been developed for foster carers for further support; the potential to support mother and children in foster care and newborn babies to stay with mum; and views of young people on applicants coming through to foster and adopt.
- Delivery of the 2023/2024 actions of the Child Poverty Strategy focussing on reducing child poverty, targeting our approach to care experienced children and young people and the National Tackling Poverty Action Plan.
- Care Experienced Teams in Schools. The care experienced team is made up of one Principal Teacher, 3 teachers and 9 care experienced support

offices whose role is to work with primary and secondary pupils to raise attainment, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, and to support young people to address any barriers to education that they may encounter. The team also works with families to help support and progress this movement.

- Creating a 'Hub of Excellence' that will improve outcomes for our children who experience barriers to inclusion and are at risk of family breakdown through a coordinated multi-agency approach. Funding received through the WFWF enabling appointment of project manager and two-family support workers. Training programme introduced to provide Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) for families and reduce staffing costs/making our model of delivery more sustainable.
- Procurement and introduction of educational resource app to support children with complex care needs and their families through WFWF funding.
- Pilot site for the Scottish Child Interview Model, or SCIM. Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) are undertaken jointly by specially trained Police Officers and Social Workers, when it is necessary to obtain the account of a child who has been the victim or witness to a potential crime.
- In the summer of 2023, the 3rd annual We Care Event for care experienced children and young people across the region was held. The event saw children and young people take part in workshops throughout the day, with some providing an opportunity for them to have their say on services, whilst others were activity based including creative and sports sessions. Refreshments, lunch, dinner, transport and fair ground rides and activities were provided at no cost to the young people.
- Youth Beatz Fringe is a variety of free events that take place across our region for children and young people for a week during the summer break leading to the main event "Youth Beatz Music Festival." There is at least one event and/or activity taking place within each regional ward, enabling as many children and young people to benefit as possible. The free music festival is made up of 3 stages that headline acts perform on over Saturday and Sunday.
- 10,000 Voices was a region-wide consultation that was first carried out with young people during Year of Young People in 2018. Since 2018, there has been a wide range of work taken place in response to what young people said about their community. The 10,000 Voices Youth Action Group was established by young people from across Dumfries and Galloway and they worked together to distribute over £120,000 worth of funding received from the Scottish Government to local projects aiming

address the issues identified through 10,000 Voices. Young people in their local communities voted through participatory budgeting to determine the projects they felt would have the most impact.

- Two “Sharing Practice Festivals” across the region. The premise for the sharing practice festival is to provide an opportunity for colleagues and partner agencies to learn about the services that are provided by other teams and agencies within their area.
- The Leaving Care Team worked with young people to create a new name for the team that supports and reflects the work that they do and removes the language barrier. The Leaving Care team is now known as the Young People’s Transition Team, with young people playing a vital role in the development of this rebrand, including the design of their team branding.
- Work to establish a robust and responsive programme of housing support to enable care experienced young people to make positive transitions to permanent accommodation. Work is underway with Registered Social Landlord partners ensuring that priority is given to this group to access accommodation, and this has been incorporated into our new Corporate Parent Plan as a priority area.
- For the last 3 years, Dumfries and Galloway has successfully secured funding from the Amazing Summer Programme. This Scottish Government funded scheme enables children and young people access to a wide range of activities throughout the school summer holidays providing them with the same opportunities as their peers.
- Bairns Hoose: Local children and young people participated in the development of the National Bairns Hoose Standards, and Dumfries and Galloway are now one of the Local Authority Affiliates for the Bairns Hoose.
- Working in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland on key activities including the development and introduction of awareness and training to key strategic groups on corporate parent responsibilities and eLearning targeted at practice level staff.
- Through funding from the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP), support offered through our Family Support Team and third sector has been upscaled.
- Whole Family Support Self Evaluation: Using the nationally developed Self-Assessment Dumfries and Galloway undertook a self-assessment of the family support service. This first assessment gave the baseline and allowed targeted improvement/action planning on a multi-agency basis.

- A mapping exercise was undertaken to identify current parenting programmes and staff resources across Dumfries and Galloway with a view to training and ensuring consistent coordination of evidence-based programmes to improve the availability of parent-child relationship focussed interventions. A new family centre model is being developed in Dumfries and Stranraer which will complement the family centre run by Action for Children in Upper Nithsdale. This will ensure we have family centre access across our region. The learning from this will inform future service development.
 - Virtual Reality Training Programme. The immersive nature of the Virtual Reality Programme allows the user to experience the impact of trauma, abuse and neglect through the eyes of the child. The programme is a clinically led, technology enabled behaviour changing tool. It is designed to enhance adults understanding of a child's emotions, trauma and potential triggers to improve the care, support and guidance they provide. By understanding the journey of children and young people that experience trauma, the outcomes for children and young people can improve significantly.
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Dundee

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Dundee is Scotland's fourth largest city. The most recent estimate of the area's population is 150,390 (National Records of Scotland (NRS) 2023 Mid-year population estimate). The Dundee City Council area covers 60 square kilometres and is, geographically, the [smallest local authority area in Scotland](#). It is bordered by Perth and Kinross Council to the west and Angus Council to the north and east. It is estimated that there are 23,971 children aged 0-15 years in Dundee City accounting for 15.9% of the overall Dundee City population, this is lower than the Scottish proportion which stands at 16.3%. It is part of the Tayside Police Division which has [19 police stations](#) and is served by [6 hospitals](#).

[Dundee City Council](#) supports children and young people via Dundee City Council supports children and young people via 8 secondary schools, 33 primary schools, and 31 nursery/early years centres. Additionally there is one assisted learning school (primary and secondary), and one school offering a flexible alternative to mainstream secondary education.

Dundee has a sizeable student population (circa 30,000), being home to the University of Dundee, Abertay University, Dundee & Angus College and Al Maktoum College. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [977 third sector organisations operating in Dundee, including 246 dedicated to social care](#).

[Life expectancy in Dundee](#) is lower than for Scotland as a whole. The city has the highest 5 year rolling average rate, at 45.2 per 100,000 population of drug

misuse deaths in Scotland, and pressures around poverty and mental health remain significant: this is a major priority for the Dundee Partnership. [6.4% of the 16-64 population \(6,319 people\)](#) identified with mental health conditions in 2023/24, with a rate of 64 per 1,000 population, higher than the Scottish average of 54. Suicide rates are also a concern with Dundee experiencing a higher rate than other mainland Scottish areas.

[Dundee is the 5th most deprived local authority in Scotland.](#) 37% of the population lives in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. 7 of the 8 Local Community Planning Partnerships (LCPPs) have areas which are in the 20% most deprived in Scotland. The [2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (SIMD) confirmed high levels of poverty, social and material deprivation exist across the city. It confirms that 70 out of Dundee's 188 data zones are ranked within the 20% most deprived in Scotland, with around 37% of Dundee's population living in these areas. Using the data zones ranked in the 20% most deprived in the 2020 SIMD and the National Records of Scotland 2021 mid-year small area population estimates, it was estimated that 10,171 children (aged 0-15 years) live within the 20% most deprived data zones, this accounts for 42.9% of children in that age group in Dundee City overall compared to 15.9% of children in all Scottish families. Dundee City Council was the first Local Authority in Scotland to declare a [Cost-of-Living Crisis in June 2022](#) and action agreed at a series of "Cost of Living summits". The work continued in 2023/24 with additional funding pledged to address the impacts of rising costs on households. In addition to £500,000 allocated for emergency food distributed through the Dundee Community Food Network, further community food grants totalling £46,650 were given to small projects; and The Fuel Well Dundee Energy Assistance scheme has assisted 256 households and spent over £110,000 in energy support measures.

Following publication of the Independent Care Review, Dundee City Council Children and Families Service has led a partnership programme aimed at transformational change. Under 'Our Promise to Care Experienced Children and Young People and Care Leavers 2020-23' and '23 - 26', the strategic implementation of community-based family support services has aimed to support children and young people to flourish in their families. Current Children Services planning around the foundation of Family includes renaming 'Team around the Child' to better reflect the Whole Family approach; Expanding nursery provision to 140 hours; Conducting Welfare Rights assessments with all

families; Implementing Contextual Safeguarding approaches; and exploring and implementing models of best practice in family support such as:

- Family Group Conferencing
- Solihull for Kinship Carers and Foster Carers
- Mockingbird model of support for Foster Carers

Dundee City Council is also part of the [Tayside Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder Programme](#), a partnership across Tayside. The learning identified during this phase will help develop a blueprint for a national Bairns' Hoose model in Scotland. This will then be used in an incremental rollout of Bairns' Hoose following the Pathfinder Phase.

Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) operates across the region, covering Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Angus. The leadership of TRIC is chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Families Services at Dundee City Council. [The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People, and Families \(2023 - 2026\)](#) is developed and monitored through TRIC. This plan complements all activities related to child and family wellbeing across the three local authority areas. It outlines five priority areas:

1. Our children will have the best start in life.
2. Our children, young people, and their families will achieve and make positive contributions to communities.
3. Our children and young people will enjoy good physical and mental health.
4. Our children and young people will have their rights protected and their voices heard.
5. Our children and young people will be safe and loved.

The Tayside Plan also includes the contribution of NHS Tayside who have developed [Our Promise to Tayside's Care Experienced Children, Young People, and Care Leavers](#) for Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Angus. The Child Health Commissioner for NHS Tayside oversees this plan.

Key reporting in Dundee

- [The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People, and Families \(2023 - 2026\)](#)
- [Dundee - Our Promise \(Young Person version\)](#)
- [Children and Families Service Improvement Plan 2023-27](#)
- [Dundee - Our Promise](#)
- [Dundee- Our Promise annual update, October 2023](#)

- [Dundee Engagement and Participation Framework](#)
- [Dundee Alliance Family Support Delivery Plan](#)
- [Dundee City Council Children Services Improvement Plan 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 373 children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 19 per 1000 children in Dundee on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 493 children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 18 per 1000 children in Dundee on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 127 children who entered the 'care system' in Dundee from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 172 children who entered the 'care system' in Dundee between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

49 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This is 13.1% of children who were experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024.

83 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This is 16.8% of children who were experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020.

There were 338 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This is 90.6% of children who were experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024.

There were 440 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This is 89.2% of children who were experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020.

There were 102 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This is 27.3% of children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024.

There were 136 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This is 27.6% of children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020.

155 children were living in foster care in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This represents 41.6% of all children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024.

207 children were living in foster care in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This represents 42.0% of all children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020.

There were 35 children living in residential care in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This is 9.4% of all children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2024.

There were 53 children living in residential care in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This is 10.8% of all children experiencing care in Dundee on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 159 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Dundee, 130 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 5 per 1,000).

13.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Dundee during 2022/23. 18.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Dundee during 2022/23. 17.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Dundee during 2022/23.

12.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Dundee during 2019/20. 17.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Dundee during 2019/20. 15.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Dundee during 2019/20.

220 children were living in temporary accommodation in Dundee on 30 September 2024.

185 children were living in temporary accommodation in Dundee on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4672 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dundee. This represents an average of 19.7% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 6890 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Dundee. This represents an average of 26.6% of children in Dundee.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5121 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dundee. This represents an average of 20.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3528 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dundee. This represents an average of 14.9% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4042 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Dundee. This represents an average of 16.3% children.

In Dundee on 31 July 2024, there were 39 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Dundee on 31 July 2020, there were 61 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 83.1% in Dundee.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 88.0% in Dundee (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Dundee, 19 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 74 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

50.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Dundee.

28.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Dundee.

11.1% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Dundee.

4.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Dundee.

86.1% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Dundee. 50.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Dundee during 2023.

80.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Dundee. 80.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Dundee.

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.

257 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Dundee on 31 July 2024. This represents 69% of all children who were 'looked after' in Dundee on that day.

343 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Dundee on 31 July 2020. This represents 70% of all children who were 'looked after' in Dundee on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Dundee.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

88 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Dundee.

68 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Dundee.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

40.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Dundee on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

84.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Dundee on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Dundee between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 24 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.8 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Dundee between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 5 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 412 households living in temporary accommodation in Dundee.

On 30 September 2020, there were 449 households living in temporary accommodation in Dundee.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 1228 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Dundee.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 972 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Dundee.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Universal family support

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us?

What Matters 2 U

[What Matters 2 U](#) is a voice led, community-based change programme working alongside families in Dundee and Clackmannanshire. The programme aims to shift resources to offer support earlier to enable children to flourish in their own families.

Development of WM2U in Dundee over the past two years has progressed with backing from strategic leads and local practitioners. A recent evaluation highlighted benefits for families in Charleston, Kirkton, Ardler, and Whitfield from Community Learning and Development approaches, supporting community connections, belonging and leadership, and improved access to support for health, financial, and housing challenges.

The WM2U team will support system change in Dundee until 2026 focusing on place-based and community empowerment approaches that amplifying youth voices. This includes the [Make it Happen Fund](#); a grant scheme offering funding to families to support projects that create positive change in their communities.

The evaluation detailed challenges for families related to community poverty, mental health needs, and substance use, alongside financial uncertainties affecting services. Furthermore, the ongoing work will aim for a fuller understanding of what tools provide the right support at the right time to inform Children's Services strategic planning and implementation.

Dundee City Council and partners are involved in a test of change based on whole family empowerment in locality settings. This work has been supported by What Matters 2 U, which is a voice led, community-based change programme working alongside families. The programme aims to shift resources to offer support earlier to enable children to flourish in their own families. A recent evaluation highlighted the benefits of this Community Learning and Development approach for families in Charleston, Kirkton, Ardler, and Whitfield, supporting community connections, belonging, leadership and improved access to support for health, financial and housing challenges.

Dundee City Council will work alongside the WM2U Team until 2026 focusing on place-based and community empowerment approaches that amplify youth and

whole family voices. This includes a Make it Happen Fund; a grant scheme offering funding to families to support projects that create positive change in their communities. The evaluation detailed challenges for families related to community poverty, mental health needs, and substance use, alongside financial uncertainties affecting services. The ongoing work will aim for a fuller understanding of what tools provide the right support at the right time to inform Children's Services strategic planning and implementation.

VOICE: Listening

[My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted upon.](#)

Dundee Council and NHS Tayside implemented new Practice Guidance which places the voice of families at the centre of decision-making in key meetings. A new Champions Board model has been introduced, coordinated by Pupil Support Workers in secondary schools. Champs have also worked directly with the Child Protection Committee to contribute towards the development of a new city-wide [Child Protection Charter](#) which mirrors Trauma Informed Practice principles. A group of 12 care experienced young people also attended a three day [Columba 1400 Young Person's Leadership Academy](#)

VOICE: Participation & Engagement

[I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that will affect me](#)

Social Work have introduced [Mind of My Own \(MOMO\)](#) to enable children to express their views more fully during social work assessment processes. This digital application allows children and young people to express their views and offer suggestions in their own time, including in relation to preparation for Planning Meetings, Hearings, Reviews and Child Protection Case Conferences. Information gathered informs decision making and support to both individual children and young people and the wider care experienced population.

Partners in Dundee have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Strategic planning and implementation of the promise has resulted in enhanced partnerships across services working with children, families, and adults to establish community-based family support.

- Strategic and operational developments in relation to adolescents needing extra help and support, including a new Children's Home, Supported Accommodation, risk assessment training and a co-located multi-agency hub.
 - Work has been undertaken to improve support to Foster Carers, including work with The Lens to increase recruitment and retention, training, life story work and the panel.
 - Work has been undertaken in schools, including UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools, EHWB Services, Counselling, LAC/SAC PSWs and the review of approaches towards positive destinations.
 - The range of initiatives aim to enhance universal, targeted and specialist support to families at home, in schools and in the community.
 - The strategic and practice focus is on family voice and ensuring that children, young people and parents/carers are at the centre of decision making.
 - The new Kinship Care Team has enhanced support for school attendance and wellbeing through therapeutic support and pupil support workers. Residential care has received positive inspection outcomes.
 - MCR Pathways Mentoring and targeted employability support are helping more young people stay engaged in learning and move into positive outcomes, with strong ongoing support available after leaving school.
 - Dundee Children's Services are developing a consistent intensive family support offer to families where children are at risk of entering the 'care system'. A key priority is to improve understanding and practice around risk and decision making across statutory agencies.
 - Dundee is prioritising the expansion of therapeutic and education support model to children and young people in Kinship Care, maximising benefits for kinship carers, and is leading a review of fees and allowances for foster carers to align with neighbouring authorities.
-

East Ayrshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

East Ayrshire is the 14th largest geographical area and has the 17th largest population out of the 32 local authority areas in Scotland. It has a population of about [121,000 and around 23,000 are babies, children and young people](#). It is [semi-rural](#), with a mix of both urban and rural communities with Kilmarnock being the largest town, with a population of over 46,000. East Ayrshire is part of the Ayrshire Police Division which has [14 police stations](#) and is served by [2 hospitals](#).

There are [seven secondary schools, 40 primary schools and three additional support needs schools across East Ayrshire](#). Ayrshire college has a campus in Kilmarnock town centre. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [778 third sector organisations operating in East Ayrshire, including 227 dedicated to social care](#).

For children growing up in East Ayrshire, there are a range of places where children can play and parents and carers can meet other local parents. The East Ayrshire [Vibrant Communities](#) service aims to work “with and for local communities rather than ‘doing to’ them” by working with all sectors of the community, including children young people, adults and older people. As part of this there is a Play and Parental Engagement Team who hold [play based events](#) for younger children, and a Young People, Sport and Diversion Team offering [a range of activities and community based youth groups](#).

East Ayrshire has one of the higher levels of deprivation in Scotland and families living there face a variety of challenges, including higher than national average unemployment, health inequalities, rising inflation and the cost of living crisis, increased demand for services, restrictions in funding, recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic and the impact of EU exit.

[East Ayrshire's current Child Poverty Action Plan](#) highlights that many families in East Ayrshire are experiencing poverty. In 2022, 71.3% of people in East Ayrshire were employed, lower than the national average of 74.4%. Full-time employees earned an average of £16.42 per hour, slightly below the national average of £16.59. As of February 2023, 19.4% of households in East Ayrshire were on Universal Credit, up from 10% in 2019.

In 2021/22, East Ayrshire's child poverty rate was 24.4%, up from 19.1% the previous year. This is 4.5% higher than the national rate of 19.9%, meaning 6,308 children and young people in the area are living in poverty. East Ayrshire had the 4th highest child poverty rate across Scotland's 32 local authorities, behind Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, and Clackmannanshire.

Child poverty has risen steadily over recent years, from 17% in 2015/16 to 22% in 2019/20, before dropping slightly in 2020/21. However, there was a significant increase of 5.3% in 2021/22. Even in less deprived areas, many children still face the impact of poverty.

In 2021/22, 77.7% of primary pupils and 19.8% of secondary pupils in East Ayrshire were registered for free school meals, compared to 20.5% and 17.7% nationally, reflecting an ongoing trend of rising poverty levels. If current trends continue, nearly 9,000 children in East Ayrshire could be living in poverty by 2030, with the cost-of-living crisis likely making matters worse.

East Ayrshire's most recent [Children and Young Peoples Services Plan](#) says that 31.7% of children aged 0-15 years are predicted to have a speech, language and communication support need. The plan also highlights the need to address health inequalities, noting that children living in poverty are more likely to have poorer health outcomes including low birth weight, poor physical health and mental health problems.

In East Ayrshire, 84% of children had a healthy weight at birth against a Scotland mean of 84.2%, and 19% of babies were exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks compared with the Scotland mean of 31.8%. A quarter of children had one or more developmental concerns at their 27-30 month review against a Scotland mean of 14.7%. There were also lower rates of dental health, with 54% of P7 children having no obvious dental decay against a [Scotland mean of 75%](#).

The [East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan](#) also states that more people have been seeking help for their mental health and wellbeing in recent years. In 2020/21, 21% of residents were prescribed medication for anxiety, depression, or psychosis, higher than the Scottish average of 19%. As of March 2023, the average waiting time for treatment from the East Ayrshire Primary Care Mental Health Team was 32 weeks.

In 2021, East Ayrshire had 38 drug-related deaths, a rate of 33.2 per 100,000, higher than the Scottish rate of 25.2, and the rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions in East Ayrshire is 561 per 100,000, significantly higher than the Scottish rate of 230 per 100,000.

Key reporting in East Ayrshire

- [Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Children and Young People's Services Annual report 2023/24](#)
- [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2021-2024](#)
- [Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022-2023](#)
- [Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan Update 2024-2027](#)
- [East Ayrshire Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Ayrshire community planning partnership April 2025](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 416 children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 33 per 1000 children in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 382 children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 16 per 1000 children in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 118 children who entered the 'care system' in East Ayrshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 86 children who entered the 'care system' in East Ayrshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

101 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 24.3% of children who were experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

87 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 22.8% of children who were experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 374 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 89.9% of children who were experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 345 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 90.3% of children who were experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 118 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 28.4% of children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 110 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 28.8% of children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

117 children were living in foster care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 28.1% of all children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

137 children were living in foster care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 35.9% of all children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 42 children living in residential care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 10.1% of all children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 37 children living in residential care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 9.7% of all children experiencing care in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 125 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in East Ayrshire, 85 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

14.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Ayrshire during 2022/23. 19.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Ayrshire during 2022/23. 19.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Ayrshire during 2022/23.

12.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Ayrshire during 2019/20. 20.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Ayrshire during 2019/20. 13.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Ayrshire during 2019/20.

25 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Ayrshire on 30 September 2024.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Ayrshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4261 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Ayrshire. This represents an average of 20.9% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 6263 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in East Ayrshire. This represents an average of 26.9% of children in East Ayrshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4719 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Ayrshire. This represents an average of 22.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3252 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Ayrshire. This represents an average of 15.9% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3825 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Ayrshire. This represents an average of 18.3% children.

In East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024, there were 46 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020, there were 19 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 79.3% in East Ayrshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 84.0% in East Ayrshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In East Ayrshire, 31 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 111 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

46.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Ayrshire.

18.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Ayrshire.

26.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Ayrshire.

9.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Ayrshire.

80.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school

in East Ayrshire. 83.3% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Ayrshire during 2023.

83.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Ayrshire. 33.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Ayrshire.

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.

235 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 56% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Ayrshire on that day.

247 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 65% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Ayrshire on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in East Ayrshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

91 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in East Ayrshire.

77 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in East Ayrshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

46.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

47.5% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Ayrshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Ayrshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 7 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.9 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 96 households living in temporary accommodation in East Ayrshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 143 households living in temporary accommodation in East Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 672 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 709 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Ayrshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local Change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE: Listening and Participation

How are you making sure that my experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on?

How are you making sure I've got all the information I want about the things that impact me, I understand it, and have chances to ask any questions and have them answered?

Children's perspectives in East Ayrshire-[Bright Spots](#)

In 2022, care-experienced children and young people (ages 4-18) participated in the Coram 'Your Life, Your Care' surveys. The results showed that 97% felt safe in their homes and that their caregivers were invested in their education. Most also said they had a trusted adult to turn to for support, and were enjoying fun activities, learning valuable life skills, and being included in decisions about their lives. This work also included 'Your Life, Beyond Care': there was a high return rate, and this is helping the area shape responses and actions.

Despite these positives, children were worried about what people would think if they knew they were care experienced. Many felt uncomfortable with social workers wearing lanyards in public and were worried about being bullied by peers. Some also shared that they didn't fully understand why they were in care and felt they weren't trusted with enough responsibility.

In response, East Ayrshire committed to ensuring social workers keep their ID badges but no longer display them publicly, to discuss with each child how they'd like to describe their relationship with their social worker, and make sure

that children fully understand the reasons they are in care. They also said they would provide more opportunities for children to prove their trustworthiness, helping to build their self-esteem and confidence.

FAMILY/POVERTY: Universal Family Support

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us?

East Ayrshire's Health and Social Care Partnership's HEART model (Help Everyone At the Right Time) is a family support approach aimed at providing early, integrated, and community-based assistance to children, young people, and their families where they live. Launched in 2022, the model focuses on integrating a range of services into community-based, multi-disciplinary teams. Early help for families is central to the HEART model. By identifying challenges families are experiencing as they emerge, HEART is aimed at preventing issues from escalating and providing support, before problems become more complex. The approach works alongside families, building on their strengths, helping them navigate any difficulties they're facing, and improve their overall well-being.

The programme is currently focused on four core projects: Request for assistance; Restorative approach/family group decision making; Community participation to Power; and ALISS - Digital mapping. These four projects are designed to understand what an effective early help model or 'blueprint' for practice could look like

The Independent Care Review heard that rural geography often intensifies some of the problems experienced by children and families, including difficulties with recruitment and retention of the people who support them, feelings of isolation and difficulties accessing services near home. In East Ayrshire, in recognition of some of these issues, a mobile barber service is joining forces with support to help provide counselling and advice for children, young people and families. "We've got a mobile barber that goes to our most rural communities, but there's also a counsellor as part of that and there is the teen coffee van. People are coming out to have their free haircuts but then having a chance to speak to somebody around the mental health, addictions or financial inclusion."

Partners in East Ayrshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

A strategic review of Children and Young People's Services was undertaken in 2023-24. Through this process, the review identified several areas for improving collaborative leadership across children's services, highlighting themes around structures and governance, communication and data sharing, planning, budgets and decision making, engagement and participation, relationships and behaviours. It is anticipated that these recommendations will improve joint working and collaborative leadership, deliver better integration of services, and ensure resources are effectively used and that decision making processes are child centred.

Building on the Bright Spots work, and self evaluation of the promise journey, there was a recognised need to enhance the support to young people 'moving on'. The *Moving On, Throughcare and Aftercare (MOCCA)* service now supports young people and in its first year the teams report that they are already seeing the benefits of this.

Care Experience Cabinet: The forum for supporting care experienced children and young people and elected member and senior officer engagement. The group meets three monthly with pre meetings in between to ensure the agenda is directed by young people and they are prepared. Recent improvements have been made to close the feedback loop and promote better participation. There are also further plans in place around enhanced mechanisms for participation. These approaches are supported by participation leaders, one from HSCP and one from CAMHS as well as advocacy support.

Art Club? has been running for several years and is a participatory group promoting voice through the medium of art. The group enables young people from a range of care backgrounds to creatively engage with the issues that interest and affect them. Mental health, social anxiety, language barriers, housing issues and financial pressures are just some of the challenges facing young people that have served as a focus during the weekly sessions.

The [Cherishing Our Families Strategy](#) was developed by partners in the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to prevent and reduce neglect in East Ayrshire. Neglect can have lasting impacts on children into adulthood, and this strategy aims to improve outcomes for future generations. It was shaped through engagement with children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals to understand what matters most in tackling neglect.

[All schools](#) and some Early Childhood Centres (ECC) are now registered for the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). Each school and ECC has a dedicated RRSA lead and there are 26 schools achieving Bronze, 13 achieving Silver and 6 achieving Gold with an aim of all achieving and maintaining gold awards. The East Ayrshire Young Peoples Equalities Forum has allowed young people with a specific interest in equalities to come together to learn from each other and to discuss and increase their knowledge around equalities, diversity and equity. This forum has proved to be a positive platform for young people to consult with others and to facilitate community engagement and cohesion to raise awareness of what constitutes fairness and to encourage young people to be more aware of issues such as poverty.

[East Ayrshire Children and Young People's \(CYP\) Cabinet](#) consists of young people aged between 11 and 25, acting as a democratic voice on behalf of all young people living, working or in education in East Ayrshire. Across 2023-24 they continued to meet with the Council Cabinet and Community Planning Partnership throughout the year and worked with the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Finance and ICT to ensure young people are included in the budget making decision processes. As Cabinet members our young people developed important skills for learning, life and work through their involvement in a range of events, campaigns and representation on committee groups. They demonstrated dedication and passion to ensuring that youth voice in East Ayrshire was strong and thriving and through a strengthened partnership with East Ayrshire Council, young people not only have a voice but are continually influencing and affecting change. This period seen Cabinet members actively participate and contribute their views and experiences to inform improvement throughout this period and they achieved awards and recognition for their role in community planning.

[In 2023-24](#) there were significant developments in the support for children and young people in kinship care across. This included:

- Rebuilding internal processes for assessing, supporting and children and young people and their kinship carers.
 - Developing and providing additional training opportunities for kinship carers, focused on the provision of peer support and encouraging learning from others.
 - In January 2024 there was a community event for kinship carers to share their experiences and needs: the findings from this is helping shape future supports for Kinship Carers.
-

East Dunbartonshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

East Dunbartonshire covers 77 square miles and has an [estimated population of 109,000](#). Compared to 2011 Census data, East Dunbartonshire has seen a 3.7% increase in its population, in comparison to a 2.7% population increase across all of Scotland. It is projected that the population will increase by 3.8% over the next 10 years to 112,008. It is part of the Greater Glasgow Police Division which has [17 police stations](#) and is served by.

[Employment of those aged 16 to 64 was 73.5% in 2023, a decrease from 76.3% the year previous](#), compared to a Scottish figure of 74.7%. [As of 2024 the average gross weekly pay for those living in East Dunbartonshire and working full time was \(£859.50\)](#), which is significantly higher than that across Scotland as a whole (£740). In the same year, 1.9% of people aged 16-64 were claiming out of work benefits, which is 1.2% lower than Scotland as a whole. There were 9,765 families in East Dunbartonshire in receipt of Child Benefit in 2023.

SIMD data shows that East Dunbartonshire remains relatively less deprived in contrast to other local authorities in Scotland with the majority of East Dunbartonshire data zones being in the least deprived areas. However, despite levels of affluence, [2022 data shows that 2,156 children \(11%\) were living in relative poverty](#), compared to the Scottish number of 250,000 children (24%).

Communities in [East Dunbartonshire](#) are served by 32 Primaries, 8 Secondaries, 24 Early Years Centres and 1 Additional Support Needs Schools. There are 14 GP practices, and it is served by the [10 hospitals](#) across Glasgow. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [770 third sector organisations operating in East Dunbartonshire, including 237 dedicated to social care](#).

As of 2023, there were 142 children and young people cared for by the local authority which is the lowest number since 2018. [In the last few years, the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children living in East Dunbartonshire has increased, from 11 in 2022/23 to 24 in 2023/24.](#)

2022 data shows that:

- 11.5% of children aged 0-15 are living in relative low-income families compared to 15.9% of children in all Scottish families
- 40.6% of babies exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks: the Scotland mean is 31.8%
- 17.2% of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27-30 month review against a Scotland mean of 17.9%
- 81% of P7 children had no obvious dental decay against a Scotland mean of 75%

Key reporting in East Dunbartonshire

- [Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)
- [Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report](#)
- [Integrated Children's Services Plan Annual report 2022-23](#)
- [East Dunbartonshire Child Poverty Report and Action Plan 2022-23](#)
- [East Dunbartonshire Early Years Strategic Plan](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Dunbartonshire community planning partnership April 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 127 children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 12 per 1000 children in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 155 children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 7 per 1000 children in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 42 children who entered the 'care system' in East Dunbartonshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 38 children who entered the 'care system' in East Dunbartonshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

15 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 11.8% of children who were experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

48 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 31.0% of children who were experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 101 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 79.5% of children who were experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 132 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 85.2% of children who were experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 40 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 31.5% of children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 44 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 28.4% of children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

32 children were living in foster care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 25.2% of all children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

40 children were living in foster care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 25.8% of all children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 26 children living in residential care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 20.5% of all children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 17 children living in residential care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 11.0% of all children experiencing care in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 43 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in East Dunbartonshire, 22 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 1 per 1,000).

4.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Dunbartonshire during 2022/23. 17.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Dunbartonshire during 2022/23. 21.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Dunbartonshire during 2022/23.

2.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Dunbartonshire during 2019/20. 15.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East

Dunbartonshire during 2019/20. 18.2% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Dunbartonshire during 2019/20.

75 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Dunbartonshire on 30 September 2024.

90 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Dunbartonshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1684 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 8.8% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 3614 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in East Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 15.9% of children in East Dunbartonshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1837 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 9.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1287 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 6.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1471 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 7.8% children.

In East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024, there were 15 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020, there were 13 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 86.9% in East Dunbartonshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in East Dunbartonshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In East Dunbartonshire, 9 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 66 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

50.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Dunbartonshire.

63.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Dunbartonshire.

25.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Dunbartonshire.

15.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Dunbartonshire.

100.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Dunbartonshire. 75.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Dunbartonshire during 2023.

83.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Dunbartonshire. 66.7% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Dunbartonshire.

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.

72 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Dunbartonshire on that day.

84 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 54% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Dunbartonshire on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in East Dunbartonshire.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in East Dunbartonshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

28 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in East Dunbartonshire.
39 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in East Dunbartonshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

43.5% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

19.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Dunbartonshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 6 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.9 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Dunbartonshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 12 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 110 households living in temporary accommodation in East Dunbartonshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 198 households living in temporary accommodation in East Dunbartonshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 203 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Dunbartonshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 248 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Dunbartonshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Care

I have been properly prepared for and am supported with living independently.

The House Project

The project aims to provide young people 'moving on' from care with the opportunity to plan and prepare in a structured way as they enter their tenancy and live independently. It seeks to provide young people with a community of support and the ability to build connections in their area.

People

People who support me are all working together to share resources, to jointly make decisions, and to own and fix any problems together.

Better Hearings

Work has taken place in partnership with the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration to improve the experiences and outcomes for children, young people and their families when involved in a Children's Hearing. This has included:

- Asking children, young people and families about their experiences. Having listened, improvements have been implemented.
- Children, young people and families have been supported to attend hearings virtually by providing devices and digital support.
- The needs and views of siblings have been prioritised in relation to making decisions around care plans and family time.
- Social Work leaders have regular meetings with Children's Hearings Scotland and panel members to continually learn and improve.

People who support me are all working together to share resources, to jointly make decisions, and to own and fix any problems together.

Building Capacity

Champions Board

In 2020, the Champion's Board was established and has provided those who attend with an opportunity to share their experiences of care and highlight some of the difficulties and challenges they have faced and support one another. The group met with a number of corporate parents and were invited to work with

Children's Hearings Scotland and share their experiences at a panel member training event.

Promise Steering Group and Young Persons Subgroup

Since August 2021, East Dunbartonshire has had an Implementation Lead for The Promise. Their initial work included increasing awareness of the promise, and networking across East Dunbartonshire Council and Scotland. A Steering Group has been established with 14 partner agencies committing to being a part of it. A Care Experienced Subgroup has also been established in conjunction with the Champions Board.

Voice

My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on.

Mind of My Own

The app aims to allow children and young people to have a voice when they may find it difficult to speak to those supporting them. Their views and feelings can be recorded at any time on a personal digital device, and these can be shared when decisions are being made about the child's life and can be heard by those making decisions.

Scaffolding

I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.

Care Experience Attainment Fund

Care experienced children and young people have been supported by an Outreach Teacher who provided literacy activities across three schools. This has resulted in positive outcomes in improving confidence and class engagement for all pupils supported.

One secondary school has recruited a Principal Teacher for Care Experienced Pupils and a Family Link Worker.

Partners in East Dunbartonshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Awareness raising of what keeping the promise means and establishing networks across East Dunbartonshire and across Scotland to do this.
 - North Strathclyde Bairns' Hoose opened in August 2023. This offers a multiagency service which provides survivors of child abuse a safe and secure space to receive support, provide evidence and speak to all of the services involved in a child or young person's journey from disclosure to recovery.
 - Establishing a multi-agency steering group, involving care experienced people.
 - A Community Support Team (CST) provides family support with the aim of early intervention to support families to remain together safely in the community and prevent risk escalating.
 - Supporting mental and physical health, including extending and enhancing the range of services available to care experienced children and young people aged 5-26 to support their mental health.
 - Promoting children's rights, including by providing professional learning and raising awareness, and ensuring children and young people are involved in service design.
 - Addressing poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, including by ensuring young people are not further disadvantaged by poverty, and working together within the partnership and with wider partners to improve post-school destination opportunities for school leavers facing disadvantage.
-

East Lothian

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

East Lothian is predominantly rural. It has 40 miles (64 km) of coastline with several small islands off the coast north of North Berwick. It is part of the Lothians and Borders Police Division which has [23 police stations](#) and is served by [3 hospitals](#).

Despite being a small Local Authority, East Lothian is [seeing a growing population](#). East Lothian was the fastest growing in Scotland, rising 24.6% in the last 20 years to 112,300 (Census, 2022). East Lothian also has the [6th highest proportion of 0-14 years old in Scotland](#) with 23,213 children. East Lothian's population is projected to increase by 7.2% (2018 based) by 2028. As East Lothian's population grows, [new housing estates have been built to accommodate the increase. A major phased housing development which could see as many as 10,000 new homes, 25% of which would be affordable housing, is planned for Blindwells over the next 30 years](#). In 2020/21, the [number of homeless applications in East Lothian decreased to 628 \(13.7% lower than the 728 the previous year\)](#).

The area is also one of a small number of Scottish local authorities with an increasing child population (a 17.1% forecasted increase to 2028/29 for P1 to S1 pupils based on the 2020 census roll). In 2021, [under 16s accounted for 18.1% of the overall population, with 62.3% working age, and 19.6% pensionable age. The population density in East Lothian is increasing and has risen from 152 persons per square km in 2015 to 158 in 2019. In 2018/19, 4,460 people migrated into East Lothian, with 3,290 migrating out, giving a net migration of 1,270 people](#). The National Transfer Scheme has resulted in higher numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children living in East Lothian.

[East Lothian](#) has 7 secondary schools, 34 primary schools and 32 nurseries within primary establishments. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [645 third sector organisations operating in East Lothian, including 166 dedicated to social care](#).

In 2023/24, [84 children in East Lothian were referred to the Children's Reporter, compared to 107 in 2022/23, 233 in 2013/14 and 670 in 2003/4. In 2023/24, 314 Children's Hearings were held in East Lothian and 97 children were subject to a Compulsory Supervision order on 31st March 2023. In 2021-22 108 families were involved in Family Group Decision Making and 80 families in 2022-23.](#)

East Lothian's Children's Services Plan highlights economic disparities between and within communities and the growth of relative poverty in the area. The plan is built around a number of shared principles, including prioritising early help and support. [East Lothian's Child Poverty Action Report 2022-23](#) highlights the following reality for children and families in East Lothian:

- East Lothian is made up of 132 data zones across 6 wards. 8 of these data zones fall within the most deprived (quintile) 20% of areas in the whole of Scotland. These 8 data zones are in three wards which lie to the west of the county: Tranent, Wallyford & Macmerry, Preston Seton & Gosford and Musselburgh.
- Within these 8 data zones are 5.2% of East Lothian's population, with 12.7% of the Tranent, Wallyford & Macmerry ward residing within this quintile.
- 26 data zones are in the least deprived quintile. 19.1% of East Lothian's population, and 40.7% of North Berwick's population are within this quintile.
- 16.1% of East Lothian's children (0-15 year olds) in 2021/22 were living in low-income households. The Scottish average was 20.8%.
- In 2022/23 the number of children in absolute low-income families in East Lothian increased by 10.7% from the previous year to 3,229, the 4th highest increase in Scotland.
- In 2017-2019, after housing costs, 24% of East Lothian households were in fuel poverty (Scotland 24%)
- In 2022/23, 1,445 Community Care Grants (from the Scottish Welfare Fund) were awarded with an associated spend of £913,781.00 – an average of £632.37 per claimant. 2,912 Crisis Grant applications were awarded with associated spend was £343,186.00 – an average of £117.85

per claimant. Crisis Grant applications increased by 42.62% when compared to the previous year.

East Lothian's allocation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for the FY 2024/25 and 25/26 is £0.715m. East Lothian is one of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund's Element 2 supported areas, receiving [support from Scottish Government and CELCIS](#) to develop [whole family wellbeing approaches](#). [Support has included a variety of facilitation, teaching, mentoring and coaching around](#): the use of Quality Improvement thinking and tools; Active Implementation Science thinking and tools; data and social research supports; participation, co-design and community engagement; ways to capture and tell the stories of the work; and initial exploration of collective leadership to support individuals in leading and managing change.

In 2019/20 Attendance at East Lothian was [95.2% \(primary\) and 89.8% \(secondary\)](#) compared to 94.5% and 90.7% respectively for Scotland as a whole. In terms of attainment:

- In 2020/21 the [P1, P4 & P7 combined scores](#) for Reading, Writing, Listening & Talking, Literacy and Numeracy were lower than the national average.
- Over the last 10 years, a [lower percentage of East Lothian school leavers](#) enter higher and further education and a higher percentage enter employment, when compared to Scotland.
- Less people of [working age in East Lothian have a degree](#), but less have no qualifications when compared to the Scottish average.
- [95.6% of pupils](#) leaving secondary school in East Lothian in the 21/22 session went onto a positive destination. This includes those young people moving into Further and Higher Education, Employment and Training. East Lothian Works, East Lothian Council's employability service works closely with schools, and other partners to support any young person leaving school to secure a positive destination. Ongoing support is available to young people post-school.
- [84.8% of East Lothian school leavers](#) attained one award at SCQF level 5 or above in 2020/21, compared to a national figure of 87.7%.
- The rate of pupils who leave school with one or more SCQF level 5 or above has [been lower](#) than the national average for the last 5 years.
- In East Lothian in 2018/19, there were 4.4 primary and 35.2 secondary exclusions per 1,000 pupils, compared to 8.1 and 39.6 [respectively for Scotland](#).

Key reporting in East Lothian

- [Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26](#)
- [East Lothian Plan/ Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [Child poverty action report 2020-22](#)
- [East Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan](#)
- [Carer strategy 2023 - 2026](#)
- [East Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Lothian community planning partnership May 2024](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 193 children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 25 per 1000 children in East Lothian on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 260 children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 12 per 1000 children in East Lothian on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 39 children who entered the 'care system' in East Lothian from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 71 children who entered the 'care system' in East Lothian between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

40 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 20.7% of children who were experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024.

70 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 26.9% of children who were experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 161 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 83.4% of children who were experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 220 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 84.6% of children who were experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 44 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 22.8% of children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 52 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 20.0% of children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020.

69 children were living in foster care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 35.8% of all children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024.

98 children were living in foster care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 37.7% of all children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 32 children living in residential care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 16.6% of all children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 40 children living in residential care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 15.4% of all children experiencing care in East Lothian on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 43 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in East Lothian, 33 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 1 per 1,000).

12.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Lothian during 2022/23. 13.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Lothian during 2022/23. 11.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Lothian during 2022/23.

9.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Lothian during 2019/20. 13.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Lothian during 2019/20. 12.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Lothian during 2019/20.

80 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Lothian on 30 September 2024.

195 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Lothian on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2430 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Lothian. This represents an average of 12.0% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 5281 children living in relative poverty,

after housing costs, annually in East Lothian. This represents an average of 24.0% of children in East Lothian.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2830 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Lothian. This represents an average of 14.4% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1855 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Lothian. This represents an average of 9.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2259 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Lothian. This represents an average of 11.5% children.

In East Lothian on 31 July 2024, there were 21 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In East Lothian on 31 July 2020, there were 20 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 84.7% in East Lothian.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in East Lothian (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In East Lothian, 7 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 43 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

33.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Lothian.

33.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Lothian.

20.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Lothian.

8.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Lothian.

100.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Lothian. 86.7% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Lothian during 2023.

77.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Lothian. 77.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Lothian.

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.

113 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 59% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Lothian on that day.

150 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Lothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 58% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Lothian on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

26 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in East Lothian.

45 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in East Lothian.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

28.4% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Lothian on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

39.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Lothian on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Lothian between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 2 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.3 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 310 households living in temporary accommodation in East Lothian.

On 30 September 2020, there were 421 households living in temporary accommodation in East Lothian.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 626 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Lothian.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 552 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Lothian.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY- Universal and Intensive Family Support

[I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life](#)

[There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community](#)

[People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together](#)

[When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together](#)

An Early Intervention Support Team (EIST) was established in 2021, supporting families to avoid ‘targeted interventions’ by improving engagement with the Child’s Plan. In 2023, the EIST merged with the pilot project supported by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to become Families Together East Lothian (FTEL). The ELCSP is now working to establish a clearer and more streamlined approach to delivering whole family support, developing real alternatives for families needing additional support at different levels. [Work will continue to develop this over the next three years.](#)

In considering how to use their Whole Family Wellbeing Fund allocation (£0.715m for 2024/25) East Lothian analysed the profile of referrals into family services and found a third of referrals were related to school- based issues, such as non-attendance and anxiety linked to the Covid pandemic. In response, they used the funding to establish Education Outreach Workers, who will work with schools to resolve school-based issues earlier, and to identify if other family members require support, such as with routines or boundaries. The aim is for these workers to support earlier referrals, before children are in crisis and to improve the appropriateness of referrals for neurodivergent children.

CARE – Moving On

[I have been properly prepared for and am supported with living independently](#)

[I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it at different points in my life](#)

[East Lothian has an Ambition Fund](#)—a registered charity hosted by Who Cares? Scotland to help young people access things that others may take for granted. That includes driving lessons, car insurance, gym membership, wi-fi or

technology. [Applications](#) to the awards are approved by a panel and bursaries are paid once a year.

East Lothian's Throughcare and Aftercare (TAC) Housing and Support Panel has been developed to assist young people to find the most appropriate supported accommodation. More flexible housing support has also been developed which have helped a number of care experienced young people and adults.

Young people have benefited from the following supports from the team and partnership agencies:

- Midlothian Young People's Advice Service (MYPAS) is a local third sector substance misuse support agency, which has worked in partnership with the TAC team to support young people to access substance misuse education and counselling.
- The TAC nurse provides advice, guidance, and support to young people with all matters related to their health and wellbeing. They connect young people with the appropriate universal and targeted health services in the community.
- A monthly education, training and employment oversight meeting with partners reviews individual young people's needs and identifies opportunities to tailor support in line with the No One Left behind agenda. This also enables the partnership team to identify gaps in provision for education, training, and employment.
- All young people have a plan for leaving care that includes accommodation and support. The service works closely with housing to plan for appropriate housing options and to forecast future needs. However, the significant shortage of housing in East Lothian can impact this particular group of young people.

SCAFFOLDING - Health

[I feel important and loved, and I have someone I trust to ask for help if I need it](#)

[My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different](#)

[East Lothian has established a Single Point of Access](#), which provides access to three strands of support and services: Mental Health and Wellbeing Support; Neurodevelopmental Assessment; and Early Years Education Resource Group. Integrated approaches to tier 2 mental health supports and services are demonstrating a reduction in demand for the Child and Adolescent Mental

Health Service (CAMHS) and reduced delays for children experiencing distress. This should help children remain included and engaged in education and reduce the risk of requiring [targeted services](#).

A Person-Centred Trauma Project worker has been employed to coordinate a trauma-informed approach and will work to embed this within all corporate parenting areas over the next three years.

SCAFFOLDING- Education

[I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education](#)

Since 2021, numbers of care experienced young people at Edinburgh College have fluctuated from 125 in 2021, 194 in 2022 and 89 in 2023. However, there has been a focus upon the support provided to young people through college with a Corporate Parenting training module mandatory for all staff, priority to care experienced young people for the Discretionary Fund, fast tracking of their bursary payment and not suspending bursary payments. The work has been underpinned with a focus upon the right support at the right time.

This year will see East Lothian follow the progress of the NHS who have identified career pathways for care experienced young people, recognising the barriers and challenges that they face.

Every school also has a teacher who is responsible for coordinating matters for care experienced children and young people. In addition, East Lothian has a Virtual Headteacher who is a champion for care experienced children and young people, focusing on improving educational experiences and outcomes and providing key links between multi-agency teams and advocating for the needs and rights of care experienced children and young people.

Partners in East Lothian have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Signs of Safety (SoS) was relaunched across children's services in 2022. SoS supports relationship-based practice between social workers and families resulting in families feeling more supported and empowered within the safety planning process.
- GIRFEC Child Planning Framework – Locality Teams, which are part of a continuum of support to facilitate multi-agency discussions around the wellbeing of identified children and young people.

- Using Pupil Equity Funding, attendance rates amongst East Lothian's care experienced school aged population is improving. Stretch aims are being implemented to ensure care experienced students are supported to achieve their full potential.
- Promise resources have been co-developed to help practitioners understand their role in keeping the Promise to babies & infants.
- Families Together East Lothian (ELCSP priority) is a new model of family support which takes an early intervention approach to support families before they need statutory intervention. The work of Families Together East Lothian is complementing the work of the children's services redesign to ensure families get the right support at the right time.
- Commitment to embed trauma informed and trauma responsive practice within all council services is demonstrated in the appointment of a trauma informed lead.
- Learning from '[Each and Every Child](#)' has been integrated into practice and East Lothian is working to ensure what is said and written about children and families is trauma informed and does not reinforce negative perceptions of care experience.
- Resources have been invested to support families including Kincare support, outreach support, Family Group Decision Making and support to older young people.
- The Council's delivery of active schools has resulted in targeted support to enable young people with projected poor outcomes to engage in physical activity.
- The [local housing strategy 2023-2029](#) sets out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services across East Lothian with actions relating to housing enabling a coordinated response on priorities, including homelessness and housing support for care experienced people.
- Reviewing approach to attracting and retaining skilled people who wish to foster for East Lothian Council.
- Strengthening the support offer for kinship carers, acknowledging that this is often the best option for children who cannot safely stay with their parent(s).
- Reviewing and increasing the capacity in local residential childcare provision to meet the current level of demand in East Lothian.

- Introducing additional outreach services to support families at risk of breakdown and to keep children with their families wherever it is safe to do so.
 - Development of a young person's Housing Pathway which will encompass all young people who find themselves at risk of homelessness. All young people will receive appropriate housing, support, and advice.
 - Strengthen provision of independent advocacy to include all children at risk of harm.
 - Strengthen multi-agency systems and processes to improve outcomes for older young people.
-

East Renfrewshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

East Renfrewshire is situated to the south of the city of Glasgow. It covers an area of 67 square miles; 85% of which is rural land with the remaining area comprising mainly residential suburbs. [East Renfrewshire](#) has 7 secondary schools; 24 primary schools (13 of which have nursery classes); 10 family centres; 1 school for children with additional support needs and 1 school for Gaelic Medium Primary Education. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [556 third sector organisations operating in East Renfrewshire, including 188 dedicated to social care](#). It is part of the Greater Glasgow Division which has [6 police stations](#) and is served by the 10 hospitals across the [Greater Glasgow](#) area as part of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

East Renfrewshire has the highest percentage of data zones of all the Scottish Local Authorities classed as being in the 20% least deprived in Scotland. Seven of the 122 data zones (population units) in East Renfrewshire are classed as being within the 20% most deprived in Scotland: Two of the data zones are classed as being within the 10% most deprived in Scotland and one of these is classed as being within the 5% most deprived. As of 2021, the population was 96,580: the locality has a growing population and is projected to grow faster than expected and the Scottish average. The number of people living in East Renfrewshire is projected to increase by [6.4% by 2028, higher than the Scottish rate of 1.87](#).

Despite levels of affluence, in some parts of the authority more than [1 in 3 children](#) live in families who have a low-income. It is also essential to recognise that even in affluent areas, there are families and children living in poverty. Some families struggle to make ends meet due to low wages, underemployment or high essential costs of living. In particular, the costs of housing in East

Renfrewshire are high. In areas like East Renfrewshire, child poverty may not always be visible. Families experiencing financial difficulties may be less visible due to the stigma associated with poverty or a desire to maintain appearances. This “hidden poverty” can make it challenging to identify and address the needs of vulnerable children and families.

Key reporting in East Renfrewshire

- [Children’s Services Partnership Plan](#)
- [Local Child Poverty Action Report](#)
- [Community Learning and Development Plan](#)
- [CPP Annual Performance Report](#)
- [Health and Social Care Partnership annual performance report 2023/24](#)
- [Outcome Delivery Plan](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Renfrewshire August 2022](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 96 children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 14 per 1000 children in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 117 children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 5 per 1000 children in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 33 children who entered the 'care system' in East Renfrewshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 36 children who entered the 'care system' in East Renfrewshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

34 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 35.4% of children who were experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

62 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 53.0% of children who were experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 88 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 91.7% of children who were experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 110 children experiencing care who were living in the community in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 94.0% of children who were experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 24 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 25.0% of children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 26 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 22.2% of children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

18 children were living in foster care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 18.8% of all children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

22 children were living in foster care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 18.8% of all children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 8 children living in residential care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 8.3% of all children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 0 children living in residential care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 0.0% of all children experiencing care in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 34 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in East Renfrewshire, 22 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 1 per 1,000).

7.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Renfrewshire during 2022/23. 17.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Renfrewshire during 2022/23. 15.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Renfrewshire during 2022/23.

4.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in East Renfrewshire during 2019/20. 15.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in East Renfrewshire during 2019/20. 17.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in East Renfrewshire during 2019/20.

130 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Renfrewshire on 30 September 2024.

25 children were living in temporary accommodation in East Renfrewshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1653 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families,

before housing costs, annually in East Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 8.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 3456 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in East Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 15.3% of children in East Renfrewshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1897 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 10.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1335 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 6.8% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1531 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in East Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 8.1% children.

In East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024, there were 8 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 80.2% in East Renfrewshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 84.0% in East Renfrewshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In East Renfrewshire, 1 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 14 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

30.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Renfrewshire.

40.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in East Renfrewshire.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Renfrewshire.

26.7% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in East Renfrewshire.

90.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Renfrewshire. 70.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Renfrewshire during 2023.

62.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in East Renfrewshire. 87.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21,

who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in East Renfrewshire.

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.

42 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 44% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Renfrewshire on that day.

48 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 41% of all children who were 'looked after' in East Renfrewshire on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in East Renfrewshire.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in East Renfrewshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

44 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in East Renfrewshire.

23 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in East Renfrewshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

47.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

36.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in East Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Renfrewshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 1 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.1 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by East Renfrewshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 194 households living in temporary accommodation in East Renfrewshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 74 households living in temporary accommodation in East Renfrewshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 364 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Renfrewshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 317 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in East Renfrewshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

CARE: Moving on and lifelong support

I have been properly prepared for and supported with independent living.

Care experienced and other young people accessing additional support reported to East Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership that the current provision of housing support was insufficient and failed to address their needs. A partnership between Aberlour and East Renfrewshire's Health & Social Care Partnership was established in 2022. The aim of the project is to examine support for independent living, redesign supported accommodation and aftercare/outreach offers. An action plan has been developed and is now guiding activity going forward including a joint commissioning model.

VOICE: Listening

My experiences have been sought out, listened to and acted on.

East Renfrewshire's Champions Board has been established for ten years and in that time has become a platform for care experienced young people aged 12 – 26 years and key senior leadership to become champions for change. The Champions Board have worked together to explore issues facing care experienced young people and suggest ways to improve the services that are

there to support them, for example housing and mental health services. Young people have worked directly with heads of service and other corporate parents at directorate level to discuss issues affecting them with the aim of influencing changes in policy and practice.

Four care experienced members of the Champions Board were successful in gaining apprenticeships in the Health & Social Care Partnership and played a key part in the Pathway Planning Project. Due to the success of the Champions Board and the experience of working in a co productive way, East Renfrewshire Council and HSCP approved the development of a Keep the Promise Board in September 2024. The Board will comprise of children, young people and families along with Chief Officers, senior officials, and elected members. The purpose of the Keep the Promise Board is to provide an opportunity for care experienced children and young people, and their families to communicate directly with Council, HSCP, and other Corporate Parents in relation to what is working well locally and what could be improved. Young people in particular have been active in creating the Board and driving forward its vision. Methods of engagement will include play and fun activities as well as formal meetings. The first Board meeting will take place in summer 2025 and children and young people will be supported to participate and set the agenda.

SCAFFOLDING: Education

I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn, and thrive in education.

Across [East Renfrewshire](#), key education data shows an improving picture. Systems are in place to track the participation, attendance, attainment and achievement of care experienced children and young people and education services work with the wider corporate parents to support them understand how they can provide opportunities for care experienced young people.

Outcomes include 100% of care experienced children and young people meeting their primary one developmental milestones in 2022/23; achieving a 90% attendance rate for children and young people cared for by the local authority; and no children and young people cared for by the local authority who were excluded in 2022/23.

[The Learn Well Service](#) was created by combining resources from different funding streams, including the Strategic Equity Fund, Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund and the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The Service comprises one outreach Teacher, one Pupil Support Assistant, one Neurodevelopmental Support Worker and 1.5 Children 1st Project Workers. Together, the team have supported 32 young people. Intensive support is offered through home visits, one to one sessions, group support and online learning. The Education Psychology Service has developed evaluation tools which have highlighted the following impact:

- Almost all (90%+) of the young people have shown increased resilience and a willingness to engage in education.
- Almost all (90%+) have engaged with learning activities appropriate to their age and stage.

Partners in East Renfrewshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- [Healthier Minds Approach](#) has been established in the area since 2020, supporting young people via a collaborative approach to identifying opportunities to strengthen mental wellbeing with a team comprising of a mixture of multi-agency professionals from Health & Social Care Partnership, Education, Community Learning and Development and third sector. It has enhanced youth counselling provision across the local authority by an additional 50%. It also provides a comprehensive programme of resources to upskill school staff and the wider children's workforce to respond earlier and prevent children's distress escalating into higher level concerns that would require clinical or medical responses. 94% of the children and young people who received support from the Healthier Minds team reported improved outcomes.
- East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has targeted Whole Family Wellbeing Fund resource to create six new service project responses. These are based on the priority areas of need analysed from the Children's Plan Strategic Needs Assessment. These include:
 - Complex disability
 - Neuro diversity and co-morbidity mental health
 - Vulnerable families – includes young families and kinship carers
 - Women and their children experiencing domestic violence

- Children and families living in poverty
- Non-school attendance – includes care experienced pupils and pupils with significant mental health concerns.
- Whole systems approach and Early Effective Intervention: East Renfrewshire partners and Police Scotland have recognised the need to change processes and responses for supporting young people who come into conflict with the law. This is important as a proportion of these children would otherwise become subject to statutory measures and referral to the Reporter could result in a children's panel deciding to grant a supervision order. Early help is key to preventing this happening in many cases.
- Mapping community and partner supports and offers to ensure they are targeted at the most in need children and young people, and especially those on the edges of the formal 'care system'. Improved supports to be considered are restorative justice approaches and positive diversion activities to redirect young people who are on the edges of the care system.
- Siblings: Delivered most successful fostering campaign to date in 2023 to expand the option available to meet the needs of families via extension of family networks. Permanence assessments have been reviewed to focus on sibling relationships, individualised reviews to support sibling relationships where the separation occurred a long time ago or they never lived together are underway.
- Advanced Practitioners: Across East Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership Children and Families Teams, there are advanced practitioners aligned to specific priorities including, child protection, continuing care and aftercare, Champions Board, fostering and adoption, and permanence
- #KeepThe Promise Board: a forum for children, young people, and families with lived experience to come together with the corporate parenting family, as equal partners, in order to effect change.
- Building The Promise Capacity: development and delivery of Three Tier Workforce Learning Programme.
- There will be an investment in upskilling staff across schools to be more inclusive and adopt a consistent approach to inclusion within the classroom. The intended benefits of this will include:
 - Increased attendance.
 - Reduction of reduced timetables.

- Reduction in number of educational placements breaking down.
 - Increase in participation, achievement and attainment.
-

Falkirk

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Falkirk is Scotland's [11th largest council area](#) and serves a population of around [158,620](#), who live in a mix of urban, semi-rural and rural communities. As a local authority, Falkirk has a slightly higher proportion of children living in relative low-income families (18.4%) compared to the national average (15.9%). As of December 2024, there are around [30,400 children](#) and young people in Falkirk and [1 in 4 are living in poverty](#). Falkirk has the highest Scottish Child Payment uptake in Scotland, [with 94% of eligible families accessing the weekly support](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [653 third sector organisations operating in Falkirk, including 165 dedicated to social care](#). Falkirk is part of the Forth Valley Police Division which has [11 police stations](#) and is served by [3 hospitals](#).

Falkirk's [Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023–2026](#) outlines the Children's Services Planning Partnership's collective vision to ensure all children and young people have the best possible start in life. The plan is grounded in a commitment to helping children grow up feeling safe, loved, and respected, with opportunities to become healthy, confident, and resilient individuals.

Falkirk has used the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding allocated by the Scottish Government to support both innovation and delivery. Just over half is funding change projects that test new ideas and approaches, with the remaining amount supporting the Promise Implementation Team, who lead on project oversight, evaluation, reporting, corporate parenting, promise delivery, and multi-agency training. A dedicated funding panel, consisting of local people with lived experience, has been established to review and select the successful bids, ensuring that the decisions reflect the community's real needs and priorities.

[Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership](#) launched *Building a Fairer Falkirk 2024–2029*, a new strategy to tackle poverty by maximising income and resources for every household. With a strong focus on child poverty and priority family groups. The Strategy is committed to addressing poverty through a strategic, community-driven approach, which includes insights gathered from over 100 residents and key stakeholders. The strategy raises significant issues such as digital exclusion, highlighting that 13% of Falkirk residents are not using the internet—higher than the Scottish average—and a lack of awareness about available income maximisation support, as 39% of survey respondents were unaware that Falkirk Council could help with financial difficulties. The poverty gap between Falkirk's most and least affluent wards has widened by 3.5% since 2019/20, now at 14.1%. Drug and alcohol use in Falkirk is above the national average, and domestic abuse incidents have risen steadily—170 more were reported in 2021/22 compared to 2018/19. Maternal smoking rates in Falkirk are also higher than the Scottish average.

[Since January 2024](#), a bespoke priority pathway developed by Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley has delivered immediate, cash-first support to vulnerable households at risk of infant food insecurity—distributing £10,240 through the Household Support Fund and ensuring same-day assistance and financial health checks for families with babies or those in late pregnancy. [Eligible residents in Falkirk](#), including children and young people in kinship care, can also sign up for the Go Card, which provides access to a range of concessions, including discounts on gym memberships, cinema tickets, and free swimming.

[There were 88 children in Falkirk](#) subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of the May–July 2024 reporting period. During this quarter, Falkirk's child protection rate rose to 28.9 per 10,000 children, compared to the national average of 20.4. Following a significant decrease in registrations between May and November 2023, numbers increased again over the subsequent two quarters.

Falkirk has [8 secondary schools](#), [48 primary schools](#), and a number of specialist provisions to support a wide range of additional support needs. In 2022/23, 96% of school leavers achieved at least Level 4 Numeracy—6% above the national average, though slightly lower than Falkirk's highest ever figure the previous year. Falkirk ranked 4th in Scotland for Level 4 Literacy and 7th for Level 5 Literacy—placing the authority in the top quartile for both measures. Falkirk's positive destination rate for the 2022/23 leavers cohort was 95.4%, an increase

from 94.2% the previous year. As of May 2024, 95% of Falkirk schools have achieved bronze, silver, or gold accreditation through the Rights Respecting Schools Awards Programme.

[Falkirk Family & Friends](#) is committed to listening to care-experienced children and young people and working collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people across Falkirk. Falkirk Council recognises that corporate parenting duties exist to ensure children cared for by the local authority and care experienced young people and adults receive the same support, care and opportunities as any good parent would provide. Through Falkirk Family & Friends, the Council is working to help all children and young people in Falkirk better their life chances and reach their full potential.

[Improving the mental health](#) and wellbeing of children and young people remains a core priority. Falkirk aims to support children and young people to thrive and build resilience by adopting a whole systems approach, ensuring children, young people and families receive the right support at the right time. In terms of other aspects of health, across Falkirk:

- 86.4% of children had a healthy weight at birth against a Scotland average of 84.2%
- 28.1% of babies exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks: the Scotland average is 31.8%
- 17.5% of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27-30 month review against a Scotland mean of 14.7%
- 72.1% of P7 children had no obvious dental decay against a Scotland mean of [73.2%](#)

Key reporting in Falkirk

- [Falkirk Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Falkirk's Strategy for tackling Poverty 2024-2029](#)
- [Fairer Falkirk - Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019 2024](#)
- [The Falkirk Plan 2021-2030 Community Planning - The Falkirk Plan | Falkirk Council](#)
- [Falkirk Community Partnership Corporate Parenting Plan 24-27](#)
- [Falkirk's Care Experience Definition](#)
- [Falkirk Child Poverty Action Progress Report 2023-2024](#)

- [Falkirk Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2023-2024](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 352 children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 24 per 1000 children in Falkirk on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 369 children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 12 per 1000 children in Falkirk on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 83 children who entered the 'care system' in Falkirk from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 103 children who entered the 'care system' in Falkirk between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

94 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This is 26.8% of children who were experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024.

114 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This is 30.9% of children who were experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020.

There were 298 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This is 84.9% of children who were experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024.

There were 298 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This is 80.8% of children who were experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020.

There were 91 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This is 25.9% of children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024.

There were 62 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This is 16.8% of children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020.

106 children were living in foster care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This represents 30.2% of all children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024.

122 children were living in foster care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This represents 33.1% of all children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020.

There were 53 children living in residential care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This is 15.1% of all children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2024.

There were 59 children living in residential care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This is 16.0% of all children experiencing care in Falkirk on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 144 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Falkirk, 109 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

17.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Falkirk during 2022/23. 16.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Falkirk

during 2022/23. 19.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Falkirk during 2022/23.

14.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Falkirk during 2019/20. 13.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Falkirk during 2019/20. 10.4% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Falkirk during 2019/20.

250 children were living in temporary accommodation in Falkirk on 30 September 2024.

150 children were living in temporary accommodation in Falkirk on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4876 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Falkirk. This represents an average of 18.0% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 7476 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Falkirk. This represents an average of 24.3% of children in Falkirk.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5131 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Falkirk. This represents an average of 18.4% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3779 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Falkirk. This represents an average of 14.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4140 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Falkirk. This represents an average of 14.9% children.

In Falkirk on 31 July 2024, there were 46 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Falkirk on 31 July 2020, there were 71 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 87.6% in Falkirk.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in Falkirk (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Falkirk, 2 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 7 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

37.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Falkirk.

40.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Falkirk.

10.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Falkirk.

18.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Falkirk.

79.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Falkirk. 62.1% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Falkirk during 2023.

71.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Falkirk. 68.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Falkirk.

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.

197 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. This represents 56% of all children who were 'looked after' in Falkirk on that day.

184 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Falkirk on 31 July 2020. This represents 50% of all children who were 'looked after' in Falkirk on that day.

7 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Falkirk.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

66 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Falkirk.
120 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Falkirk.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

41.3% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Falkirk on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

69.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Falkirk on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Falkirk between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 16 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.6 children per 1000. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Falkirk between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 5 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 491 households living in temporary accommodation in Falkirk.

On 30 September 2020, there were 397 households living in temporary accommodation in Falkirk.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 965 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Falkirk.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 914 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Falkirk.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by local partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Family: Intensive Family Support

“The purpose of intensive family support will be explicitly understood across Scotland as being to: (1) Keep families together and avoid children going into care wherever it is safe to do so; (2) Interrupt and address intergenerational cycles of trauma; and (3) Sustain meaningful and loving relationships (Pg 52)”

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life

There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community

People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together

When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together

Initially funded for two years through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, Breathing Space is a trauma-informed space in Falkirk specifically reserved for crisis situations. The service offers young people a safe and comfortable environment to go to when relationships are breaking down, while also providing families with the space and time needed to de-escalate. This critical period supports Social Work in planning sustainable next steps aimed at keeping young people with their families and avoiding residential care. Breathing Space represents a more trauma-informed approach to crisis management and, if successful, has the potential to deliver cost savings across the Partnership.

As part of Falkirk’s ongoing commitment to supporting families at the earliest opportunity, a new family support hub has also been established at the Sealock Centre to improve accessibility of services for families in Grangemouth. Grangemouth Family Support Hub received one year funding through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The service will deliver family groups and one-to-one volunteer support, with a focus on parent-child bonding, early help and support, and early years development (ages 0–5). In addition, One Parent

Families Scotland (OPFS) will provide support to single-parent families through peer support groups, health and wellbeing sessions, holistic therapies, and one-to-one support, including free counselling. These services are designed to address crisis situations, financial challenges, income maximisation, and provide tailored, needs-led family support for families across all age ranges.

Voice: Listening

“Scotland will listen to care experienced children, young people and care experienced adults in the delivery, inspection and continuous improvement of services and care (Pg 37). Services will be creative in their listening (Pg 32)”.

My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted upon.

Falkirk’s Champs Families received funding for 2 years through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The Champs used the funding to trial a whole-family approach to their youth-work. Families, meaning anyone who is an important support in the lives of any of Falkirk’s Champs, are coming together to plan activities. Bringing families together to have fun in a relaxed environment creates valuable support networks and reduces isolation. Some parents have already stepped up to volunteer with the Champs to keep this going after staffing issues, demonstrating its success and its sustainability.

Champs More Choices More Voices also received 18 months of funding through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. As part of this, a Champs worker is being brought in to support the newly established Care Experienced Ambassador sessions taking place in schools. This pilot aims to build a broader coalition of care experienced young people in Falkirk, amplifying their voices and supporting them to influence change. Bringing these young people together also seeks to address the isolation and loneliness that care experienced individuals are more likely to face. As part of this test of change, there is also an opportunity for a young person with care experience to be employed as a Research and Administration Assistant. In this role, they will help connect both groups to national policy developments and opportunities to make their collective voices heard.

Scaffolding: Health

“There will be timely access to mental health support before crisis point, to avoid hospitalisation. This will be available as long as it is needed and available for children who are in hospital so that services and families can plan for return to the community (Pg 51/ 84).

My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different.

Falkirk’s Mental Health Association (FDAMH) received 2 years funding through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. FDAMH is a well-established mental health organisation providing targeted early help and support services in line with their whole person approach to meet the needs of young people and families in Falkirk.

Parent groups are offered to parents/carers who may be experiencing poor mental health, or who are supporting their young person by building mental health literacy and encouraging self-care to reduce stress within the family. Counselling can be offered to young people aged 13-18 years who have left school, are non-attenders or who are too anxious to attend counselling in a school environment. They can also offer counselling to parents, guardians and caregivers to help manage difficult life problems, behaviours and emotions, for the benefit of the whole family. Both parent groups and counselling will deliver a holistic approach and will be tailored to meet the needs of the young people and their families. Their aim is to prevent any escalation and future clinical intervention.

Partners in Falkirk have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Falkirk Council has appointed three senior Trauma Champions across key services and the establishment of a dedicated Trauma Informed Policy Officer post, funded by the Scottish Government. These roles work collaboratively to develop and implement a strategic, whole-systems approach to embedding trauma-informed principles across the area. Falkirk’s is also an active participant in the Forth Valley Trauma Champions Network.

- The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund enabled the establishment of a dedicated team focused on Promise implementation, Corporate Parenting, family support, and engagement with the Champs Board.
- The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has also enabled numerous tests of change across Falkirk. For example, funding has been allocated to test a Single Point of Access (SPoA) system in Falkirk. This initiative aims to streamline the referral process for young people, families, and services, providing a shared electronic platform for direct referrals or multi-agency panel discussions. The goal is to reduce waiting times, improve service coordination, and ensure timely support for those in need.
- Care-experienced young people and parents have actively participated in the co-design of services, ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience shape service development and delivery.
- The emphasis on dignity and non-stigmatising approaches has informed service planning. This aligns with the Champs Board's long-standing focus on respectful language and identity.
- Training from The Promise Scotland in service design methodology has supported a user-centred approach to service planning, driving a cultural and operational shift in how services are designed and delivered.
- Participation in national networks such as The Promise and COSLA has supported shared learning, collaboration, and consistent implementation of The Promise across local system.
- Establishing a 'Family Firm in Falkirk' to help support care experienced young people with the transition into the world of work. This will involve work to achieve active sustainable buy-in across the partnership to make this project a reality.
- Building up a baseline picture from data and getting a more accurate picture on the current situation across the partnership regarding the outcomes for care experienced young people as they move through the education, care, justice, and housing systems.
- Charting the progress of work against local Promise metrics. It is hoped that future iterations of metrics will grow in complexity which will give a more detailed oversight of what is happening to care experienced children and young people across different systems.
- Seek to establish a community hub in Falkirk where members of the local community can come and meet in a welcoming and trauma-informed space. This will be accessible to other local community groups and the Champs Board as a space to come and meet up, relax, or work together.

- Developing a new Family Support Services Strategy to ensure families get the help they need when they need it.
-

Fife

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Local context

[Fife](#) is the 3rd largest local Authority area in Scotland (based upon population). It has a mix of urban areas, small towns and rural areas. It is part of the Fife Police Division which has 8 police stations.

Child poverty in Fife continues to track just above Scotland for both relative and absolute poverty rates. According to [Fife's Child Poverty Annual Report for 23/24](#):

- 23.6% of children in Fife are now living in relative poverty (in households with an income of less than 60% of UK median income) compared to 21.3% for Scotland.
- Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes all have higher child poverty rates than Fife as a whole.
- There were an estimated 33,888 low-income households in Fife in April 2024.

In 2023/24, 769 children in Fife were referred to the Children's Reporter, compared to 808 in 2022/23, 859 in 2013/14 and 3,050 in 2003/4. In 2023/24, 1,419 Children's Hearings were held in Fife and 386 children were subject to a Compulsory Supervision order [on 31st March 2023](#).

There are [13 children and families social work area teams in Fife](#), plus additional teams providing specialist support. Average 'caseloads' within the area teams have been significantly reduced—this number is now between 12 and 17 children per worker. The development of two permanence teams has allowed members of the workforce to focus on both earlier and crisis help and support for children at the 'edge of care'. In 2024 the [Chief Social Work Officer's report](#) states that there are 3,102 "open involvements", 2,321 children subject to s.22 (voluntary measures), 642 children cared for by the local authority, 139 children

on the Child Protection Register, 448 'cases' pending initial assessment. This is a total of 3,550—a slight increase on the previous year (3,216 in 2023).

The number of children and young people [subject to child protection registration in Fife](#) has increased in the last year. Evaluation of this has indicated that there was a whole system 'reset' after Covid.

[As of March 31st 2024](#), there were 742 children cared for by the local authority in Fife. Many children in living with kinship carers are no longer cared for by the local authority. Fewer children are in foster care (306) in 2024 compared to 2023 (340) and there has been a slight increase in the number of children in kinship care (from 730 in 2023 to 746 in 2024). The number of children living in residential care has increased from 49 in 2023 to 63 in 2024. There has been increasing access to kinship care and reductions in the number of children in residential and foster care over the last five years. In line with national trends, there has been an [overall decline in the number of foster](#) carers in Fife. Evidence shows an increasing use of kinship care and more effective family strength-based help and support and flexible and immediate support to families at the time of crisis.

There are [156 schools in Fife](#) —133 primary schools, 18 secondary schools and five special schools. Figures for 2021/22 show that there was 93% attendance for primary schools in in Fife (compared to the national rate of 94%) and 88.2% attendance for secondary schools (compared to the national rate of 89.1%). 94.8% of children and young people had an initial positive destination (compared to the national rate of 95.7%). 89.5% of children had Level 4 numeracy by the end of S4 (compared to the national rate of 87.9%) and 92. 1% had level 4 literacy by the end of S4 (compared to the national rate of 92%).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [2592 third sector organisations operating in Fife, including 665 dedicated to social care](#).

Key reporting in Fife

- [Fife Children's Services Plan 2023–2026](#)
- [Fife Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023–26](#)
- [Keeping the Promise in Fife](#)

- [Fife Chief Social Work Officer Report 2023-24](#)
- [Children and Families Strategy for 2020-23: Belonging to Fife](#)
- [Tackling poverty and preventing crisis Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 727 children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in Fife on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 919 children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 13 per 1000 children in Fife on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 238 children who entered the 'care system' in Fife from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 246 children who entered the 'care system' in Fife between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

154 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Fife on 31 July 2024. This is 21.2% of children who were experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024.

166 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Fife on 31 July 2020. This is 18.1% of children who were experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020.

There were 653 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Fife on 31 July 2024. This is 89.8% of children who were experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024.

There were 825 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Fife on 31 July 2020. This is 89.8% of children who were experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020.

There were 216 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Fife on 31 July 2024. This is 29.7% of children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024.

There were 227 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Fife on 31 July 2020. This is 24.7% of children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020.

283 children were living in foster care in Fife on 31 July 2024. This represents 38.9% of all children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024.

432 children were living in foster care in Fife on 31 July 2020. This represents 47.0% of all children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020.

There were 74 children living in residential care in Fife on 31 July 2024. This is 10.2% of all children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2024.

There were 92 children living in residential care in Fife on 31 July 2020. This is 10.0% of all children experiencing care in Fife on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 278 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Fife, 256 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

17.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Fife during 2022/23. 18.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Fife during 2022/23. 13.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Fife during 2022/23.

14.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Fife during 2019/20. 15.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Fife during 2019/20. 10.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Fife during 2019/20.

465 children were living in temporary accommodation in Fife on 30 September 2024.

270 children were living in temporary accommodation in Fife on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 11713 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Fife. This represents an average of 18.9% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 18082 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Fife. This represents an average of 26.0% of children in Fife.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 13160 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Fife. This represents an average of 20.8% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 9015 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Fife. This represents an average of 14.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 10628 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Fife. This represents an average of 16.8% children.

In Fife on 31 July 2024, there were 77 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Fife on 31 July 2020, there were 93 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 87.2% in Fife.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in Fife (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Fife, 62 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 95 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

44.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Fife.

46.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Fife.

18.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Fife.

10.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Fife.

83.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Fife. 70.4% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Fife during 2023.

83.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Fife. 75.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Fife.

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.

499 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Fife on 31 July 2024. This represents 69% of all children who were 'looked after' in Fife on that day.

659 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Fife on 31 July 2020. This represents 72% of all children who were 'looked after' in Fife on that day.

9 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Fife.

12 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Fife.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

122 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Fife.

127 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Fife.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

18.4% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Fife on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

27.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Fife on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Fife between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 29 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.0 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Fife between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 1108 households living in temporary accommodation in Fife.

On 30 September 2020, there were 700 households living in temporary accommodation in Fife.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 2153 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Fife.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 2084 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Fife.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY - Poverty

The people who support me know if and how my family are being affected by poverty, and provide us with help and support me if we are

The people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us

Fife has focused on income maximisation and targeted programmes of winter support, as ways to address poverty and prevent crisis. There have been particular efforts to ensure people are able to access the benefits they are entitled to; protect people from cost-of-living increases with a focus on support for food, fuel and childcare costs; prevent crisis through a No Wrong Door approach; improve the use of data relating to poverty and crisis to target spend on prevention of crisis; and tackle homelessness.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund funded test of change *Putting People First (PPF)* has provided wraparound support on a 1:2:1 and community basis, supporting 168 households in Kirkcaldy with a wide range of issues. 23% of the people supported were care experienced or had a child cared for by the local authority.

Next steps are to continue to implement a No Wrong Door approach; reduce long term food poverty; develop a joined-up system of household support; and work with communities to create welcoming places that provide wrap around advice and support.

More information is available in [Fife's Poverty Annual Report 23/24](#).

FAMILY- Universal and Intensive Family Support

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life

There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community

People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together

When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together

In Children and Families Services, Fife is continuing to manage integration into a Communities Directorate [maximising the opportunities created by this and](#)

[developing a No Wrong Door approach](#) to improve support at the earliest point for families.

The [Children and Families Contact Centre](#) operates as the ‘front door’ for the service and continues to manage all initial referrals from partners and families. The Multi-Agency Improvement Team (MAIT) used Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to support earlier and more effective screening of referrals received from health and education colleagues.

The focus on early help and support within communities was piloted through a ‘[Community Social Work](#)’ approach in Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath and the learning from this work is contributing to wider whole system change, as part of Fife Council reform.

Family Support Service

Open Involvements	FSS Central	FSS East	FSS West	Total
April 2021	153	117	154	424
April 2022	186	115	193	494
April 2023	154	114	172	440
April 2024	136	97	162	395

Source: [Fife Chief Social Work Officer Report 23-24](#)

Fife’s local authority allocation from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for 2024/25 and 2025/26 is £2.696m.

The Fife [Together for Change](#) project was funded by the Fife Children’s Services Partnership through the Scottish Government’s Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF).

The Together for Change project was co-ordinated and facilitated by Fife Voluntary Action (FVA). It included third sector organisations (Barnardo’s, Clued Up and The Cottage Family Centre), public sector partners (Fife Council and Fife Health and Social Care Partnership), and parents, carers, and young people who have experience of using and receiving family support services.

In line with the priorities set out within the [Fife Children's Services Plan 23 - 26](#), the project aimed to establish the conditions where the views and experiences of children, young people and families are central to design and funding of children’s services in Fife.

- Over the course of 18 months (January 2023 – June 2024), the project delivered the following:
- Recommendations to inform future children and family support service planning and commissioning, in line with the [No Wrong Door](#) approach and [Supporting Families Toolkit for Change](#)
-
- Meaningful engagement with children, young people and families across Fife to inform commissioning and delivery of services.
- Local contextual learning on what supports children, young people and families value to inform service design, commissioning, and practice.
- Recommendations from the project being taken forward by Children in Fife (CIF) are:
- Ensure partnership between service providers and families.
- Implement services that provide timely assistance to families to reduce the need for crisis support.
- Develop programs that foster positive relationships among family members and between families and service providers.
- Establish transparent accessible information on local services to assist families in navigating available support.
- Enhance the availability and ease of access to services in communities considering factors such as location and operating hours.
- Implement strategies to reduce stigma associated with seeking support.
- Secure consistent funding to ensure the longevity of services and maintenance of relationships between services, children and families.

The Homemaker role within Fife's Family Support Service was a small pilot of a practical, hands-on position that focuses on providing direct assistance to families who are facing challenges in maintaining a stable and supportive home environment. The responsibilities include practical home, life skills, parenting support, emotional support and crisis prevention. A key responsibility was collaboration with other services, through weekly multi-agency meetings, to ensure the changing needs of families are understood and quickly responded to by the most appropriate service.

CARE – Where Children Live

[People who support me are working together to make sure that no matter where my family and I are, we'll always get the same high quality help and support](#)

[People who support me are working together to make sure that if I ever need to live away from home, I'll still be close by, and/ or in a place that I have meaningful connections with](#)

Fife has a [dedicated therapeutic service \(Springfield\) for](#) children and young people cared for by the local authority, providing direct support and assistance to foster carers, the child and the professional network. This service offers expertise from social work practitioners, psychotherapy and play therapy. The reach of this service has recently extended to supporting kinship families and family relationships.

Fife were successful in a funding bid from CORRA which was centred on understanding 'the system' and partners attitudes to kinship care. Findings from an independent review of kinship care in 2022-23 suggested a number of partnership improvements which are being [taken forward across the partnership, led and reviewed by the multi-agency Kinship Steering Group](#).

CARE – Moving On

[I have been properly prepared for and am supporting with living independently](#)

[I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it at different points in my life](#)

Fife has demonstrated commitment to promoting continuing care by offering a wide range of options for children and young people. [The Fife House Project](#), launched in 2022, was recognised in [Oversight Board 2 Report](#) as a positive example of innovative practice in supporting care-experienced young people.

[The National House Project](#) was developed in response to feedback from young people who had transitioned into independent living and reported negative experiences. The project adopts a psychosocial informed relational approach grounded in research, lived experience, and evidence-based practice.

The Fife House Project is supported jointly with Housing Services and Children's Services allowing joint support of resources. All the Young People who have been supported through the Housing Project have been successful in retaining their tenancies.

The [Siblings Reunited](#) project of The Star Project reunites brothers and sisters separated by the care system. The project allows siblings to spend quality time together at East Flisk Farm.

There has been an ongoing increase in the number of carers recruited to offer a supported lodgings provision.

Two [additional workers based in the Young People's Team](#) have been recruited to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children. A senior [mental health](#)

[nurse has also been recruited](#) to the team which has allowed easier and more timely access to support for some of our young people whose mental health needs or experience of trauma requires support.

SCAFFOLDING - Health

[I feel important and loved, and I have someone I trust to ask for help if I need it](#)

[My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different](#)

[School Nursing Service in Fife](#) has redesigned their officer, visiting all of Fife's residential home as well as introducing a text messaging service to allow young people in high schools to contact the School Nursing Service directly, if they have any concerns regarding their health and wellbeing.

[Fife Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#) have expanded the capacity across their therapeutic services for care experienced children and have introduced a service specifically addressing the therapeutic needs of children and carers who are in kinship arrangements.

SCAFFOLDING- Justice

[If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by that contact](#)

The [Child Protection team](#) have completed [Scottish Child Interview Model training](#) and all child interviews now follow this methodology.

Fife Council was accepted as a [pathfinder for Bairns Hoose](#) and work continues across the partnership to ensure that children are at the centre of planning.

SCAFFOLDING- Money & Commissioning

[Money is spent in a way that means I can have support that fits around what my family and I want and need at that moment in time, rather than our needs having to fit around what is already on offer across different services and organisations.](#)

[Fife families continue to benefit](#) from a wide range of third sector provision both at an early help and support and intensive level from the numerous partners providing support across the council. There has been a review of the strategic commissioning model so that the focus in future will be to develop a more integrated community-based approach aligned to redesign activity across Children & Families services. A whole system approach to commissioning has

been informed by whole family wellbeing and the How Good is Our Family Support framework, as well as consideration of national developments to ensure best practice underpins the current commissioning strategy in Fife.

SCAFFOLDING- Education

[I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education](#)

The Learning with Care (LWC) initiative has been established to support the improvement of education planning for care-experienced children and young people. Education and Children's Services work together using the LWC team to improve education experiences for care-experienced children. There is a LWC funded worker based within the Social Work Kinship Team who has a specific remit to work with children and families to encourage educational attendance. The role involves linking in with local community supports, teasing out barriers to educational attendance, and assisting in facilitating person-centred educative packages to re-engage children/young people in their schooling. A small scale project has been undertaken with LWC EP staff and one residential care provision to develop capacity in care staff to support the education of young people. This was a creative approach to improve outcomes for young people in residential care

[Benarty Primary School](#) was the first school in Scotland to achieve the [Promise Schools Award](#). This award is earned by working to support care experienced children in a variety of different ways. There are 30 care experienced children in the school. All staff undertook the learning e-modules. The modules were successfully completed by all teachers, and all staff including cleaning staff, dinner staff, janitors, and administrative staff.

The next part of the award is around community projects and engagement. The school initiated an integrated community project where children from the Promise group visited a nursing home monthly. This aims to provide quality time for the children with residents of the nursing home, recognising many of the children lacked relationships with grandparents due to family circumstances.

SCAFFOLDING- Governance

[People who support me are all working together to share resources, to jointly make decisions, and to own and fix any problems together](#)

In November 2023 it was agreed that the [Children and Family and Justice Social Work Service](#) would move to the Communities Directorate.

Children in Fife (CIF) is the Governance Group for the Fife Children's Services Partnership. Membership of Children in Fife includes:

- Lead Officer for Keeping the Promise in Fife.
- Fife Council (Education Service, Children and Families Social Work, Housing, and Communities), Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, Fife Voluntary Action, Fife College, Police Scotland, and SCRA.
- Corporate Parenting Board and Child Protection Committee.
- Representation from the Children's Services Data Group.

Children in Fife leads the strategic planning of children's services on behalf of the Fife Partnership Board. The Lead Officer for Keeping the Promise in Fife ensures connection with the Promise across Health, Education, Social Work, and the Third Sector.

The Children's Rights Oversight Group is a partnership group responsible for promoting children's rights and coordinating participation and engagement. The group:

- Aims to improve engagement with children, young people, and families.
- Coordinates collective ownership and delivery of the UNCRC.
- Is responsible for children's services plan requirements related to Children's Rights Reporting.
- Promotes children's rights in line with UNCRC.
- The Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group includes lead members from the three key partnership groups overseeing work related to health and wellbeing. The group:
 - Owns the action plan for the improvement theme of Health & Wellbeing.
 - Provides a link to the work of the Fife Alcohol & Drugs Partnership (ADP) and the Health and Social Care Partnership.
 - Promotes rights within the UNCRC relating to health and wellbeing.
 -

SCAFFOLDING- Data

My views and experiences, and the views and experiences of people who are important in my life are recorded, included and acted on in a meaningful way

Fife's Children's Services data group includes representation from across the CSPP. The group has been working for a number of years to improve the impact of data. This has included development of a core dataset to encourage routine monitoring data collection across Children's Services, including WFWF activities.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund enabled Fife to recruit a Lead Data Analyst role, developing analytical capacity and data use across all strategic priorities of the CSPP. The Analyst's responsibilities include establishing relationships with multi-agency partners' data staff; understanding data availability, quality and how to access it; supporting the data group's development of meaningful performance reports; and creating a description of Fife's WFWF whole systems approach (to ensure data captured covers all activity).

Partners in Fife have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The development of the Kinship service has including dedicated workers to ensure children remain in family-based care.
- The development of [The Willow Project](#) which provides a service specifically addressing the therapeutic needs of children, young people and carers who are in kinship arrangements.
- The implementation of the National House Project, [which has provided supported tenancies for 8 young people in cohort 1, 10 young people in cohort 2 and 8 young people in cohort 3.](#)
- Improving accessibility to services and increasing understanding of trauma informed practice.
- Change of [use of residential homes](#) to dynamically respond to changes in profile of need.
- Creation of [additional posts for the Emergency Support Team and Close Support Team through Whole Family Wellbeing Fund](#) to enhance capacity to creatively support children to remain at home or in their local community.
- [Permanence teams becoming established](#) allowing a focus on improving support for children who will not return to family care.
- [Evaluation and learning from 'This is Us'](#) groupwork with mothers who have had their children removed from their care, to support understanding of this trauma and enable learning from conversations around change.
- The [Belonging to Fife strategy](#) continues to provide the vision, governance, and direction for work with children and their families. The strategy is underpinned by the following principles:
 - - Reflecting the principles of GIRFEC and The Promise – what will it take, from the whole of the team around the child, to keep this child safely at home, additional supports, scaffolding, family strengths etc.

- Keeping the needs of children at the centre of all planning.
 - Whole partnership understanding that children have a right to live within their own communities, with their siblings and where possible within their own family.
 - Outcomes Focused/Strength based planning reflecting the strengths and capacities of the young person and their family while recognising and managing any risk.
 - A whole system approach is required as keeping the promise necessitates a commitment from all services: Education, Health, Police Scotland and third sector providers.
-

Glasgow City

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[Glasgow City Council](#) is Scotland's largest local authority, serving a population of around 622, 050 within a small geographical area. Around 17.3% of the population are aged 17 or under, just under the Scotland average of 18.5%. A densely populated area across urban and suburban communities, there are [30 secondary schools, 142 primary schools and over 200 local authority nurseries and partnership nurseries](#). There 157 GP practices and it is served by [10 hospitals](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [3843 third sector organisations operating in Glasgow, including 840 dedicated to social care](#). Glasgow City Council is part of the Greater Glasgow Police Division which has [17 police stations](#).

The current [Children's Services Plan](#) highlights that the proportion of children and young people in Glasgow living in relative poverty has increased to 25% as compared to pre-pandemic levels of 24%. Family income is on average £117 below the poverty line per week, which has worsened in comparison to the average weekly gap before the pandemic of £107. 24.6% of Glasgow children aged 0-15 are living in relatively low-income families compared to 15.9% of children in all Scottish families. Since 2022 Glasgow HSCP has been working with Scottish Government and partners on the [Child Poverty Pathfinder initiative](#).

[Glasgow City welcomes the highest numbers of asylum seekers outside London](#). Following the changes to the asylum decision making process in July 2023, there was a 96% increase in homelessness applications in Glasgow. The number of homelessness applications from households granted leave to remain in 2022/23 was 1,384 and this increased to 2,709 in 2023/24 from households who had been granted leave to remain. Whilst recognising the positive outcome for those seeking humanitarian assistance, local leaders identified this change and the

cost-of-living crisis as contributing towards the 'housing emergency' declared on 30th November 2023. The Glasgow Homelessness and Housing Emergency Task Force Action Plan of January 2025 includes specific action for the Private Rented Sector Hub to support families living in this type of accommodation, particularly families with children who are living in poverty due to the impact of welfare reform.

In [Glasgow City schools](#), two-thirds of Glasgow's school children are facing issues associated with multiple deprivation. 41.6% of Glasgow primary (P5-7) and 42% secondary school children are registered for free school meals compared to around one fifth nationally (Primary 20.5%; Secondary 17.7%). The national health and wellbeing census highlights those pupils living in more deprived areas report feeling less positive in their feelings about school, home life, mental health, wellbeing, confidence, physical activity and sleep, and are more likely to have higher scores related to loneliness and worries ([Health and Wellbeing Census Scotland 2021/22](#)). The most recent survey in Glasgow City schools identified that pupils in the most deprived areas feel less positive in their attitudes about school, life at home, having a trusted adult they can talk to, physical activity and sleep, mental health and wellbeing and confidence, with higher scores on loneliness and worrying a lot about things in their life.

In terms of other aspects of health, across [Glasgow City](#):

- 87.1% of children had a healthy weight at birth against a Scotland mean of 84.6%
- 31.1% of babies exclusively breast fed at 6-8 weeks: the Scotland mean is 31.8%
- 21.0% of children had one or more developmental concerns at 27-30 month review against a Scotland mean of 14.6%
- 66.6% of P7 children had no obvious dental decay against a Scotland mean of 75.2%

There are a wide range of family help and support services available. Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector's Promise Partnership undertook [mapping work](#) that identified:

"it's not that services aren't available (in Glasgow), there's just not enough of them."

In this context, the work also highlighted [123 services delivered by 78 providers, reaching 32,000 families with different criteria and referral routes](#), some of which are commissioned services, and others funded through Glasgow Community Fund, philanthropic funders, or through fundraising. In recognition of the scale and complexity of systems change required, Glasgow City Health and Social Care partnership is actively exploring with partners (including Scottish Government) ways to join up whole family wellbeing, child poverty and employability work to develop more holistic support for families.

Key reporting in Glasgow City

- [Draft Corporate Parenting Plan 2023 – 2026](#)
- [Glasgow City Promise Plan](#)
- [Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023/24](#)
- [Integrated Children and Young People's Services Plan](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Glasgow Community Plan 2024-2034](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 1748 children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in Glasgow on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 2544 children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 23 per 1000 children in Glasgow on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 249 children who entered the 'care system' in Glasgow from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 454 children who entered the 'care system' in Glasgow between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

241 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This is 13.8% of children who were experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024.

471 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This is 18.5% of children who were experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020.

There were 1619 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This is 92.6% of children who were experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024.

There were 2321 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This is 91.2% of children who were experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020.

There were 908 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This is 51.9% of children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024.

There were 1154 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This is 45.4% of children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020.

462 children were living in foster care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This represents 26.4% of all children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024.

696 children were living in foster care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This represents 27.4% of all children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020.

There were 129 children living in residential care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This is 7.4% of all children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2024.

There were 219 children living in residential care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This is 8.6% of all children experiencing care in Glasgow on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 381 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Glasgow, 282 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

6.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Glasgow during 2022/23. 25.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Glasgow during 2022/23. 25.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Glasgow during 2022/23.

3.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Glasgow during 2019/20. 19.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Glasgow during 2019/20. 18.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Glasgow during 2019/20.

3100 children were living in temporary accommodation in Glasgow on 30 September 2024.

2385 children were living in temporary accommodation in Glasgow on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 26554 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Glasgow. This represents an average of 27.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 32304 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Glasgow. This represents an average of 31.4% of children in Glasgow.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 28593 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Glasgow. This represents an average of 28.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 20925 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Glasgow. This represents an average of 21.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 23010 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Glasgow. This represents an average of 23.0% children.

In Glasgow on 31 July 2024, there were 74 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Glasgow on 31 July 2020, there were 156 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 85.4% in Glasgow.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 88.0% in Glasgow (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Glasgow, 120 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 75 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

52.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Glasgow.

54.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Glasgow.

23.6% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Glasgow.

23.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Glasgow.

92.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Glasgow. 70.2% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Glasgow during 2023.

82.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Glasgow. 84.4% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who

experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Glasgow.

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.

1370 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. This represents 78% of all children who were 'looked after' in Glasgow on that day.

1850 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Glasgow on 31 July 2020. This represents 73% of all children who were 'looked after' in Glasgow on that day.

12 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Glasgow.

31 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Glasgow.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

505 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Glasgow.

419 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Glasgow.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

80.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Glasgow on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

89.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Glasgow on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Glasgow between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 52 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.0 children per 1000. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Glasgow between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 28 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 3710 households living in temporary accommodation in Glasgow.

On 30 September 2020, there were 3179 households living in temporary accommodation in Glasgow.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 6773 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Glasgow.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 5064 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Glasgow.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Intensive Family support

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life

There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community

People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together

When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together

- Glasgow's reform of the care system for children has seen a substantial reduction in the number of looked after children – with a decrease of more than 50% in the number of children accommodated away from their families since 2016. In the last three years, the number of children accommodated has decreased from 965 in March 2020 to 675 in March 2023, a reduction of 30%. Glasgow report a combination of factors have contributed to this sustained decrease each year, including:
 - focus on a strengths-based approach, working in partnership with families to develop plans, approaches and skills which build resilience and support meaningful change

- viewing families' pressures and stressors through a trauma-informed and poverty lens
- use of flexible funding available during the pandemic to issue direct payments to families
- partnership work between HSCP, Council, GCVS, third sector partners and Scottish Government on the Child Poverty Pathfinder and the Public Health approach within Police Scotland
- additional funding for earlier intervention and intensive family support
- additional funding for Health Visiting, in line with the national standard based on the Caseload Weighting Tool
- continued development of approaches such as Family Group Decision Making, and Life Long Links, to build networks of support for families.

CARE: Relationships

How are you ensuring that, where it is safe to do so, I can live with my brother(s) (and) sister(s)?

Glasgow City Council's has developed its practice in relation to connections in relation to brothers, sisters and people that are important to children and young people. The [Family Connections Assessment and Plan \(FCAP\)](#) is designed to support child centred, relationship-based practice with children and young people that helps us to plan effectively for children who are a part of a wider sibling group whether they live together or not. This tool has been shared as part of the [Community of Practice for Siblings](#) and other areas are exploring its use in their context.

VOICE: Documenting Decisions

How are you ensuring that the words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed?

The Glasgow HSCP Promise Keepers established a *Language of Care* working group. This group spent around 18 months focussing on the importance of words, language and care. They explored the different ways and purposes of communicating, who owned information and who had a right to know it. This

included work to identify barriers and determine whether they were perceived or procedural, learning that they were often perceived.

This led to a test of change in one Children's House where the entire community of carers and young people collaborated, going back to the purpose of everything that is communicated, recorded and written.

SCAFFOLDING: Education

I have every support I need to stay in school and I'm not excluded.

Glasgow Virtual School worked with colleagues from The West Partnership to develop the Keeping The Promise Award (KTPA) Programme for all staff in our educational establishments. The Award had originally been created by North Lanarkshire Council. Due to the size and scale of Glasgow City Council (GCC), a Train the Trainer approach to delivery was developed. This empowered and built capacity of key staff, establishment Designated Managers (DMs) in the main, to deliver the programme to all staff members within their establishment. In March 2024, 15 members of staff from early years, primary and secondary establishment participated in a Pilot Programme. In June 2024, Train the Trainer sessions were attended by 147 education colleagues from Early Years, Primary and Secondary establishments with a further 72 members of staff trained in March 2025.

Staff have worked collaboratively to evaluate the delivery of the award, discuss barriers and plan next steps. As a result, staff have developed positive working relationships and are developing peer mentoring systems to 'look outwards' - visiting establishments to examine good practice for supporting Care Experienced Learners. In some areas, establishments are working collaboratively to deliver the award within Learning Communities. This is enhancing provision across learning communities as senior leaders are evaluating their current provision for care experienced learners and are working jointly to plan improvements regarding their culture, systems and practice.

Partners in Glasgow have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The Best Services Trial (BeST³) has been researching the effectiveness of the New Orleans Intervention Model (NIM) in supporting decision-making

for children where they have been removed from the care of their birth families. Glasgow City Council, in partnership with the NHS, NSPCC and other social care partners participated in this trial since 2011, with the findings due for publication later this year. The FACS (Family Assessment and Contact Service) participation in this work has generated learning applicable both locally and nationally in relation to the impact systems have on babies, children and families.

- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) are responsible for whole family groups so that they can keep family connection in mind if brothers and sisters cannot live with one another, and ensure that relationships are maintained, in line with children and young people's wishes.
- Development of practice in relation to connections in relation to brothers, sisters and people that are important to children and young people.
 - The Family Connections Assessment and Plan (FCAP) is designed to support child centred, relationship-based practice with children and young people that helps us to plan effectively for children who are a part of a wider sibling group whether they live together or not. It is designed to be a tool that social workers can use at the point that children become care experienced to help map out brother/sister and other important relationships that need to be maintained. This work also then paves the way for more focussed Life Story work and allows for evidence of decision making and a record of children and young people's views. The FCAP requires that all sibling information is recorded along with their care arrangements and views, with a section for then planning how to support these relationships if safe to do so. There are also a variety of direct practice tools which workers are encouraged to use including sibling maps, genograms, and family trees.
- Glasgow City 16+ review of Accommodation and Support Services – Reimagining Care and Support.
 - In July 2022, Glasgow launched a review of accommodation and support services that are available to young people who are ready to move onto more independent living. Young people, supported by Promise Participation Workers, have been integral to this review. Partnership work with them, accommodation providers, and the Promise Design School has seen progress to develop a shared understanding of the challenges across all stakeholders (including young people and providers) before moving on to develop a solution.

- In Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) there are just under 50 named Promise Keepers: this network meets every 2 months and focusses on what matters to Glasgow's children, young people and their families:
 - Continuing focus on building the infrastructure of support and services effectively in the community
 - Focussing on developing more consistency in strengths-based, trauma informed practice across all services through the development of a practice model, with associated supports for practitioners to practice effectively
 - Creating more direct involvement for frontline staff in the transformational change agenda
 - Ensuring further participation from children, young people and families in both feedback and involvement in redesign
 - The Central Continuing Care and After Care team is reviewing 16 plus accommodation and support services, involving all stakeholders, including young people. Their views will shape a new model of care.
 - Committing to listening and acting upon the views of children and young people. Practice is shifting to reflect the importance of working alongside children, young people and families.
 - Employing four Promise Participation Workers to ensure that the views of our children and young people are shaping policy and practice.
 - Fewer children and young people are living away from their families in Glasgow thanks to more intensive support tailored to their needs. Staff are more aware of the impact of intergenerational trauma and poverty, which is reflected in their support and relationship-building with children and families.
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Inverclyde

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Inverclyde is one of the smallest local authorities in Scotland, with an [estimated population of 78,330 as of March 2022](#) - a decrease of 3.7% from the 2011 population figure. Children aged 0-15 make up 15.4% of the local population, compared to the 16.3% Scottish average. There is an anticipated population reduction of 5% over the next 5 years, and the projected population by mid-2028 is expected to decrease by 6.1% to 73,418, with those aged 0 to 15 projected to fall by -14.2% compared to -6% in Scotland. It is part of the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Police Division which has [6 police stations](#).

According to the SIMD, in Inverclyde levels of poverty and deprivation continue to be amongst the highest in Scotland, [with 43% of local people living in areas that are amongst the most deprived in the country \(SIMD 1\)](#). Areas of high deprivation are not dispersed evenly across Inverclyde, but rather are clustered in certain communities, particularly Port Glasgow and the East End of Greenock.

Child poverty in Inverclyde is amongst the highest in Scotland, with 26.1% of children living in relative poverty after housing costs. Similarly, 19.1% of children are living in absolute poverty, which is higher than the Scottish figure of 17.1%. [In Inverclyde 78.8% of primary school aged children receive free school meals and free school clothing grant benefits](#), a higher figure than that of 64% across Scotland. In Inverclyde 1,825 families are in receipt of a Council Tax reduction, 80% of whom are lone parent families. Of these households, 70% do not have any income from employment.

Communities in Inverclyde are served by [6 secondary schools, 20 primary schools, 20 early years establishments and 3 Additional Support Needs schools](#). There are 13 GP practices in the Inverclyde area and it is served by [1 hospital](#).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [504 third sector organisations operating in Inverclyde, including 162 dedicated to social care.](#)

Key reporting in Inverclyde

- [Inverclyde Local Child Poverty Action Report: Year Four 2022-25](#)
- [Inverclyde Child Poverty Local Action Report: Year 6 2024-2025](#)
- [Inverclyde Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Children and Families Service Redesign](#)
- [Community Planning Partnership: Inverclyde Alliance Annual Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Inverclyde Strategic Needs Assessment, 2024](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 182 children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 16 per 1000 children in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 223 children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 16 per 1000 children in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 43 children who entered the 'care system' in Inverclyde from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 66 children who entered the 'care system' in Inverclyde between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

42 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This is 23.1% of children who were experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024.

103 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This is 46.2% of children who were experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020.

There were 153 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This is 84.1% of children who were experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024.

There were 186 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This is 83.4% of children who were experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020.

There were 62 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This is 34.1% of children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024.

There were 51 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This is 22.9% of children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020.

36 children were living in foster care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This represents 19.8% of all children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024.

32 children were living in foster care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This represents 14.3% of all children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020.

There were 29 children living in residential care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This is 15.9% of all children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024.

There were 30 children living in residential care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This is 13.5% of all children experiencing care in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 86 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Inverclyde, 64 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 5 per 1,000).

9.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Inverclyde during 2022/23. 24.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Inverclyde during 2022/23. 27.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Inverclyde during 2022/23.

3.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Inverclyde during 2019/20. 24.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Inverclyde during 2019/20. 27.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Inverclyde during 2019/20.

5 children were living in temporary accommodation in Inverclyde on 30 September 2024.

0 children were living in temporary accommodation in Inverclyde on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2082 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Inverclyde. This represents an average of 17.3% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 3593 children living in relative poverty,

after housing costs, annually in Inverclyde. This represents an average of 23.5% of children in Inverclyde.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2147 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Inverclyde. This represents an average of 17.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1537 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Inverclyde. This represents an average of 12.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 1609 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Inverclyde. This represents an average of 12.8% children.

In Inverclyde on 31 July 2024, there were 14 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Inverclyde on 31 July 2020, there were 26 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 82.2% in Inverclyde.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 85.0% in Inverclyde (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Inverclyde, 12 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 78 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

40.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Inverclyde.

41.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Inverclyde.

22.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Inverclyde.

17.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Inverclyde.

86.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Inverclyde. 72.7% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Inverclyde during 2023.

80.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Inverclyde. 86.7% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Inverclyde.

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.

98 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. This represents 54% of all children who were 'looked after' in Inverclyde on that day.

83 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020. This represents 37% of all children who were 'looked after' in Inverclyde on that day.

5 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Inverclyde.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

34 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Inverclyde.

44 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Inverclyde.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

31.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Inverclyde on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

27.5% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Inverclyde on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Inverclyde between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 7 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.5 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Inverclyde between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 6 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 67 households living in temporary accommodation in Inverclyde.

On 30 September 2020, there were 84 households living in temporary accommodation in Inverclyde.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 370 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Inverclyde.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 169 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Inverclyde.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Family

People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together.

Creation of school linked social workers

Inverclyde has allocated two full time social workers to school communities of Aileymill and St Andrew's Primary Schools and their associated early years establishments. This project takes an early intervention approach to provide families with the necessary support to improve wellbeing and improve outcomes for the whole family.

Home Start Inverclyde project

This project provides a whole family approach to mentoring support for low-income families who experience challenges with their mental health and anxiety. Homestart Inverclyde has recruited a Family Support Coordinator, Family Support Worker and 10 new peer support volunteers.

Inverclyde Early Adopter Community - Affordable childcare

This initiative provides accessible and affordable childcare and empowers parents to pursue employment and education. In 2023/4 33 families (44 children) have benefited from the initiative which includes receiving financial advice and help identifying local employment opportunities. A dedicated project team has been integral to the success of the project by building trust and relationships with families. By providing targeted support the project has improved family wellbeing, addressed financial challenges, and increased employment opportunities.

Early help and support for families

Inverclyde's Request for Assistance team developed a partnership with Children 1st Family Wellbeing Services in February 2023. This partnership has improved the support to 34 families, and has reduced the unnecessary involvement of social work, and has enabled opportunities for five Family Group Decision Making meetings to support families.

Voice

The language used about and around me is kind and understandable to me.

The words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed.

Mind of My Own app

The app seeks to gather the views of care experienced children and young people, allowing them the choice about how they wish for their views to be shared. Children and young people can share their thoughts and feelings ahead of meetings and about the decisions that have been made about them. The app translates into over 100 languages and has a recite me tool which reads aloud to ensure Inverclyde is supporting all children's views.

Language

Work has taken place across Inverclyde's children's houses in relation to how those working alongside children, young people and their families write their case notes. Residential staff have been writing their young people's notes directly to them, rather than being about them. Due to positive feedback from young people, this work will be built upon and expanded.

Connections and Relationships – Young person led conference

Connected2Care

Organised and hosted by care experienced young people, the Connected2Care conference provided the opportunity for over 100 members of the workforce from across many sectors to come together and hear how Inverclyde's workforce and communities can better support children, young people and their families to thrive. The theme was the power of relationships and how supportive, loving relationships from those who work in the care system can have a lasting impact on young people.

People

People who help me are getting all the support, time and resources they need as individuals, to be able to do a good job.

I-Promise Keepers

As part of Inverclyde Council's '[I-Promise Plan](#)', Inverclyde's Promise Keepers is an initiative to support Inverclyde in its commitment and accountability to its care experienced children, young people and their families in keeping the promise. Inverclyde has asked its workforce to pledge support and be an I-Promise Keeper to help keep the promise. 88 individuals from across sectors have pledged their commitment and support. The I-Promise Board is jointly chaired by two care experienced young people and the Council Chief Executive.

[Developing the workforce](#)

As part of Inverclyde's redesign of children and families' services, initiatives are being put in place to address challenges around the recruitment and retention of social workers. These include:

- Grow Our Own: at the time of writing, nine paraprofessional staff have secured support to obtain a social work qualification over the next 3 to 4 years.
- MSc financial support: financial incentives are being offered to candidates who completed their MSc qualification, where the HSCP has reimbursed the final year of fees.
- Newly qualified social worker supported year: now in its third year of implementation, this pilot has been developed to support all NQSWs throughout their first year, as well as creating a NQSW Continuous Professional Learning toolkit, including guidance regarding mandatory learning requirements.

Scaffolding

My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different.

Health

CAMHS Specialist Nurse for care experienced young people

This ensures all young people have the help they need for their health when it is required. The specialist nurse also supports and provides training to residential care staff about their understanding of mental health.

[Kooth](#)

Kooth was introduced in 2022 to deliver free, confidential and personalized digital mental health support for Inverclyde's 16–26-year-olds. The service is available and accessible 24/7 with no waiting lists or thresholds to meet.

Partners in Inverclyde have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Further work to improve the culture around language, ensuring all case notes are written to the child or young person and not about them.
- As part of Inverclyde's work to empower communities and reduce rates of poverty, Community Link Workers work closely with a range of partners to provide holistic support and advice. From September 2023 to March 2024, [1,307 people were seen by a Community Link Worker](#), with 2,193 reasons given for referral, including financial challenges, stress related problems, housing issues and social prescribing support for mental health
- [Partnership with The Lens](#) – the council worked with The Lens to identify four projects which will support the care experienced community and families across Inverclyde. These included 'Home from Home' to ensure families have an appropriate space to spend quality family time together, and the addition of a family time co-ordinator will provide consistency to families, and '[Practice Pad](#)', and initiative designed to support care experienced young people transition to living more independently
- Continued work to reduce poverty and inequalities by:
 - Increasing income from employment by offering a range and choice of opportunities for priority parents to help them access and maintain employability.
 - Increasing income from benefits to ensure a systematic whole family approach for families more likely to living in poverty and facing financial insecurity.
 - Mitigating the cost of living by providing accessible and affordable childcare, activities and food for children in priority families.
 - Working collaboratively with families with lived experience to ensure services respond effectively and meet their needs.

Midlothian

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

On 30 June 2023, the [population](#) of Midlothian was estimated as 98,260. This is an increase of 1.3% from 97,040 in 2022. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.8%. It is anticipated that Midlothian will have the highest percentage change in population size out of all the 32 council areas in Scotland (2018 to 2028). The current population can be characterised by 19% being over 65 years of age, 63% between 15-64 years of age, and 17.8% under 14 years of age. It is part of the Lothians and Borders Police Division which has [23 police stations](#), and is served by [1 hospital](#).

The [community is served by 31 primary schools, six secondary schools, one additional support school and two further education providers](#). In 2020/21 the number of pupils registering for free school meals increased by 0.5%, whereas nationally it has stayed the same. On average in 2021/22 a lower percentage of pupils registered for free school meals in Midlothian than in Scotland. The percentage of Midlothian leavers going into Higher Education over the last 6 years has increased by 3.0%. During the same time period, the national average has increased by 0.6%. Conversely, a lower percentage of Midlothian leavers go onto Further Education (20.4%) than the national average (25.5%). In 2022, 40% of Midlothian's students required additional support, which is an increase of 13% since 2018.

There are 12 GP practices in Midlothian. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [452 third sector organisations operating in Midlothian, including 156 dedicated to social care](#).

[Employment](#) levels for the 12-month period April 2022 to March 2023 at 78.6%, were above the Scottish figure for the same period at 74.7%. This is a contraction on the previous 12-month period from April 2021 to March 2022 when employment levels in Midlothian were 84.9%. The economically active population as of June 2023 is 48,200 (80.3%), above the Scotland rate of 78.6%. In 2022 the average weekly pay in Midlothian was £622.90, less than Scotland (£640.30) and Great Britain (£642.20)

The number of households who applied to Midlothian Council for [homeless assistance](#) during 2023/24 increased by 28% compared to the previous year and reflects an increase of 68% when compared to 2021/22: the proportion of applications from households with dependent children has continued to rise in each of the last two years . The number of people seeking homeless assistance as a result of domestic violence or other violence in the household increased from 64 in 2022/23 to 79 in 2023/24. 39 of those applications were from female households, 24 of which had children.

17,680 people in 2019/20 (19.1% of the Midlothian population), [were prescribed drugs](#) for depression, anxiety and/ or psychosis. This is an increase from 15.2% in 2010/11. The proportion of the Scottish population prescribed has also increased since 2010. For the most deprived SIMD (1) in Midlothian this rises to 23%.

Key reporting in Midlothian

- [Children's Services Plan](#) 2023-26
- [Children's Services Annual Report](#) 2023/24
- [Chief Social Worker Report](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan](#)
- [Child Poverty Action Report](#)
- [Single Midlothian Plan](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Midlothian September 2020](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 219 children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 25 per 1000 children in Midlothian on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 214 children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 11 per 1000 children in Midlothian on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 82 children who entered the 'care system' in Midlothian from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 78 children who entered the 'care system' in Midlothian between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

40 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This is 18.3% of children who were experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024.

56 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This is 26.2% of children who were experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 198 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This is 90.4% of children who were experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 195 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This is 91.1% of children who were experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 87 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This is 39.7% of children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 70 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This is 32.7% of children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020.

70 children were living in foster care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 32.0% of all children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024.

63 children were living in foster care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 29.4% of all children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 21 children living in residential care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This is 9.6% of all children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 19 children living in residential care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This is 8.9% of all children experiencing care in Midlothian on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 112 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Midlothian, 88 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

13.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Midlothian during 2022/23. 14.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Midlothian

during 2022/23. 12.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Midlothian during 2022/23.

4.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Midlothian during 2019/20. 7.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Midlothian during 2019/20. 8.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Midlothian during 2019/20.

320 children were living in temporary accommodation in Midlothian on 30 September 2024.

320 children were living in temporary accommodation in Midlothian on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2573 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Midlothian. This represents an average of 14.1% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4436 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Midlothian. This represents an average of 23.4% of children in Midlothian.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2637 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Midlothian. This represents an average of 15.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1977 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Midlothian. This represents an average of 10.8% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2093 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Midlothian. This represents an average of 12.1% children.

In Midlothian on 31 July 2024, there were 20 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Midlothian on 31 July 2020, there were 36 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 88.3% in Midlothian.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in Midlothian (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Midlothian, 6 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 37 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

75.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Midlothian.

40.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Midlothian.

12.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Midlothian.

10.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Midlothian.

87.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Midlothian. 100.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Midlothian during 2023.

93.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Midlothian. 87.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Midlothian.

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.

157 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 72% of all children who were 'looked after' in Midlothian on that day.

133 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Midlothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 62% of all children who were 'looked after' in Midlothian on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

23 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Midlothian.

42 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Midlothian.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

26.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Midlothian on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

44.4% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Midlothian on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Midlothian between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 0 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.0 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Midlothian between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 10 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 406 households living in temporary accommodation in Midlothian.

On 30 September 2020, there were 437 households living in temporary accommodation in Midlothian.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 656 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Midlothian.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 415 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Midlothian.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by local partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE: Participation and Engagement

Having an influence over the things that matter to me is a normal and easy part of my everyday life.

[Making Choices Keeping Safe Midlothian](#) is designed to support young people with learning disabilities who are exposed to risk whilst navigating the complex world of relationships and social media. It is a series of themed workshops developed and designed around the lived experience of six young people with the aim of supporting them to stay safe whilst promoting their right to healthy relationships and a full life. The project demonstrates the value of partnership working and early help and support by bringing together the different perspectives of the young people themselves, their families and carers, the social work learning disability team, Police Scotland, The Enable Local Area Coordination Service, the community learning disability team and third sector providers to understand the issues and develop a response uniquely designed to meet the needs of the young adults. Initial evaluation, as well as sustained attendance by the participants, has evidenced that the workshops are both popular and effective. The next course for a group of young men is currently underway.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

[There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community.](#)

[Hawthorn Family Learning Centre](#) continues to be the only service of its kind in Midlothian, providing support to children, parents and carers in Midlothian via Early Years placements, groups, outreach, and other supports. The centre works closely with both Children's Services and Education to provide high quality environments, interactions, experiences, and support to families.

Across 2024 and 2025, Hawthorn staff have teamed up with staff from the Family Wellbeing Service (FWS) to deliver monthly supper clubs to families. These events are open to anyone in the community and are advertised widely. Feedback from families and staff attending these events is overwhelmingly positive and every family attending receives a gift prompting family learning to take home.

At the end of 2024, Hawthorn was successful in receiving funds via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support the 2025 Supper Club activities and to

develop the centre's 'Secret Garden'. This work has now taken place, enhancing the available outdoor space, to create fun, secure breakout spaces for children and their families. This has benefitted not only children attending early years placements at Hawthorn, but families involved with other areas of children's services, including those using Hawthorn for family time.

The Family Wellbeing Service (FWS) was established in January 2023 to address the gap in support available to children and their families between universal and statutory services. The team provide support to families across Midlothian with children aged between 0-17 years. The FWS works with families, schools, health and third sector partners to support children and their families to improve low school attendance, and other wellbeing concerns. The team provide holistic support with the aim of supporting families earlier and in partnership to reduce the number of children and young people coming into statutory children's services.

The FWS is aligned with the 10 family support principles outlined in The Promise:

1. Community Based
2. Responsive and Timely
3. Work with Family Assets
4. Empowerment and Agency
5. Flexible
6. Holistic and Relational
7. Therapeutic
8. Non-Stigmatising
9. Patient and Persistent
10. Underpinned by Children's Rights

Key Successes/Impact

- Team Around The Child (TATC) High School was launched in June 2024 in response to requests for a more defined support referral pathway for young people aged 12+.
- To streamline the referral process, all services represented at TATC have agreed to use one single referral form. In addition to streamlining the access families have to relevant services, this has reduced the risk of duplicating processes.
- In 2024 the FWS supported and hosted a parenting group called 'Calm and Collected' alongside colleagues in children's services. This is based on the principles of Non-Violent Resistance (NVR). NVR is a systemic family support approach that focuses on changing how parents address challenging behaviours rather than focus on changing the child's behaviour. Feedback from parents attending the programme has been positive, and actions are now underway to roll-out the Calm and Collected course in 2025.
- In response to increasing numbers of children having additional support needs, the FWS joined up with colleagues from children's services and the third sector to attend development sessions that focused on better understanding and supporting individuals with neurodiversity.
- 19 children were transferred to children's social work from the FWS in 2024. While this is a significant increase from 2023 (where only 3 families were transferred into children's social work), this can be explained in part by the increased use and awareness of the FWS. It is also important to acknowledge the increasing complexity in the presentation with the families being referred to the FWS.
- The team are working with several families where it is recognised that without the scaffolding of support provided by the FWS, these families would require statutory social work support. Additional capacity for social work level assessment and planning has been created in the team with the recruitment of a second senior practitioner to support efforts to keep families together and out of statutory services in line with the practice aspirations of the promise. Additionally, FWS practice standards have been developed outlining the expectations of work, including frequencies of reviews, to ensure that the team continue working with those families most in need and they are no longer needed families are supported to end their contact with the team.
- Of those children/young people referred to the FWS for school attendance in 2024, approximately 65% of children open had improved rates of

school attendance. It is worth noting that where there has been no positive impact on attendance, these children are typically active cases remaining open to the FWS for further intervention.

- As part of efforts to reduce child poverty, children's services fund three income maximisation projects including one dedicated to the FWS. The Project Worker works directly with families to increase household income and reduce debt. There has been an increase in families reached by the projects and financial gains for individual families continue to be significant. Since it began in May 2024, the income maximisation project dedicated to the FWS has generated £69,341.81 income for 28 individual families.
- The FWS are typically working with families from highest areas of SIMD and the team are working to ensure that where entitled, families are accessing key supports such as free school meals and school clothing grant. Work is underway to develop the offer to families not accessing supports via TATC, and those waiting for supports, to ensure income maximisation is more readily available to those in need and barriers to access are reduced.

VOICE: Participation and Engagement

My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on.

Midlothian Champions Board is a forum for care-experienced young people. They consult widely with care experienced young people and meet regularly with senior officers to highlight issues and to inform children's services planning and service delivery. In response to consultation with the Champions Board, Midlothian Leisure Services have introduced a leisure card for care-experienced young people, which offers free or substantially reduced fees for a range of sporting and leisure activities. Midlothian Champions Board have co-designed and decorated the Hearing Centre to create a less clinical and more young-person friendly environment. They are also currently developing a "family firm" approach that offers employment opportunities to care experienced young people.

SCAFFOLDING: Justice

If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing, and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by that contact.

In October 2023, Midlothian Council were successful in a joint bid with Cyrenians, via round two of the Promise Partnership – Keep the Promise Fund. This interagency approach provided support for five care experienced young people and their families, with the aim of delivering a rights-based response to conflict with the law issues. In addition, there will be four interagency partnership training events held twice over the next 12 months with a focus on The Promise, building a greater understanding of neurodiversity, keeping care experienced young people out of the justice system and with a drive to be bold and seek system change that proactively improves outcomes for children and young people in the immediate and long term.

Partners in Midlothian have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Investment into services such as Kinship Care, Family Group Decision making, Income Maximisation has improved support for families.
- A strong youth justice partnership has diverted a number of children and young people away from criminality.
- Since August 2021, 100% of Children and Young People supported [by Midlothian House Project](#) remain engaged. 78% have secured their own permanent property with no tenancy breakdowns. 78% are either in employment, college or training
- Who Cares? Scotland and CAP's advocacy in place.
- Launch of the 'Promise Guarantee' to promote commitment to care experienced young people, ensuring they have an opportunity to gain valuable work experience throughout the council and beyond. Elected Members and Senior Officers have also offered a number of mentoring and 'shadowing' opportunities should young people and any care leavers wish to know more about the respective roles. Human Resources supporting an evaluation of the number of care experienced people applying for jobs within the council.
- New Family wellbeing service established.

- A new attendance strategy has been introduced and it is hoped this will support a direct increase in numbers over the next academic year.
 - Increased number of staff in place to provide additional supports to the Family Group Decision making team.
 - Trauma informed practice development lead in place and steering group established.
 - Strengthened partnership approach to UNCRC, The Promise and Corporate Parenting via GIRFEC planning and Community Planning Partnerships.
 - Partnership approach to Early Identification of Children and Young People in conflict with the law continues to support a reduction in the number of children and young people being referred to SCRA on offence grounds.
 - Recent partnership work with Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, local community youth groups and Community Lifelong Learning, gave children and young people an opportunity to take part in activities which diverted them from taking part in anti-social behaviour on Bonfire night and no offences were recorded in Midlothian.
 - A group of children and young people created their own 'Promise Animation.'
 - Midlothian has welcomed a number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as part of The National Transfer Scheme and have employed a permanent dedicated Children and Families Practitioner in this role.
 - Midlothian has a well-established Promise Delivery group consisting of a multiagency partnership which spans across the whole of Midlothian and beyond. Partners are aware of their commitment and offer regular updates on progress and challenges via the GIRFEC children's rights subgroup.
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North Ayrshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Located in the Southwest of Scotland, North Ayrshire is [a large semi-rural and coastal area](#) on the Firth of Clyde, with the principal town of Irvine and two islands, Arran and Cumbrae. Currently, there are [135,000 people living in North Ayrshire](#). 16.7% of the population are children and young people under 16 (17% national average) making it the 15th largest local authority in Scotland and home to 2.4% of Scotland's population. 16.7% of the population are children and young people under 16 (17% national average). However, compared to the Scottish average, North Ayrshire has a higher proportion of older residents, resulting in [increased service demands](#). It is part of the Ayrshire Police Division which has [14 police stations](#), and is served by [3 hospitals](#) and 27 GP Practices.

North [Ayrshire supports children and young people](#) via 8 Secondary Schools, 1 through-school, 1 ASN school, 49 Primary schools and 4 early years establishments. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [718 third sector organisations operating in North Ayrshire, including 164 dedicated to social care](#).

North Ayrshire offers numerous play opportunities, including 95 play parks, beaches, nature-based activities, and initiatives like the [Active Play programme](#), with some parks having adapted equipment for accessibility. The Active Play Programme is delivered by charity partners Scottish Sport Futures, who use the power of sport and physical activity to engage with young people affected by poverty and trauma across Scotland, [empowering them to be confident, healthy and happy](#).

North Ayrshire has some of the highest rates of poverty and inequality and one of the lowest job densities in Scotland. It is the 5th most [deprived Council area in](#)

[Scotland](#). North Ayrshire currently has the [second highest rates of child poverty in Scotland at 29.2%](#). This means that over 7,000 of children, young people and their families may be struggling to access everyday essentials including food, clothing and transport. The area also experiences significantly higher levels of youth unemployment at 6.4% (youth claimant count), the 2nd highest rate in Scotland and is significantly higher than the Scotland average rate of 4.1%, while 50.4% of children were in working households in North Ayrshire in October 2022 in comparison with Scottish average of 60.9%.

Key reporting in North Ayrshire

- North Ayrshire Partnership Plan (LOIP) 2022-2030 [LOIP 2023](#)
- Child Poverty Action Plan 2023 [North Ayrshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2023](#)
- Child Poverty Progress Report 2023-24 [Child-Poverty-Action-Plan-Progress-Report-2023-24.pdf](#)
- Children's Rights Report 2020-23 [North Ayrshire Children's Rights Report 2020-23](#)
- NA HSCP Strategic Commissioning Plan [nahscp.org/Documents/Strategic-Commissioning-Plan.pdf](#)
- Report of Joint Inspection of services for C&YP at risk of harm [Joint inspection of services for children and young people North Ayrshire June 2022.pdf](#)
- Youth Participation Strategy [youth-participation-strategy](#)
- Education Service Improvement Plan [Education Service Annual Improvement Plan](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 409 children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 30 per 1000 children in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024

(percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 575 children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 23 per 1000 children in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 114 children who entered the 'care system' in North Ayrshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 128 children who entered the 'care system' in North Ayrshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

110 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 26.9% of children who were experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

181 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 31.5% of children who were experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 356 children experiencing care who were living in the community in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 87.0% of children who were experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 519 children experiencing care who were living in the community in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 90.3% of children who were experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 87 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 21.3% of children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 136 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 23.7% of children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

143 children were living in foster care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 35.0% of all children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

194 children were living in foster care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 33.7% of all children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 53 children living in residential care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 13.0% of all children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 56 children living in residential care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 9.7% of all children experiencing care in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 197 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in North Ayrshire, 165 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 7 per 1,000).

10.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in North Ayrshire during 2022/23. 20.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in North Ayrshire during 2022/23. 18.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in North Ayrshire during 2022/23.

10.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in North Ayrshire during 2019/20. 16.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in North Ayrshire during 2019/20. 16.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in North Ayrshire during 2019/20.

85 children were living in temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire on 30 September 2024.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4846 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Ayrshire. This represents an average of 22.7% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 6937 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in North Ayrshire. This represents an average of 27.5% of children in North Ayrshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5335 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Ayrshire. This represents an average of 23.8% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3729 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Ayrshire. This represents an average of 17.5% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4271 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Ayrshire. This represents an average of 19.1% children.

In North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024, there were 44 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020, there were 91 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 84.2% in North Ayrshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 89.0% in North Ayrshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In North Ayrshire, 39 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 105 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

38.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in North Ayrshire.

37.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in North Ayrshire.

15.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in North Ayrshire.

10.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in North Ayrshire.

94.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school

in North Ayrshire. 76.9% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in North Ayrshire during 2023.

79.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in North Ayrshire. 82.6% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in North Ayrshire.

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.

230 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 56% of all children who were 'looked after' in North Ayrshire on that day.

330 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in North Ayrshire on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

90 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in North Ayrshire.

66 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in North Ayrshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

85.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

100.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in North Ayrshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by North Ayrshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 9 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.1 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 279 households living in temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 255 households living in temporary accommodation in North Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 980 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in North Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 849 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in North Ayrshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by local partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE: Participation & Engagement

How are you making sure that my experiences have been sought out, listened to, and acted on?

[North Ayrshire Champions Board](#) have created and launched a Care Experienced App named "CE4U". The app has lots of tips, advice, and information that they believe will help Care Experienced young people throughout their journey and beyond. The app has a little bit about everything from housing support, learning how to cook using recipes, tips on how to look after yourself physically and mentally, travel support as well as key contacts and events happening in the area. North Ayrshire Champions Board used their own experiences to create app, as they often found they didn't know a lot of the information that was out there or they simply didn't know who or what to ask to find it for them.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

How are you making sure that people are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together?

North Ayrshire's Health & Social Care Partnership has worked to enhance the support and services it provides to parents/carers, children and young people. They now offer the following:

- Family Centred Wellbeing Service – created to provide early help and family support.

- Community-Based Short Breaks Service – created to provide short break carers for children aged from birth to 16 years old who reside in the community with birth parents, as well as for children and young people who are live with kinship carers.
- Enhanced Early Years Support Programme – created to see a shift in relationship-based support with identified families from the ante-natal period to a child starting nursery.
-

North Ayrshire supported 314 children, parents and carers through the Rosemount Project which supports families and young people to help families remain together and in their communities. The service is committed to whole family support and, wherever possible, will include siblings, parents/carers and extended family members in the parenting supports and family work that the service facilitates.

The Ayrshire Community Trust developed a [strand of mentoring](#) within the Positive Steps with Partners Project employability project. The project will have volunteer mentors who will support new referrals, supporting them to attend volunteer interviews and placements helping mentees to overcome worries and fears and helping to increase confidence in individual abilities and be more included in their communities.

Scaffolding: Governance

People who support me are all working together to share resources, to jointly make decisions, and to own and fix any problems together

Promise Champions is a staff network of Corporate Parents led by the Corporate Parenting Engagement and Participation Lead with representation across North Ayrshire. The aim is to have at least one person from every service, team, or establishment encouraging sharing of best practice and partnership working.

The Promise Champions staff network has 75 Corporate Parents across North Ayrshire involved (as of March 2025) & continues to grow. Promise Champions are enthusiastic about their roles and have been instrumental in raising awareness of The Promise and Corporate Parenting with their colleagues, partners and wider communities.

As a result of attending the network so far, Promise Champions have:

- Updated knowledge of The Promise and its progression.
- Improved understanding of what it means to be care experienced, the data pertaining to care experienced young people in North Ayrshire, their duties as a Corporate Parent and how to reduce stigma for the care experienced community.
- Increased awareness of local and national opportunities.
- Access to valuable guest speakers, career-long professional learning, and events.
- Peer networking and alliance.
- Opportunities to share their ideas.
- Tailored assistance from the Corporate Parenting Team.

Partners in North Ayrshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Investment in a 'Child Poverty and Cost of Living Fund'
 - In 2024/5, 625 children, from 587 families, claimed a £50 clothing grant for eligible children in Early Years for at a total cost of £31,250 plus administration costs leaving a balance of £78,750 in the Council's Cost of Living support fund.
 - [The Council agreed](#) to continue the £50 clothing grant to all eligible 3- and 4-year-olds in Early Years during the 2025/26 school year, funded through a proportion of the £78,750 residual balance unallocated in the Council's Cost of Living support fund.
- Two additional payments of £100 to approximately 3,300 families across North Ayrshire
- For the 2023/24 service year, an allocation of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding of [£959,000](#) was confirmed. Local community groups and third and independent sector organisations can apply for up to £250,000 of the total allocation to deliver support services to families in North Ayrshire. To improve this application process, a scrutiny panel is being established that will provide robust oversight of the distribution of the funds locally. To date the funding has supported:
 - Scaling up the Family Centred Wellbeing Service
 - Providing therapeutic counselling support for care experienced and vulnerable young people
 - Scaling up support to families in the early years

- Investing in whole system supports for children and young people with neuro-developmental conditions.
 - Develop an integrated approach to early years support and locality modelling around community-based teams. There is an integrated, multi-disciplinary team of nursing, support, and early years social work staff who can provide support to families in their home with a focus on early and preventative help.
 - Partnership with national charity Dads Rock to employ a Dads Support Worker to consider how, within this early years' approach, there can be better consideration of the role of dads and other male caregivers to develop positive attachments and relationships with their children.
 - School based social workers and social work locality teams based within some schools where education, health and social work staff work together leading to enhanced communication and quicker responses to needs.
-

North Lanarkshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

The [2021 mid-year population estimate showed](#) that North Lanarkshire had a population of 341,400 of whom 69,751 were children. This is an increase of 260 people since 2020. It is part of the Lanarkshire Police Division which has [16 police stations](#). There are 51 GP practices in North Lanarkshire and the community is served by [6 hospitals](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), there are [1645 third sector organisations operating in North Lanarkshire, including 527 dedicated to social care](#).

In North Lanarkshire there were [118 primary schools in the published ACEL assessment data for North Lanarkshire](#). Of these, 50 were assessed to have 80% of pupils meeting the required level (average across numeracy, reading, writing and listening and talking) when assessed according to the ACEL standards.

Since [2020 children in North Lanarkshire living in poverty](#) has reduced by 2%, from 25.2% to 23.2%. Department for Works and Pensions figures for Children in Relative Low-Income Families 2020/21 show that 13,966 children live in low-income families across all communities in North Lanarkshire. In November 2022 of 48,835 children and young people, 10,004 (20%) were recorded to be in receipt of free school meals and 11,243 (23%) in receipt of the Clothing Grant.

In 2023/24, 522 children in North Lanarkshire were referred to the Children's Reporter, compared to 511 in 2022/23, 969 in 2013/14 and 2,762 in 2003/4. In 2023/24, 1,400 Children's Hearings were held in North Lanarkshire and 459 children were subject to a Compulsory Supervision order [on 31st March 2023](#).

Overall, the number of children in care in North Lanarkshire has remained stable from 2020-2024. The [Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for 2023/24](#) states that this should be seen in the context of a 20% increase in children

referred to the service over the same period and within this a significant 44% increase in child protection referrals. In addition, the Chief Social Work Officer's Report highlights the higher number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (55 and increasing), having arrived through the National Transfer Scheme or directly from the community.

The report states that the maintenance of a stable position reflects the use of a strengths-based approach, finding solutions for children through Family Group Decision Making and a strategic approach to investment in family support. Use of out of authority foster homes has also reduced, which means more children have remained in North Lanarkshire close to their families and communities.

There has been a [reduction in the overall number of carers](#) in North Lanarkshire, and recruitment has been a high priority. Interest in fostering or adoption has remained static post- Covid and the numbers of potential carers deciding to progress to an assessment has not increased. However, 2023-24 saw an increase in the number of fostering approvals on the previous year. Which was an indicator of the increased focus on recruitment through community-based alternatives. Adoption approvals have also increased, representing the continued increase and enquiries for adoption. This means that most children in need of adoption are able to be matched with adoptive parents North Lanarkshire.

Key reporting in North Lanarkshire

- [North Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership Strategic drivers and plans](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in North Lanarkshire community planning partnership October 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 690 children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 18 per 1000 children in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 832 children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 12 per 1000 children in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 176 children who entered the 'care system' in North Lanarkshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 155 children who entered the 'care system' in North Lanarkshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

196 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 28.4% of children who were experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

286 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 34.4% of children who were experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 655 children experiencing care who were living in the community in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 94.9% of children who were experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 795 children experiencing care who were living in the community in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 95.6% of children who were experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 320 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 46.4% of children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 326 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 39.2% of children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

135 children were living in foster care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 19.6% of all children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

183 children were living in foster care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 22.0% of all children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 35 children living in residential care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 5.1% of all children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 35 children living in residential care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 4.2% of all children experiencing care in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 257 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in North Lanarkshire, 208 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

14.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in North Lanarkshire during 2022/23. 20.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in North

Lanarkshire during 2022/23. 16.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in North Lanarkshire during 2022/23.

13.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in North Lanarkshire during 2019/20. 17.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in North Lanarkshire during 2019/20. 14.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in North Lanarkshire during 2019/20.

275 children were living in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire on 30 September 2024.

210 children were living in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 11853 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 19.7% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 18416 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in North Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 26.1% of children in North Lanarkshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 13343 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 21.4% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 9275 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in North Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 15.4% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 10843 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in North Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 17.4% children.

In North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024, there were 33 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020, there were 35 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 78.6% in North Lanarkshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 83.0% in North Lanarkshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In North Lanarkshire, 15 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 27 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

37.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in North Lanarkshire.

35.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in North Lanarkshire.

20.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in North Lanarkshire.

17.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in North Lanarkshire.

75.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in North Lanarkshire. 62.3% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in North Lanarkshire during 2023.

70.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in North Lanarkshire. 70.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in North Lanarkshire.

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.

455 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 66% of all children who were 'looked after' in North Lanarkshire on that day.

509 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 61% of all children who were 'looked after' in North Lanarkshire on that day.

6 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in North Lanarkshire.
0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in North Lanarkshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

216 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in North Lanarkshire.
216 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in North Lanarkshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

45.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

20.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in North Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by North Lanarkshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 8 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.3 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by North Lanarkshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 15 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 670 households living in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 589 households living in temporary accommodation in North Lanarkshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 1981 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in North Lanarkshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 1544 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in North Lanarkshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE – Documenting Decisions

The words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed

[My views and experiences, and the views and experiences of people who are important in my life are recorded, included and acted on in a meaningful way](#)

In August 2021, a working group was set up to explore how North Lanarkshire could improve the language used to describe children, families and care experienced adults. Together with the help of people with lived experience of care of all ages from 'Crafty Foxes', 'Mad Middles' and 'TNT- Today Not Tomorrow', North Lanarkshire [prepared a language guide](#). This includes language that needs to be eradicated, and suggestions of alternative, more appropriate, language.

A video and guidance for managers and practitioners across the Children's Services Partnership has been produced. Awareness raising sessions by the Promise Development Workers have taken place with managers and practitioners.

Further developments include a focus on how North Lanarkshire capture memories for care experienced children and young people which will accompany them throughout their care journey and beyond. Photographs, letters, and memory boxes are now being used and developed in partnership with young people.

Alongside the work on language there has been an overhaul of Subject Access Requests and The Promise team were involved in designing and delivering training to staff to ensure that a baseline standard is set. The importance of person-centred practice when redacting a case file ensures that the process is meaningful, and trauma informed. It also eradicates ambiguity and enhances the offer for those individuals who choose to access their records.

FAMILY- Universal and Intensive Family Support

[I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life](#)

[There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community](#)

[People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together](#)

[When plans are made to help me, those plans include my whole family—taking account of any support they need too, and how we live our life together](#)

North Lanarkshire's allocation for the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for 2024/25 and 2025/26 is £2.687m.

[North Lanarkshire's Intensive Social Work Services Team](#) delivers whole family support seven days a week where families need a high level of support to

prevent a child or young person entering care or to sustain homes where children live. The service uses a range of help and support, including structured parenting programmes and thematic help and support.

The team works with around 450 children, young people and their families at any given time. Over 2023-24 52% of the children and young people supported were living at home with their family; 20% were supported in a residential, foster or a kinship care home; 17% of the young people supported were care experienced individual who needed a high level of emotional and practical support and 11% were young people in the community subject to Structured Deferred Sentence or Diversion from Prosecution or were supported through Youth Bridges whilst detained in Polmont YOI for a period and through their transition back to the community.

In recognition of the additional challenges experienced by families over the school holiday periods and to offer positive opportunities during the Easter and summer holidays, the service delivered individual support to families and daily structured activities in the local community for younger children, attracting up to 40 participants and family-based day trips with around 45 participants.

CARE- Decision Making/VOICE- Listening

I am nurtured and supported to explore and develop my identity and people who support me think about what my identity could mean for the help I might need at different times and places in my life

My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on

I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that affect me

The [Family Group Decision Making \(FGDM\)](#) and [Lifelong Links Service](#) are an integral part of Intensive Services as part of North Lanarkshire's commitment to build on family assets, promote and maintain important relationships.

FGDM in North Lanarkshire is committed to the FGDM National Standards for Scotland, with the following key principles:

- FGDM is strength-based, future-focused and blame-free.
- The focus is on the voice and safety of children and young people.
- FGDM recognises that families are the experts in their own lives.
- The FGDM Coordinator should always be independent of any other professional involvement with the family.
- FGDM recognises the child's and families right to be involved in their future planning.
- Private family time is an essential element of Family Group Meeting.

Referrals to FGDM and Lifelong Links have remained consistent over the past two years. Of the referrals received for FGDM during 2023-24, 70 were successfully progressed to family meetings where a family plan was devised, and 28 referrals progressed to a significant piece of work being concluded with the family without a family meeting.

The Lifelong Links service aims to support care experienced children and young people to maintain or enhance a natural network of support. A trained Lifelong Links coordinator engages with the young person to identify people who are important to them and seeks ways to establish or maintain connections with important people, which are often lost in the process of their care journey. Up until the end of March 2024, four connections and 24 lifelong connections have been established with young people.

CARE – Relationships

I am given support to keep in touch, and have meaningful interaction with, any brothers and sisters I don't live with

I am given support to keep in touch with, and have meaningful interaction with, people who matter to me

The Promise team helped to develop a revised framework for assessing family time with the voice of children and parents central to how North Lanarkshire can be more creative in their approach, while keeping children safe.

North Lanarkshire has created a specific assessment for the separation of brothers and sisters and if advocating for separation this must be approved by the Chief Social Work Officer. The Promise team has also influenced the creation of trauma informed spaces for family time to take place to ensure this is as natural and comfortable as possible for children, young people and their families.¹

CARE – Where Children Live

People who support me are working together to make sure that no matter where my family and I are, we'll always get the same high quality help and support

People who support me are working together to make sure that if I ever need to live away from home, I'll still be close by, and/ or in a place that I have meaningful connections with

Fostering allowances have been increased and backdated (in line with the Scottish Recommended Allowance) and fees have been uplifted by 10%. [Kinship](#)

¹ Update on Progress: North Lanarkshire, 2023. Shared with The Promise Scotland in response to the call for evidence on Plan 24-30

[allowances](#) have also been increased and backdated (in line with the Scottish Recommended Allowance).

There continues to be an increase in children living with kinship carers in North Lanarkshire and there is therefore higher demand for [support for kinship carers from the kinship team](#). Over the last year, support for kinship carers has developed and over and above the allowances paid, the service provided direct support to 190 kinship carers. Kinship support groups also took place on a fortnightly basis across North Lanarkshire and individual therapeutic and groupwork sessions were introduced.

The Virtual School has also prioritised support to kinship families including in school holiday periods.

CARE – Moving On

*[I have been properly prepared for and am supporting with living independently](#)
[I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it at different points in my life](#)*

The [Care Experienced Young Persons Operations Group](#) comprises a wide range of partners and care experienced young people. A Housing Operations subgroup looks at the housing needs, resources to support preparation and sustainability and matching of young people to available properties.

Coordinated support has contributed to improvements in care experienced young people sustaining tenancies, with over 100 young people sustaining their tenancy long term. This was supported by partnership working with housing and the Tackling Poverty Team to quickly identify any debt and budget management issues that may have impacted on young people sustaining a tenancy and ensure their rights to financial support were in place.

A dedicated and coproduced counselling service, the [Exchange Counselling Project](#), was established and now operates from North Lanarkshire's Aftercare Hub 5 days a week as well as reaching out to young people as required. In 2023-24, the service worked intensively with 42 young people, with 78% of young people reporting improved wellbeing on finishing counselling.

Following a review of the unmet health needs of care experienced young people and adults, NHS Lanarkshire agreed funding for two Throughcare and Aftercare Nursing posts to deliver front line health support to this group and undertake an analysis of the challenges and barriers faced by care experienced young people accessing adult services. An 'aftercare' website was developed in partnership with a group of care experienced young people and adults. ['Aftercare' North Lanarkshire](#) went live in March 2024.

SCAFFOLDING - Health

I feel important and loved, and I have someone I trust to ask for help if I need it

My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different

A review of the process for health needs assessments for care experienced children and young people has been undertaken. Included in the review was the development of an information leaflet for children, young people and their parents outlining the importance of the health needs assessment and highlighting the benefits and resource that can be provided to support healthy development. The mental health and wellbeing need of care experienced children and young people and others is part of a suite of developments being taken forward by through Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Services Framework. Developments include 'Let's Introduce Anxiety Management' and 'Living Life to the Full' programmes as well as the expansion of capacity for out-of-hours support offered through social work intensive service.

PEOPLE – Supporting the Workforce

People who help me are getting all the support, time and resources they need as individuals, to be able to do a good job.

North Lanarkshire's promise development workers have delivered several workshops to staff across the partnership to enable them to understand their role in keeping the promise in North Lanarkshire. They have delivered more specific workshops on thematic issues, processes and how to progress both The Promise and Plan 21-24. They have worked in partnership with health colleagues to create a 7-minute briefing for staff and are currently progressing more in-depth training on The Promise with Health Improvement staff. The team have participated in the creation of a Theory of change which will ensure North Lanarkshire's young people receive services which are person centred and trauma informed. The team have influenced colleagues in Procurement who now recognise the need for collaboration not just with the care experienced population but with the diverse communities public servants, seek to serve. Individually the team have developed relationships with practitioners and provided support and guidance when and where necessary.

PEOPLE- Recruitment and Retention

People who help me are getting all the support, time and resources they need as individuals, to be able to do a good job.

[North Lanarkshire's recruitment strategy group developed](#) an action plan to widen recruitment opportunities focussing on digital promotion and increased presence within local communities. This included recruitment stands within hospitals and local community events.

As well as recruitment, [retention of existing carers](#) has been a priority for the Children's Carers Service. The training and support programme for carers has been enhanced to include adopters and kinship carers. Early indications are this has been successful in increasing the numbers of participants and feedback has been positive about the added value to carers understanding of each other's roles and the needs of the children within their care. Work has also been undertaken to support carer wellbeing.

SCAFFOLDING- Education

[I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education](#)

[I have every support I need to stay in school and I'm not excluded](#)

The [Virtual School in North Lanarkshire](#) has had a positive impact on meeting the needs of care experienced children and young people. The Virtual School has continued to develop vocational opportunities with a wide range of partners.

Ongoing partnership work across North Lanarkshire's schools and wider services to support care experienced learners and reduce school exclusions continues to move forward positively with significant improvements recorded. Over the past five school sessions, exclusions of care experienced learners have reduced overall by 93% (158 to 11), learning days lost reduced by 93.5% (339.5 to 22) and the number of care experienced learners receiving an exclusion reduced by 88% (92 to 11). This is an area of work North Lanarkshire continues to prioritize in line with the broader commitment to fulfilling the ambitions of The Promise

Forest School and Outdoor Learning has been a successful approach in engaging a number of children and young people in learning packages, tailored to meet individual needs. Engagement and attendance in these activities continues to be high.

Partners in North Lanarkshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The number of children living with North Lanarkshire foster carers has increased despite a reduction in carer numbers which is due to the carers team working with, and supporting, carers to look after brothers and sisters to keep them together in North Lanarkshire. Core and temporary funds have been used to invest in family support for kinship carers based on feedback from kinship carer groups.

- Since the publication of The Promise, the number of care experienced young people and adults (“care leavers”) who have been supported has more than doubled (over 250). The team supported over 100 care leavers in 2022/23. The Impact Report notes the involvement and influence of Promise Development workers in the design of services for care experienced young people and adults. Additionally, members of the Champs Board worked with the procurement team to commission a bespoke counselling service for care experienced young people 16+ which is now supporting over 40 young people. This service works flexibly from the hub.
- Supporting families and reducing stigma through a cash first approach. See for example independent evaluation [by CELCIS- The Power Of Money](#)
- North Lanarkshire continues to successfully recruit Social Workers, including attracting students who have had positive placement experiences with the authority. This has impacted on experience levels and stability at the frontline. In Education and Families 48 external appointments were made to the role of social worker in 22/23, 38 of whom were newly qualified.
- North Lanarkshire’s focus is building on the investments that have been made in relational practices to provide the scaffolding for workers to support families, focusing on their strengths and on loving relationships. There is clear commitment to continue with the implementation, or embedding, of 3 related approaches, which reinforce the core values of The Promise and the Children’s Services Partnership. These are:
 - Signs of Safety: Begin an 18-month implementation of Signs of Safety which will provide staff with an approach to family support and child protection that prioritises family and individual strengths, periods of safety and good care that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child’s and family’s situation.
 - Contextual Safeguarding: Build on initial success of Contextual Safeguarding in moving away from stigmatising or criminalising young people to recognising and responding to the harms young people face beyond the family.
 - Safe and Together: Embed this approach to domestic abuse which prioritises partnering with the survivor parent and keeping children with their survivor parent. There is also focus on the upscaling and coproducing of the universal offer of whole family support across 7 days a week with Whole Family Wellbeing Fund monies. Alongside this, there is a review of core funded family support functions across the whole council as part of the Programme of Work to

create a sustainable, integrated and effective family support service offer that is available locally to families.

Orkney

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Orkney is one of 32 local authorities in Scotland and is situated off the north coast of Scotland. [Orkney is made up of more than 70 islands and skerries, with around 19 of these being lived on depending on the time of the year.](#)

[The population of Orkney as of 30th June 2022 was 22,020 people.](#) Orkney has seen a 3% growth in population in comparison to a decreasing population in other areas of Scotland's islands, although the population is predicted to decrease over the next ten years.

[Orkney's employment rate for those aged 16-64 is 88%,](#) compared to the Scottish average of 75.6%.

However, [Orkney is experiencing a workforce crisis particularly in Children and Families Social Work teams.](#) Orkney acknowledges that working in a smaller system presents opportunities such as quick and effective new service delivery models being embedded. However, it presents challenges and does mean a small number of Lead Officers are delivering a range of diverse and complex changes in a complex legislative and policy environment, whilst ensuring they can meet their statutory duties.

The needs of those living in Orkney are distinct and unique in comparison to mainland local authority areas in Scotland. While there are many positive aspects of living in Scotland's islands, communities can face specific challenges due to their [geographical location, higher living costs, reliance on ferries and distances from services.](#) [Orkney Council has been actively lobbying the Scottish Government to extend the current Young Persons' Free Bus Scheme to include free ferry fares,](#) and on the 1st of April 2025 the Government announced there would be free inter-island ferry travel for all those aged under 22.

Communities in Orkney are [served by 22 nurseries, 21 primary schools and 5 secondary schools](#). There are 15 GP practices in Orkney and [1 hospital](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [709 third sector organisations operating in Orkney, including 160 dedicated to social care](#). It is part of the Highland and Islands Police Division which has [35 police stations](#).

[Data from 2021-22 shows that 16% of children in Orkney were living in relative poverty, lower than the Scottish figure of 23%, and 13.2% were living in absolute poverty](#). The characteristics of Island life such as rurality, weather, older housing stock and lack of mains gas can include a higher cost of living, and as such fuel poverty is causing a significant cause of hardship. [2023 data shows that 31% of Orkney households were living in fuel poverty](#), compared with a Scottish average of 24%.

Key reporting in Orkney

- [Orkney's Good Parenting Plan 2020-2025](#)
- [Orkney Children's Services Plan](#)
- [Orkney Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023-2026](#)
- [Orkney Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022-23](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer's Report 2022/23](#)
- [Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022 to 2026](#)
- [Second progress review following a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Orkney May 2022](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 25 children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 16 per 1000 children in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024

(percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 31 children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 8 per 1000 children in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 6 children who entered the 'care system' in Orkney Islands from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 11 children who entered the 'care system' in Orkney Islands between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

6 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 24.0% of children who were experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024.

8 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 25.8% of children who were experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 16 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 64.0% of children who were experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024.

There were 24 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 77.4% of children who were experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 3 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 12.0% of children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024.

There were 6 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 19.4% of children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020.

7 children were living in foster care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This represents 28.0% of all children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024.

10 children were living in foster care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This represents 32.3% of all children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 9 children living in residential care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 36.0% of all children experiencing care in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 17 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Orkney Islands, 12 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

9.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Orkney Islands during 2022/23. 12.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Orkney Islands during 2022/23. 11.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Orkney Islands during 2022/23.

11.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Orkney Islands during 2019/20. 11.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Orkney Islands during 2019/20. 18.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Orkney Islands during 2019/20.

50 children were living in temporary accommodation in Orkney Islands on 30 September 2024.

15 children were living in temporary accommodation in Orkney Islands on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 444 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Orkney Islands. This represents an average of 12.7% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 855 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Orkney Islands. This represents an average of 22.1% of children in Orkney Islands.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 512 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Orkney Islands. This represents an average of 14.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 356 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Orkney Islands. This represents an average of 10.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 428 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Orkney Islands. This represents an average of 12.2% children.

In Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024, there were 0 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020, there were 6 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 85.9% in Orkney Islands.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 88.0% in Orkney Islands (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

66.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Orkney Islands.

100.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Orkney Islands.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Orkney Islands.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Orkney Islands.

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.

10 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. This represents 40% of all children who were 'looked after' in Orkney Islands on that day.

16 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020. This represents 52% of all children who were 'looked after' in Orkney Islands on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Orkney Islands.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

11 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Orkney Islands.

12 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Orkney Islands.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

53.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

64.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Orkney Islands on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Orkney Islands between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 0 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.0 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Orkney Islands between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 63 households living in temporary accommodation in Orkney Islands.

On 30 September 2020, there were 63 households living in temporary accommodation in Orkney Islands.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 103 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Orkney Islands.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 101 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Orkney Islands.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents examples of and snapshots from local areas of activity underway, aimed at keeping the promise.

Care

I can have fun – and do things I enjoy – with the people who matter to me.

Blide Trust Young Person's Project

In June 2022 the project was established to work alongside care experienced young people aged 16-25 to overcome hurdles and access opportunities. Since its inception, the project has expanded to all young people aged 16-30. There is a weekly drop-in where the group prepare and share a meal and do activities such as beach trips and creating mood boards. Linking in with the Community Learning and Development Team has resulted in young people achieving successes such as passing driving theory tests and gaining employment.

Family

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life.

Increasing access to support and opportunities for priority groups

Orkney Council deliver life skills courses and free learning opportunities to help those most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. One to one and group work support has been delivered, including Mybnk training, Confidence to Cook, budget and finance classes, digital skills, and outreach courses with the University of Highlands and Islands Orkney with the aim of ensuring positive outcomes.

Skills and employability support for parents

One of the most significant barriers to entering employment identified in Orkney is the lack of affordable childcare. The CLD Employability team have worked in partnership with others to deliver a childminding course for local parents. Six

individuals completed this and are now registered childminders. This programme was funded through 'No One Left Behind'.

Partners in Orkney have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The number of CAMHS practitioners on Orkney has been expanded from two to 14 since 2022. As a result, since July 2023, NHS Orkney has consistently met the maximum 100% of children and young people commencing their treatment within 18 weeks of referral to CAMHS. This is a substantial increase from June 2023, when 20.5% of patients on the wait list had waited 19 – 35 weeks, and 2.6% had waited 36 – 52 weeks.
 - [The Orkney Emotional Wellbeing Service](#), a partnership project led by Action for Children, continues to develop and support up to 40, eight- to 18-year-olds annually. The charity has a Family Practitioner who focuses on children, young people and families affected by alcohol or drug use and is jointly funded by Action for Children and the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership. The Service someone with alcohol and substance misuse issues, who was taking risks that adversely affected not only themselves, but their dependents, and who has, through Teen Triple P and Decider Skills work, lowered their risk taking behaviour, knows they have better mental health support and, as a parent, feels more equipped to manage situations at home.
 - Prioritise early financial support for families at risk, to avert crisis and family breakdown
 - Engagement in the Northern Promise Collaborative, facilitated by The Promise Scotland. The Collaborative has developed into a strong network for leaders of work to keep the promise across the North and East of Scotland. It has built links between areas to:
 - share innovative approaches
 - support work to engage schools across the region in the new [Keeping The Promise Award Programme](#).
-

Perth and Kinross

Local Context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[Perth and Kinross](#) is a geographically extensive but sparsely populated area. It covers over 5,286 km² with a population density of just 28.5 people per km² which is significantly below the Scottish average of 69.8. According to the [National Records of Scotland](#) (2022), the population of Perth and Kinross is estimated at 151,120. The proportion of residents aged 65 and over is 24.7% which is significantly higher than the Scottish average of 20.1%. Just over 16% of residents of Perth and Kinross are aged under 16 which is in line with the 16.9% of the Scottish population in this age group. Children under 15 make up 14.7% slightly below the national average of 15.3% ([Corporate Plan 22-23 to 27-28](#)).

Perth and Kinross supports children and young people via [12 secondary schools and 71 primary schools](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1672 third sector organisations operating in Perth and Kinross, including 404 dedicated to social care](#). There are 28 GP practices in Perth and Kinross and it is served by [6 hospitals](#). It is part of Tayside Police Division which has [19 police stations](#).

Despite Perth and Kinross having high levels of socioeconomic affluence compared to the national average ([Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) 2020](#)), local areas such as North Muirton and Letham are within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland ([Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) 2020](#)). Regional inequalities are compounded in rural parts of the region by issues related to transport and access to services.

The Perth and Kinross [Local Child Poverty Action Report 22 - 23](#) and Action Plan 2023/24 identifies areas with significant levels of child poverty - Blairgowrie East, Hillyland, Tulloch, Inveralmond, Letham, and Muirton.

The Perth and Kinross [Corporate Plan 22-23 to 27-28](#) outlines the vision of The Promise; that all children and young people grow up safe, respected, and able to realise their full potential. The plan aims to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning, reduce the poverty-related attainment gap, and ensure that care experienced children and young people with additional support needs achieve health, wellbeing and education outcomes comparable with their peers.

While overall attainment and pupils meeting developmental and educational milestones is high across Perth and Kinross, when this is broken down to look at factors such as children living in poverty there is a clear gap between the outcomes for children from a deprived background and those from more affluent households. The gap has narrowed in recent years; however, reducing the poverty-related attainment gap remains a priority for Perth and Kinross ([Corporate Plan 22-23 to 27-28](#)).

The Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) operates across the region, covering Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Angus. The leadership of TRIC is chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Families Services at Dundee City Council. [The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People, and Families \(2023 - 2026\)](#) is developed and monitored through TRIC. This plan complements all activities related to child and family wellbeing across the three local authority areas. It outlines five priority areas:

1. Our children will have the best start in life.
2. Our children, young people, and their families will achieve and make positive contributions to communities.
3. Our children and young people will enjoy good physical and mental health.
4. Our children and young people will have their rights protected and their voices heard.
5. Our children and young people will be safe and loved.

The Tayside Plan also includes the contribution of NHS Tayside who have developed [Our Promise to Tayside's Care Experienced Children, Young People, and Care Leavers](#) for Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and Angus. NHS Tayside's Child Health Commissioner oversees this plan.

Key reporting in Perth and Kinross

- [NHS Tayside Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-2024 Our Promise to Tayside's Care Experienced Children, Young People, and Care Leavers](#)
- [The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People, and Families \(2023 - 2026\)](#)

- [Perth and Kinross Our Promise to You Corporate Parenting Plan 21 - 24](#)
- [Perth and Kinross CPP Local Child Poverty Action Plan 23/24](#)
- [Perth and Kinross Corporate Plan 22-23 to 27-28](#)

The most recent data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 247 children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 285 children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 10 per 1000 children in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 65 children who entered the 'care system' in Perth and Kinross from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 95 children who entered the 'care system' in Perth and Kinross between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

37 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This is 15.0% of children who were experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024.

60 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This is 21.1% of children who were experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020.

There were 234 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This is 94.7% of children who were experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024.

There were 273 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This is 95.8% of children who were experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020.

There were 79 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This is 32.0% of children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024.

There were 90 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This is 31.6% of children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020.

96 children were living in foster care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This represents 38.9% of all children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024.

112 children were living in foster care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This represents 39.3% of all children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020.

There were 13 children living in residential care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This is 5.3% of all children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024.

There were 12 children living in residential care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This is 4.2% of all children experiencing care in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 83 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Perth and Kinross, 76 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

14.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Perth and Kinross during 2022/23. 17.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Perth and Kinross during 2022/23. 14.2% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Perth and Kinross during 2022/23.

13.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Perth and Kinross during 2019/20. 15.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Perth and Kinross during 2019/20. 17.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Perth and Kinross during 2019/20.

10 children were living in temporary accommodation in Perth and Kinross on 30 September 2024.

15 children were living in temporary accommodation in Perth and Kinross on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3362 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Perth and Kinross. This represents an average of 14.0% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 5807 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Perth and Kinross. This represents an average of 22.0% of children in Perth and Kinross.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3783 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Perth and Kinross. This represents an average of 15.8% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2621 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Perth and Kinross. This represents an average of 11.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3082 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Perth and Kinross. This represents an average of 12.9% children.

In Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024, there were 29 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020, there were 58 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 86.8% in Perth and Kinross.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 89.0% in Perth and Kinross (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Perth and Kinross, 11 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 49 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

33.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Perth and Kinross.

56.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Perth and Kinross.

13.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Perth and Kinross.

13.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Perth and Kinross.

80.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Perth and Kinross. 66.7% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Perth and Kinross during 2023.

80.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Perth and Kinross. 89.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Perth and Kinross.

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.

175 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. This represents 71% of all children who were 'looked after' in Perth and Kinross on that day.

202 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020. This represents 71% of all children who were 'looked after' in Perth and Kinross on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Perth and Kinross.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

42 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Perth and Kinross.
28 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Perth and Kinross.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

63.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

44.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Perth and Kinross on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Perth and Kinross between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 5 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.6 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Perth and Kinross between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 11 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 59 households living in temporary accommodation in Perth and Kinross.

On 30 September 2020, there were 66 households living in temporary accommodation in Perth and Kinross.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 737 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Perth and Kinross.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 640 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Perth and Kinross.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Universal family support

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us?

Perth and Kinross has [a wide range of services to support families](#) so that children can remain within their birth or extended families wherever possible. The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has supported the continuation of early help services which provide support to families out of office hours in their own homes. A Whole Family Wellbeing mapping exercise was undertaken by the area in 2023 to guide further investment in services within areas of the city in greatest need and which has resulted in increased capacity for Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

FAMILY: Intensive Family Support

My family members can get therapeutic support to improve their wellbeing, so that they are better supported to manage if they are having any problems.

The [REACH programme](#) (Resilient, Engaged, Achieving, Confident, and Healthy) is an intensive, multidisciplinary, 24/7 family support service that aims to help families with children and young people who are at greatest risk of entering the so-called care system. The programme provides intensive, tailored, wraparound support to reduce the risk of family breakdown.

CARE: Relationships

Where it is safe to do so, I can live with my brother(s) (and) sister(s).

A partnership between Perth and Kinross Council Social Work and Housing has been established to ensure that brothers and sisters can remain together when entering care. In preparation for independent living, tenancy packages have been developed specifically for care-experienced young people. These packages include essential household items and practical support to help young people set up and sustain their first homes.

The [Lifelong Links](#) program, delivered through the CREST service, aims to help maintain family networks and sibling relationships. Perth and Kinross investment in Lifelong Links has supported children and young people who are living apart from their family to learn their story and become re-connected to their family.

Perth and Kinross have funded [Grandmentors](#), delivered by Volunteering Matters. This initiative connects care-experienced young people with older experienced mentors who offer practical help, guidance, and emotional support to support young people into adulthood. The mentors help young people navigate the transition to independence into adulthood, by guiding them through life skills such as managing finances, accessing employment, education and training, and supporting their health and wellbeing.

VOICE: Documenting decisions

[The words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed.](#)

Trauma-informed training has been provided to the workforce. This includes the [Easy Read](#) project which aimed to ensure that professional language in social work reports is accessible and understandable for parents, children, and young people. The programme has trained 50 staff in Services for Children, Young People & Families to have access to support and resources on a digital platform to enable them to provide easy read information for the families they support. The work has resulted in the development of the language used in assessments and recordings of:

- Child Protection Case Conferences
- Child's Plans
- Family Time
- Kinship Assessment
- Readmission to School
- Safety Plans
- Working Agreements
- Young Person's Planning Meetings
- Discussion Records

Partners in Perth and Kinross have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Delivered through the [CREST service](#), FGDM has been well-established in Perth prior to the recommendations from the Children's Hearing Working Group. Family Group Decision Making has been extended across Perth and Kinross since 2021 to promote family-wide engagement in child-centred planning and decision-making.
- Local place-based services have also been developed in line with the principles of family support. [Families Empowering Communities \(FEC\)](#) offers holistic early help and prevention support to families living in Letham, Blairgowrie, Bertha Park, Muirton, and Crieff. The team use a community empowerment approach to design support which meets their needs. The project works with families who find it hard to engage with universal services.
- The [Love Letham](#) Project is collaboration between the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland and Perth and Kinross Council. The project involves children, young people, families, and decision-makers in co-creating a shared vision for children's wellbeing. A dedicated Safer Communities Warden has been appointed for Perth City North, and a new Locality Group is being established in Letham to implement the community's recommendations.
- Care experienced young people have influenced practice and have given direction to policy. They have met with elected members and senior managers to give their views and challenge the support they are offered. This has had a positive impact on the deployment of resources, policy direction and awareness of the needs of the care experienced population.
- A multi-agency operational delivery group which works to implement '[Our Promise to You](#)'. One of the outcomes of this group has been that all care experienced young people are given priority points for housing. Priority is also given to kinship carers who require larger properties or support for alterations to current accommodation to care for a child or young person. This has made numerous kinship arrangements a possibility.
- The education service has a focus on care experienced children and young people and in November 2023 reported that no care experienced child or young person was excluded.
- To support young people who have come into conflict with the law, a bail supervision service has been developed in partnership with Criminal Justice and aims to provide confidence in alternatives to custody. The Court has gained confidence in this service, leading to its expansion.

- Training in Decider Skills for partners and staff. This training simplifies complex Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy principles into user-friendly, memorable, and effective skills that can be shared with children and young people. These skills teach children and young people to recognise their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, enabling them to monitor and manage their own emotions and mental health.
 - In each of the Local Authority Secondary Schools there are groups specific to the care experienced young people who attend that school. The way in which this support is delivered is directed by the young people but allows for an identified person as their champion should there be anything that they need support about.
-

Renfrewshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Renfrewshire is one of 32 local authority areas in Scotland. It is situated in the West of Scotland and is the ninth largest council area. [As of June 2023, Renfrewshire had an estimated population of 186,540, an increase of 1.2% from the year previous](#), with 16.2% of the population being under the age of 16. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.8%. [Communities in Renfrewshire are served by 38 early years centres, 50 primary schools, 11 secondary schools](#) and 2 additional support needs schools. Paisley is also home to The University of the West of Scotland. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [852 third sector organisations operating in Renfrewshire, including 244 dedicated to social care](#). There are 31 GP practices in Renfrewshire and it is served by [1 hospital](#). It is part of the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Police Division which has [6 police stations](#).

[As of 2023, 76% of those aged 16-64 were in employment, which was an increase compared to the previous year.](#) This is in comparison to a 74.7% employment rate across Scotland. [As of March 2024, 3.1% of people aged 16-64 were claiming unemployment-related benefits, which was a slight decrease compared with the year before.](#) The proportion of young people (aged 18-21) claiming out of work benefits remains higher than for any other age group at 4.7% (355 people). [The Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership](#) continue to plan and co-commission local employability services to help residents make a successful transition towards employment and reduce unemployment in the area. Also, there has been an increase in the number of accredited living wage employers in Renfrewshire to 92 in 2024 from 85 in 2022/23.

As highlighted in [Renfrewshire's Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028](#), in 2021, 179,940 people lived in Renfrewshire across 87,910 households. By 2028, the

number of households is expected to increase to around 90,601. In 2022-23, the number of homeless applicants in Renfrewshire was 935, the highest in a number of years, which the Council attribute to the cost-of-living crisis and Covid-19 pressures. The Renfrewshire housing need and demand study identified that there is a considerable demand for social sector homes and more affordable market purchase opportunities, with statistics showing there are 6.35 applicants for every available Council tenancy.

[Data from 2022/23 shows that 6,068 \(20.4%\) children in Renfrewshire were living in families who have a relative low income \(before housing costs\), which is an increase of 108 children compared to the previous year. This is in comparison to a rate of 21.3% across Scotland.](#) Not all wards in Renfrewshire saw rises in the proportion of children in low-income households, with half of its wards seeing a reduction. However, there continues to be particularly high proportions of children in low-income households in Paisley North-West, Renfrew South, and Gallowhill wards. [As of March 2023, there were 10,640 applications for the Scottish Child Payment in Renfrewshire, with 8,755 of those being authorised.](#)

Key reporting in Renfrewshire

- [Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Keeping The Promise in Renfrewshire 2025](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer Report 2022-23](#)
- [Children's Services: Service Improvement Plan 2023-26](#)
- [Local Child Poverty Action Report Renfrewshire 2023/24](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Renfrewshire community planning partnership October 2024](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 610 children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 31 per 1000 children in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 642 children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 19 per 1000 children in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 117 children who entered the 'care system' in Renfrewshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 121 children who entered the 'care system' in Renfrewshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

154 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 25.2% of children who were experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

197 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 30.7% of children who were experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 566 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 92.8% of children who were experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 606 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 94.4% of children who were experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 261 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 42.8% of children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 212 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 33.0% of children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

136 children were living in foster care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 22.3% of all children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

185 children were living in foster care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 28.8% of all children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 44 children living in residential care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This is 7.2% of all children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 36 children living in residential care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This is 5.6% of all children experiencing care in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 200 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Renfrewshire , 120 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

6.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Renfrewshire during 2022/23. 21.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in

Renfrewshire during 2022/23. 22.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Renfrewshire during 2022/23.

4.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Renfrewshire during 2019/20. 19.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Renfrewshire during 2019/20. 21.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Renfrewshire during 2019/20.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in Renfrewshire on 30 September 2024.

40 children were living in temporary accommodation in Renfrewshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4757 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 15.9% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 7014 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 22.6% of children in Renfrewshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 5123 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 17.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 3679 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 12.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4055 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in Renfrewshire. This represents an average of 13.5% children.

In Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024, there were 42 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020, there were 30 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 82.2% in Renfrewshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in Renfrewshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Renfrewshire , 88 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 164 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

43.5% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Renfrewshire.

47.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Renfrewshire.

11.6% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Renfrewshire.

10.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Renfrewshire.

87.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Renfrewshire. 68.1% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Renfrewshire during 2023.

86.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Renfrewshire. 71.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Renfrewshire.

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.

397 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 65% of all children who were 'looked after' in Renfrewshire on that day.

397 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 62% of all children who were 'looked after' in Renfrewshire on that day.

8 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Renfrewshire.

9 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Renfrewshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

76 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Renfrewshire.

85 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Renfrewshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

40.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

65.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Renfrewshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Renfrewshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 16 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.4 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Renfrewshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 14 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 255 households living in temporary accommodation in Renfrewshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 218 households living in temporary accommodation in Renfrewshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 898 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Renfrewshire .

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 689 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Renfrewshire .

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

People

[Renfrewshire Promise Keeper Network](#)

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network is a community of local champions for the promise who work to improve their services for the care experienced community. There are currently 362 Promise Keepers in Renfrewshire, and this number will continue to grow. Promise Keepers make sure that their services are thinking about the needs of the care experienced community and work to educate their colleagues about care experience and the promise. There are many different services involved in the Promise Keeper Network, including social workers, teachers, health workers, council staff, public sector bodies and people who work for charities. Promise Keepers get lots of chances to meet each other and to share ideas about how they have made their services better and more inclusive for people with care experience.

One aim is to have Promise Keepers in as many different services as possible, as care experienced people will access a range of different services, and it is important that they understand the type of support they might need. Care experienced young people will have contact with social work staff but might also have contact with librarians, gym staff, and banking staff.

Promise Keepers are not expected to completely change their services on their own. They are encouraged to carry out small changes and work together with others to achieve more. An example of this is that many Promise Keepers have changed the language used in their service to be more inclusive and less negative.

Promise Keepers are encouraged to be proud of their roles and for them to be spotted easily. Promise Keepers wear a small badge, which is the Promise heart with a Paisley pattern. By wearing this badge means that this is a place which is safe and supportive for everyone, including those with Care Experience.

Renfrewshire's care experienced community have told them that they want real and honest people to champion The Promise. Renfrewshire's Promise Team works hard to make sure that Renfrewshire's Promise Keepers really care about

the promise and are doing it for the right reasons. Anyone who works in Renfrewshire can become a Promise Keeper.

Promise Keepers are encouraged to bring their whole selves to the role, with many having lived experience of the care system, too. Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper network is informed by the care experienced community; they are at the very heart of everything.

[Promise Manager](#)

The Promise Manager is a key member of Renfrewshire Council's Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and plays a central role in the strategic delivery of The Promise across the region. In post since October 2022, the Promise Manager leads the Children's Services Partnership's response to implementing the promise, ensuring that the needs and rights of care-experienced children and young people are prioritised. This role involves close collaboration with the Scottish Government, COSLA, Promise Scotland, and a wide range of local partners including the Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Police Scotland, and the voluntary sector. The Promise Manager is responsible for driving forward strategic planning and systemic change, embedding a culture of care, respect, and accountability across all services that support children and families in Renfrewshire.

[Promise Ambassador](#)

The Promise Ambassador for Renfrewshire Council plays a vital role in ensuring the local authority upholds its commitment to #KeepThePromise for care experienced individuals. Since joining the Council in July 2021, the Promise Ambassador has worked to embed the voices and needs of care experienced people into the heart of services and decision-making. With experience from the Independent Care Review, the Ambassador supports staff in reflecting on how they can better listen to and support this community. As co-chair of the Supporting the Workforce group, the Promise Ambassador also champions employment opportunities and tailored support for care experienced

individuals, helping to create a more inclusive and responsive workforce across Renfrewshire.

The Promise Human Library

Across Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network, staff have lots of different job experiences and knowledge and in Renfrewshire they want the care experienced community to be able to benefit from this. The Promise Ambassador is working to create a "Promise Human Library" where young people can be "matched" with someone who works in an area in which they are interested.

The Promise Keeper would be able to decide how they could best support the young person. This might be an email exchange, a phone call, or an office visit. Many care experienced young people do not have the same contacts and connections in areas of work in which they are interested. The hope is that this project can support this.

Family

People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together.

The Stronger Start Project

Delivered by Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau, this project provides money advice and advocacy to all women who engage with the Special Needs in Pregnancy Service (SNIPS) based at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. SNIPS supports individuals who have several vulnerabilities and complex needs in their pregnancy, which are exacerbated by challenges such as poverty, poor housing, and financial unpredictability. This project offers a person-centred wraparound service to support individuals to maximise their income, prevent homelessness, tackle debt issues, and address poverty and health related issues, whilst providing advocacy support.

Advice for children and families

Advice is identified as a crucially important part of Renfrewshire's efforts to tackle child poverty, and as part of this, the Council is supporting the 'Healthier Wealthier Children' and 'School Support' services which provide dedicated advice to families with younger children. This includes embedding a service in secondary and additional support needs schools across the council with [Renfrewshire's Citizens Advice Bureau](#), where parents, guardians and carers of students, and pupils from S5 and S6 can receive advice on a range of issues including, but not limited to, money and debt, welfare benefits, housing and employment.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding

I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.

Keep The Promise Funded Project 1

This project aims to reduce school exclusions within the Care Experienced community within Johnstone High School. The Principal Teacher of The Promise works to support the attendance and participation of Care Experienced young people in the school.

The pupils of Johnstone High School played an important role in designing the job description for this role.

This project also includes Contextual Safeguarding work within Johnstone High School, which will be delivered by Barnardo's. Contextual Safeguarding means that we must understand the risks that children and young people are exposed to in a range of different places, such as at home, at school, online or in their local communities. This project is working to understand what schools can do to protect their children and young people from harm and increase safety in school.

Keep The Promise Funded Project 2

Transitions are a normal part of school life; however, for some care experienced young people, transitions can be particularly difficult. This project creates a Promise Team in St Andrew's Academy to overcome the challenges caused by "last minute" transitions. The aim is to provide intensive support for any child who will be moving from primary to St Andrew's Academy.

Both projects above are managed by Corra and funded by the Scottish Government's Promise Partnership Fund.

Voice

The words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed.

Renfrewshire Language Policy

[Renfrewshire's Language Policy](#), introduced in early 2022, is a progressive initiative aimed at transforming how professionals speak about Care Experienced children and young people. Developed in collaboration with Care Experienced individuals and staff, the policy identifies and replaces language that may be perceived as negative, stigmatising, or overly complex. The goal is to promote more human, inclusive, and easily understood communication across services.

The policy encourages the use of respectful and empowering language, moving away from jargon or acronyms that can alienate or confuse. For example, the commonly used terms "LAC" or "LAAC" (Looked After Child / Looked After and Accommodated Child) have been reconsidered. These acronyms, while familiar to professionals, may unintentionally suggest that a young person is "lacking" something. As a result, the policy now recommends using the full terms "Looked After" or "Looked After and Accommodated" to ensure clarity and dignity.

This approach reflects a broader cultural shift towards empathy and understanding in public services. The policy is not static; it acknowledges that

language evolves and encourages organisations to continually reflect on and adapt their terminology. To ensure it remains relevant and effective, Renfrewshire will review the Language Policy in 2025/26 and produce an updated version.

The full policy is available online via the [Ren10 website](#) under the Care Experienced tab, offering a practical guide for professionals committed to improving communication and outcomes for young people in care.

[Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee — Sub-group “Voice”](#)

The Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee is committed to The Promise. A key example of this is ongoing work around “voice” and ensuring that we are listening to our Care Experienced community. A group of staff meet regularly to discuss this and have met three times. The group is led by Youth Services and focuses on how we can involve young people in our services. The Promise Ambassador attends this group.

A strategy plan is being created and will focus on the following areas:

- The voice of children, young people and families involved in the child protection process
- The voice of young people
- Seldom heard voices, focusing on children with disabilities
- The voice of infants

Partners in Renfrewshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Sharing learning and knowledge about the promise across local authority and partner teams
- The development of a mapping tool to support planning and enable Renfrewshire to monitor its progress and journey to keeping the promise. The tool is capturing promise related activity in the local authority across a range of sectors including but not limited to for

example Education, Social Work, Employability, Youth Justice, Police and Children's Hearings.

- Dedicated section within the [Ren10 website](#) which was created for Care Experienced children and young people, including a range of resources to highlight support available around positive destinations.
 - Commitment to learning and co-production to challenge existing practices, which has helped redesign for example Renfrewshire's Keeping Brothers and Sisters Policy and Renfrewshire's Language Policy.
 - The [Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership](#) supports the implementation of local and national employability policy through collective leadership and co-commissioning. The partnership works closely with delivery partners to effectively deliver needs led employability services that help people make a successful transition towards employment. This service prioritises care experienced young people.
 - Renfrewshire Council is working to introduce guaranteed interviews for Care Experienced people who meet the minimum requirements for job roles in the Council.
 - Expand opportunities for parents to enter, sustain and progress at work through the [Parental Employability Support Fund](#)
-

Scottish Borders

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Located in the south east of Scotland, [the Scottish Borders is a largely rural area](#) that lies on the border between Scotland and England. [The Scottish Borders](#) faces a number of unique challenges due to rurality - these include geography, an ageing demographic, income deprivation, fuel deprivation, digital access, poor broadband, and food security. The population of Scottish [Borders was 116,900 in the 2022 Census](#) with the region's population growth around average for Scotland. It is part of the Lothians and Borders Police Division which has [23 police stations](#).

[The percentage of children living in relative low-income families ranges from 7.9% in the Tweeddale West Ward to 23.0% in the Hawick and Denholm Ward](#). Housing is also in demand as [346 children were in families that were homeless or threatened with homelessness](#) in 2021/22.

The Scottish Borders [has 9 secondary schools and 50 primary schools](#) which [have nursery provisions](#). It is also home to Leader Valley School, which is a specialist support school, and Borders College. The 2022 Scottish Borders school roll had a total of 14,309 students split across primary (7,758) and secondary schools (6,551). 14% of school children in the Borders are registered for free school meals compared to around one fifth nationally (P 20.5%; S 17.7%). Scottish Borders reported that [93% of 16–19-year-olds participated in Education, Employment or Training](#) in 2022. There are 24 GP practices in the Borders and it is served by [8 hospitals](#).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1276 third sector organisations operating in the Scottish Borders, including 308 dedicated to social care](#).

Health indicators for children in the Scottish Borders show more positive outcomes when compared to national figures. More babies are exclusively breastfed at 6–8 weeks ([49.6%](#)), with the national mean standing at 31.8%. Additionally, a lower proportion of children present with [one or more developmental concerns at their 27–30 month review](#) (11%), compared to the Scottish average of 14.7%.

Key reporting in Scottish Borders

- [Scottish Borders Children & Young People's Services Plan 2023/26](#)
- [Children's Services Plan Annual Progress Report 2023/24](#)
- [The Promise And Corporate Parenting Annual Report - April 2021 – March 2022](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Champions Board Annual Report 2022/23 Scottish Borders Council By: Cory Paterson](#)
- [Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Plan 2021/22 And Action Plan 2022/23](#)
- [Scottish Borders Council's Education Equity Strategy 2021-2026](#)
- [Scottish Borders Council's Education Improvement Plan 2022-23](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Scottish Borders community planning partnership May 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 199 children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 22 per 1000 children in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 187 children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 9 per 1000 children in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 65 children who entered the 'care system' in Scottish Borders from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 50 children who entered the 'care system' in Scottish Borders between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

24 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This is 12.1% of children who were experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024.

47 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This is 25.1% of children who were experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020.

There were 139 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This is 69.8% of children who were experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024.

There were 153 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This is 81.8% of children who were experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020.

There were 53 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This is 26.6% of children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024.

There were 53 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This is 28.3% of children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020.

56 children were living in foster care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This represents 28.1% of all children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024.

53 children were living in foster care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This represents 28.3% of all children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020.

There were 60 children living in residential care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This is 30.2% of all children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024.

There were 26 children living in residential care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This is 13.9% of all children experiencing care in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 75 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Scottish Borders, 54 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

11.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Scottish Borders during 2022/23. 11.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Scottish Borders during 2022/23. 11.4% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Scottish Borders during 2022/23.

10.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Scottish Borders during 2019/20. 11.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Scottish Borders during 2019/20. 9.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Scottish Borders during 2019/20.

40 children were living in temporary accommodation in Scottish Borders on 30 September 2024.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in Scottish Borders on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2863 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Scottish Borders. This represents an average of 15.8% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4980 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Scottish Borders. This represents an average of 23.5% of children in Scottish Borders.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3244 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Scottish Borders. This represents an average of 17.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2191 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Scottish Borders. This represents an average of 12.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2542 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Scottish Borders. This represents an average of 13.6% children.

In Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024, there were 25 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020, there were 13 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 1 in Scottish Borders during 2023.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2019/20 was 1 in Scottish Borders during 2020.

Per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year, 61 children were excluded in Scottish Borders during 2023.

20.0% of children leaving school, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Scottish Borders during 2023.

25.0% of children leaving school, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Scottish Borders during 2020.

10.0% of children leaving school, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Scottish Borders during 2023.

80.0% of children leaving school, who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Scottish Borders during 2023.

75.0% of children leaving school, who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Scottish Borders during 2020.

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.

109 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. This represents 55% of all children who were 'looked after' in Scottish Borders on that day.

106 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in Scottish Borders on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

45 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Scottish Borders.
57 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Scottish Borders.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

23.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

48.4% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Scottish Borders on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Scottish Borders between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 5 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.7 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Scottish Borders between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 10 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 122 households living in temporary accommodation in Scottish Borders.

On 30 September 2020, there were 98 households living in temporary accommodation in Scottish Borders.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 656 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Scottish Borders.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 596 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Scottish Borders.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Scaffolding: Education

How will you make sure that I am getting support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education? (Scaffolding: Education)

Borders Young Talent Programme was developed as a partnership project with The Robertson Trust and was established to widen participation in further and higher education for young people irrespective of their background or economic circumstances. Rolled out in 2018 as a two-year project, the programme provided mentoring support for young people facing additional challenges in making a successful transition to college from school, while in their last year of secondary education. The target group for support consisted of young people who are care experienced, student carers who have caring responsibilities, young people who are experiencing considerable disadvantage because of social/rural deprivation and young people who are at risk of disengagement from education due to poor attendance (under 75%) or exclusion due to their behaviours.

An important element of the programme is working with others to support the young person, not only whilst in college, but also with forward planning and development. Borders College works in close partnership within the local community and has strong links to the local authority and external agencies such as SDS. The professional mentors work to understand the context of the learner and gain a deeper understanding of challenges and issues they may be facing. Practical solutions are discussed which can then be implemented to support the learner.

Scottish Borders Council created a Virtual School Headteacher (VSHT) post in 2017. The VSHT has overall responsibility for the planning of assessment and support for care experienced children and young people in Scottish Borders. The VSHT's responsibilities focus on improving the educational experiences and

outcomes of care experienced children and young people in the whole local authority area and provides key links between multi-agency teams and advocate for the needs and rights of care experienced children and young people and work in collaboration with others.

The VSHT helps ensure children and young people in institutional care are fully supported to access education consistently and that any barriers to this are addressed swiftly, robustly and creatively.

The National Education Outcomes for Looked After Children, 2022 -2023 report was published in August 2024. The report includes information on the attainment and destinations of school leavers and the education outcomes and post-school destinations of 1,054 'looked after' young people between August 2022 and July 2023 who were in the 2022-23 school leaver cohort. There were 1758 children who left school in 2022/23 who had experienced care at some point since turning 5. Of these children, 1246 2022/23 school leavers had experienced care at some point since turning 12.

Initial destinations relate to the activity undertaken by young people approximately three months after the end of the school year (October 2023). Follow-up destinations relate to activities undertaken 9 months after the end of the school year (April 2024). School leavers who are engaged in higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment or are undertaking personal skills development are classified as having a 'positive destination'. Other destinations include unemployed seeking, unemployed not seeking, and unknown. Of the 10 young people included in the snapshot, 80% went on to a positive destination after leaving school (down slightly from 85% in 2021-22, and the national average of 86.4%). 70% were in a positive follow up destination, compared to 71.1% nationally.

Schools monitor and track attainment and attendance of care experienced children and young people closely. A young person who is identified as care experienced (either current or previous) is entitled to the maximum Skills Development Scotland (SDS) service offer which is a minimum of 5 coaching engagements in an academic year. Advisers work with them on a 1:1 basis over the year to provide guidance and support them to develop their Career Management Skills. Information sharing with education colleagues, enables SDS to establish who is care experienced.

Care experienced young people are discussed at regular school 14+ transition meetings by key partners – school, SDS, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Community Learning and Development (CLD) and Employability and Skills – to ensure they have a plan post school. Where this is not the case there is a warm handover between SDS school and post-school team.

The SDS Team Leader meets with the Equity and Inclusion Lead Officer, which includes the Virtual Headteacher remit, on a monthly basis to discuss targeted cohort, support and 16+ data including post school intentions for care experienced school pupils and actual destinations. A tracker is updated by SDS to track current status. This is reviewed at the monthly meetings for the last 2 cohorts of leavers.

A tracker of all statuses of 16 – 24 year olds has been set up with a filter for 'care experienced' to monitor progress and sustainment. This is circulated to all schools on a monthly basis by the education team.

In August 2024, the local authority introduced its revised Attendance Policy, which closely aligns with Included Engaged and Involved Part 1, The Promise, and nurturing principles. Additionally, the local authority is currently reviewing its exclusions policy to ensure it aligns more closely with The Promise, and explicitly states the goal of preventing any care experienced child or young person from facing informal or formal school exclusion.

The Virtual School Headteacher, supported by the Care Experienced and Young People Fund, leverages their position to advocate for and champion the needs of care-experienced young people. They regularly engage with schools to provide both support and constructive challenge, while also collaborating with various council services, including children and families social work, educational institutions, partners, and other stakeholders.

Regarding outcomes, Stretch Aims have been established for the attendance of care-experienced students in both primary and secondary schools, as well as for school leavers achieving five qualifications. These metrics are monitored closely, and new comprehensive tracking procedures have been implemented in secondary schools to ensure that outcomes are tracked for all care-experienced young individuals. Achieving five or more qualifications among our care-experienced leavers is a key area of focus to meet our stretch aims. Over the past three years, the rate of care-experienced leavers attaining a positive

destination has consistently remained above 85%. Attendance of care-experienced children and young people has shown gradual improvement in primary schools, successfully meeting the stretch aims. Although secondary school attendance has regularly surpassed the pre-Covid average, it continues to be a priority area for further enhancement.

Voice: Participation and engagement

How will you make sure that I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that will affect me? (VOICE: Participation and engagement)

The Scottish Borders Champions Board now involves a range of projects including:

- The Champions Board participation group
- Champs Board monthly socials
- The New Roots Project
- Champions Board Connect
- School hubs

Champions Connect aims to:

- Ensure care experienced young people from the Scottish Borders living out with the Scottish Borders have a space to voice their views and have the opportunity to participate.
- Keep a link to the Borders for these young people.
- Offer support for young people who aim to return to the Borders

As part of the Champions Connect Project, the Just 4U Boxes are a pilot subscription-style box for care experienced children and young people from the Scottish Borders who now live in foster care, kinship care, residential care or independently out with the area. Each box contains a mixture of goodies and information on how the children and young people can have their voices heard. Four boxes are sent to each young person a year and they are sent out

approximately every three months. There are 10 children and young people involved in the pilot project.

Youth Engagement Listen to Learn (YELL) Strategy: Scottish Borders has developed a youth engagement strategy for 12 – 26-year-olds, which was co-produced with young people and emphasises the need to remove barriers to participation and ensure that professionals listen to and understand quieter voices. The strategy includes a one-page checklist on how to engage with young people which practitioners can use when working with young people, and also on completion of participation and engagement activities to evaluate the young people's experiences of their involvement.

This strategy has been meaningfully used in recent months by Corporate Parents who have been invited by the Champions Board Participation Group to attend one of their meetings. Corporate Parents have liaised with the young people and their group facilitators to answer questions the young people had prior to them attending, to ensure they were clear on instructions from the young people around their expectations of their Corporate Parents (i.e. attending in casual dress, reading of group agreement beforehand, and being clear with the group about why they wanted to attend Champs and meet with the young people.)

Engagement Strategy for 0 – 12 year olds: Scottish Borders recognises the particular challenges of listening to babies, infants and young children and the next stage of the YELL strategy work is to develop a child-friendly strategy and then a strategy for 0-12 year olds.

Care: Relationships

How will you make sure that where it is safe to do so, I can live with my brother(s) (and) sister(s)? (VOICE: Participation and engagement)

There has been a significant shift in practice around considerations for placing Brothers and Sisters and their ongoing relationship when they are separated.

Scottish Borders Council's Children and Families Social Work developed and implemented Brothers and Sisters - Policy, Guidance and Practice Standards in December 2021. The document included an assessment template and guidance.

Specific training on Brothers and Sisters Assessment was commissioned and delivered by the Association of Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland (AFKA) to social workers in 2023 and confidence around the completion of assessments is starting to build with further practice development planned.

Scottish Borders Council and Children 1st have worked collaboratively to input into social work sibling assessments and joint reflective practice space for colleagues involved in complex sibling arrangements. As a result, Scottish Borders have moved towards a narrative approach to recording and documenting therapeutic work, family time, and significant events for Brothers and Sisters so that recording about them tells their story in a way that is individual and meaningful to each child through the duration of working together and later in life.

Partners in Scottish Borders have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The development of a Champions Board project for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in Scottish Borders. It helps provide a support infrastructure for this group of young people and aims to:
 - Offer a safe space for peer support and a welcome to new arrivals to the Scottish Borders.
 - Provide a platform for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people living in the Scottish Borders to have a voice and influence change.
 - Support the creation of new links within the community, ensuring young people know who their corporate parents are and the range of support services and opportunities available to them in Scottish Borders.

- Learn and share information about other cultures (including both the young people's cultures and Scottish cultures).
- Getting it Right for Brothers and Sisters was supported by Promise Partnership investment, designed to help organisations understand more about local needs and gather evidence on what works to ensure relationships between brothers and sisters are cherished and protected. The Scottish Borders project was a partnership between Scottish Borders Council and Children 1st. An initial baseline data report was produced using data from the social work database, which gave some sense of care experienced children and their 370 brothers and sister relationships. Over the two years of the project, Children 1st worked with 17 families including 62 children and 35 adults (parents, foster carers, and kinship carers) to offer therapeutic support and there are increasing requests for FGDM from social workers to consider sibling relationships as part of the support for the family. Children 1st has also supported social work colleagues with sibling tracing – approaching siblings or family members as part of permanency or exploring Kinship options.
- The Children and Young People's Planning Partnership (CYPPP) was established in April 2023 following a series of governance planning workshops, with the aim of facilitating strategic leadership and development of corporate parenting and the promise across agencies in the Scottish Borders. The Promise is considered the umbrella policy driver for children and young people's services across the Borders, and it is recognised as extending to all children and young people, not just care experienced children and young people. The Board provides strategic governance of the implementation of the Promise, GIRFEC, the UNCRC and corporate parenting responsibilities.
- The development of multi-agency trauma-informed approaches, which include: the roll out of multi-agency trauma-skilled training for the workforce, the development of an adapted Trauma Roadmap tool for local smaller organisations and partners, the development of local guidance on – and good practice examples of- trauma-informed environments. In addition, Scottish Borders Children and Families Social Work service is one of the early implementation sites for the Scottish Government Trauma

Responsive Social Work Services Programme. The implementation support and learning programme started in Spring 2024. Following the completion of a trauma needs assessment with children and families social work team leaders, an Operational Group has been formed to develop and monitor a draft action plan for the project.

- Involvement in the extended Bright Spots Programme pilot delivered by CELCIS partnered with Coram Voice in Spring 2024. The information and data received from the 'Your Life Your Care' (for children in care aged 4 – 17 years old) and the 'Your Life Beyond Care' surveys (for care leavers aged 16 – 25) was presented to multi-agency strategic leaders in 2025. Engagement work to help explore the findings from the surveys and inform the development of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 – 2028 is currently being undertaken with members of the Champions Board. A further event for practitioners is being planned for Autumn 2025.
- Commissioning of an Independent Advocacy Service for children and young people.
- Multi-agency work to prepare for– and respond to– the requirements of the new UNCRC (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024. To support delivery of children's right in the Scottish Borders, key areas of focus include:
 - making sure the voice and lived experience of children and young people informs planning and delivery of public services and how services help realise children's rights,
 - developing Impact assessments so that children's rights are considered when a new strategy, policy is being developed, or when there is a change in public services planned,
 - development of a children's rights monitoring tool for local teams and organisations which supports self-evaluation and reporting for the 3 yearly Children's Rights report to Scottish Government.
 - ensuring that all children and young people know about their rights,
 - developing a child-friendly complaints procedure,

- developing children's rights training for the workforce in line with the new national knowledge and skills framework.
- In Summer 2023, Scottish Borders Council and Youth Borders were successful in a funding bid to UNCRC Innovation Fund. The original project outcomes had to be changed towards the end of the project due to staffing changes in Youth Borders. The revised outcomes were:
 - To raise awareness about the UNCRC through a film showcasing how children's rights are being put into practice in the Scottish Borders
 - To produce a film which is suitable and accessible for young viewers, as well as serving as educational and inspiring content for all viewers in order to uphold UNCRC article 42.
 - To gain an understanding of young people's awareness of UNCRC and their rights.
 - The new outcomes of the project were successfully delivered with the production of a feature length, professionally filmed documentary that offers an in-depth exploration into how the UNCRC is being implemented within the Scottish Borders. The film features the voices of 14 young people and 10 adults across a total of 12 different organisations. The organisations involved represent a sample of the many different stakeholders involved with upholding youth rights, such as youth work hubs, educational facilities, and youth activity groups and support services.

Shetland Islands Council

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

The Shetland Islands are an archipelago made up of over 100 islands, 15 are inhabited by [a population of 22,900](#). While there was a steady decline in the number of births in Shetland from 2012-2020, there has been an increase in the past two years and Shetland had the joint second highest birth rate in 2022. Additionally, after nearly a decade of negative net migration (migration rate per 1,000 people), Shetland had a net migration rate of 5.4 in 2020/21. This rate was also higher than the Scottish net rate (5.1) for the first time since 2009/10. There has been a 1.2% decrease in population since 2011, the Scotland population overall has increased by 2.7%. 17.9% of the population are under 16 years old, 1.4% less than a decade ago while in Scotland 16.6% are aged under 16, 0.7% less than a decade ago.

The community is [served by 24 Local Authority nurseries, 24 schools with primary departments only, six schools with primary and secondary departments and one school with a secondary department only](#). There are 10 GP practices in Shetland and it is served by [1 hospital](#).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [519 third sector organisations operating in the Shetland Islands, including 98 dedicated to social care](#).

[Child poverty in Shetland](#) has gradually increased since the early 2010s: although levels are consistently lower than Scotland as a whole, 12.3% of children were living in low-income families in Shetland in 2022/23 (rise of 0.5% from previous year). Scotland's level averages at 21.3%. While Shetland had the third lowest level of children living in low-income families in Scotland in 2022/23, this is higher than pre-pandemic levels and increasing. These figures do not reflect,

however, the higher cost of living in remote and rural Scotland: the cost of living in Shetland is 20-65% higher than the UK average. Almost half of people in Shetland live in households with an income less than the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) benchmark. In working households, in 2022/3, 42% of people in Shetland lived below the benchmark, compared to 29% across Scotland. In 2023-24, 562 pupils accessed both Free School Meals (P6-S6) and School Clothing Grants.

Key reporting in Shetland

- [Shetland Children's Plan](#)
- [Shetland Children's Services Partnership Plan Annual report 2023/24](#)
- [Shetland Partnership Plan](#)
- [Shetland Child Poverty Action Report](#)
- [Shetland Islands Council Corporate Plan](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 31 children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 14 per 1000 children in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 28 children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 6 per 1000 children in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 22 children who entered the 'care system' in Shetland Islands from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 8 children who entered the 'care system' in Shetland Islands between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

4 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 12.9% of children who were experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024.

5 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 17.9% of children who were experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 24 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 77.4% of children who were experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024.

There were 18 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 64.3% of children who were experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 6 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 19.4% of children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024.

14 children were living in foster care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This represents 45.2% of all children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024.

13 children were living in foster care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This represents 46.4% of all children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020.

There were 7 children living in residential care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This is 22.6% of all children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024.

There were 0 children living in residential care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This is 0.0% of all children experiencing care in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 28 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Shetland Islands, 20 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

20.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Shetland Islands during 2022/23. 19.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Shetland Islands during 2022/23. 18.8% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Shetland Islands during 2022/23.

10.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Shetland Islands during 2019/20. 11.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Shetland Islands during 2019/20. 10.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Shetland Islands during 2019/20.

20 children were living in temporary accommodation in Shetland Islands on 30 September 2024.

20 children were living in temporary accommodation in Shetland Islands on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 378 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Shetland Islands. This represents an average of 9.1% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 694 children living in relative poverty,

after housing costs, annually in Shetland Islands. This represents an average of 15.8% of children in Shetland Islands.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 413 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Shetland Islands. This represents an average of 9.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 303 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Shetland Islands. This represents an average of 7.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 321 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Shetland Islands. This represents an average of 7.5% children.

In Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024, there were 5 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 89.3% in Shetland Islands.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 93.0% in Shetland Islands (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Shetland Islands, 2 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 69 per 1,000 pupils who

experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

100.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Shetland Islands.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Shetland Islands.

75.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Shetland Islands.

0.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Shetland Islands.

100.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Shetland Islands. 100.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Shetland Islands during 2023.

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.

20 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. This represents 65% of all children who were 'looked after' in Shetland Islands on that day.

13 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020. This represents 46% of all children who were 'looked after' in Shetland Islands on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2023 in Shetland Islands.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Shetland Islands.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

7 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Shetland Islands.
24 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Shetland Islands.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

75.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

86.7% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Shetland Islands on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Shetland Islands between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 2 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.4 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Shetland Islands between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 95 households living in temporary accommodation in Shetland Islands.

On 30 September 2020, there were 87 households living in temporary accommodation in Shetland Islands.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 79 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Shetland Islands.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 67 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Shetland Islands.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils as examples of their work to keep the promise:

PEOPLE: Workforce Support

People who help me are getting all the support, time and resources they need as individuals, to be able to do a good job.

[In 2022, Shetland Islands Council delivered](#) a workshop for education and children's services staff to address vicarious trauma. The workshop aimed to help staff understand its signs, distinguish it from burnout, and apply proactive self-care, using an evidence-based framework.

The initiative arose from increasing staff concerns about mental health and burnout, highlighting the need for strong wellbeing support to implement trauma-informed practice effectively. The workshop explored personal motivations, the neuroscience behind vicarious trauma, and the role of empathy. Staff created personal self-care plans and received ongoing support and signposting.

The programme received positive feedback, with participants valuing the tools and shared experiences. It led to greater awareness and management buy-in, fostering a culture of proactive wellbeing. Key lessons included the importance of voluntary participation, supportive environments, managerial understanding, and long-term integration of self-care and reflective practices into the workplace.

VOICE: Listening

[*My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted upon.*](#)

Care experienced children and young people's collective advocacy group, the #ShetlandCrew, felt that the term 'corporate parent' was cold and uncaring, so they worked with a local artist to consider alternatives. 'Meid' is a Shetland word meaning, 'a prominent landmark which, when lined up with another landmark, enables fishermen to establish and maintain their position at sea' and was chosen as a metaphor to represent the role that 'corporate parents' can play in children and young people's lives. The Meids Board is co-chaired by a care experienced leader, and the Chief Executive of the Shetland Islands Council. [UHI Shetland has recently published it's new corporate parenting strategy](#) for 2025-28.

[Tending the light: the Shetland Festival of Care 2022](#) was a five-day long celebration of care and care experienced people. It led to a [Tending the Light event](#) with the Northern Collaborative in Inverness in February 2023.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

There are services where I live that can help me, my family and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community.

Parenting support in Shetland has recently been brought under one umbrella to simplify access for parents and carers, while maintaining the range of support available. The Shetland Family Centre offers three evidence-based parenting programmes – PEEP Learning Together (0-5 years), Incredible Years (2-11 years), and Teen Triple P (12-16 years). The focus in recent years has been to improve professional understanding of what is available, and the content of courses, and to decrease the stigma around accessing support for parenting. These programmes will continue to be offered with a focus on increasing access to support, and understanding the impact of support provided.

Partners in Shetland have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Since August 2020, every three- and four-year-old, (and some two-year-olds) in Shetland have been eligible for up to 1,140 hours per year of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). Responding to feedback from local communities, the ELC central team have taken steps to widen access to childcare for parents and carers to support them into employment, while giving their children high quality childcare experiences. This includes:
 - Expanding the out-of-school provision in South Mainland to include additional days and to be open for more weeks over school holiday periods.
 - Giving parents and carers the option to pay for additional hours for their child's placement at their ELC setting over the 30 funded hours per week threshold.
 - By increasing Sandwick's out of school provision, there has been an increase in uptake. Staff have heard from parents and carers that they are able to work additional hours now that they are confident this provision is in place consistently.
- Ensure every child 'in care' is having their needs met, including educational and health and work is required on establishing a robust approach to evidencing impact.
- Co-ordinate the learning from the tests of change which can be used to evidence improvements.

- Develop ideas on providing more wrap-around services at times when they are needed the most
 - Deliver improvements arising from the Meid's Board "Education" theme and identify what more is needed to enable care experienced children and young people to thrive in school including extracurricular activities.
 - Develop data and information on attainment, attendance and exclusion on care experienced pupils.
 - Explore option of guaranteeing a positive destination
 - Develop the "Becoming an Adult" theme in the Meid's Board to further understand the transition challenges and ways to address them.
 - Explore the option of developing Housing Pathways to meet the changing pattern of needs including that of supported accommodation.
 - Complete The National Trauma Transformation Programme which is being rolled out across the Shetland Partnership.
 - Co-produce a set of measures on what matters to children and families.
-

South Ayrshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[South Ayrshire is the 15th largest Scottish council area](#) in terms of physical size and the 17th largest in terms of population. It is an area of considerable contrasts. The population in South Ayrshire is around 112,450 people with 16% of the population under 16 and 10% of the population being 17-24. In 2021/22, [South Ayrshire had the 10th highest child poverty rate](#) nationally and was above the Scottish average - 24.4% compared to 22.6%. This is an estimate of 4,807 children in South Ayrshire. [16% of children in South Ayrshire](#) live in relative low-income households compared to the national average of 15.9%. It is part of the Ayrshire Police Division which has [14 police stations](#).

[In South Ayrshire there are 8 Secondary Schools](#), 41 Primary Schools, 2 Special Schools and 5 Early Years Centres, although many Primary Schools have Early Years Centres attached. [There are 101 playparks and playgrounds to choose](#) from along with public beaches. There are 26 GP practices in South Ayrshire and it is served by [4 hospitals](#). According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [784 third sector organisations operating in South Ayrshire, including 207 dedicated to social care](#).

Key reporting in South Ayrshire

- [Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Children Services Plan Annual Report 2022/23](#)
- [South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise 2021-2030](#)
- [Embedding the Promise in Practice](#)
- [Child Poverty Strategy 2024-2029](#)

- [South Ayrshire Improvement Actions 2021-24](#)
- [Supportive School Structure 2023](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 196 children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 19 per 1000 children in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 300 children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 15 per 1000 children in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 73 children who entered the 'care system' in South Ayrshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 54 children who entered the 'care system' in South Ayrshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

48 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 24.5% of children who were experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

60 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 20.0% of children who were experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 171 children experiencing care who were living in the community in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 87.2% of children who were experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 271 children experiencing care who were living in the community in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 90.3% of children who were experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 32 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 16.3% of children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 74 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 24.7% of children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

85 children were living in foster care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 43.4% of all children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

125 children were living in foster care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 41.7% of all children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 25 children living in residential care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This is 12.8% of all children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 29 children living in residential care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This is 9.7% of all children experiencing care in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 37 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in South Ayrshire, 27 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 1 per 1,000).

10.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in South Ayrshire during 2022/23. 15.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in South Ayrshire during 2022/23. 14.5% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in South Ayrshire during 2022/23.

11.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in South Ayrshire during 2019/20. 13.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in South Ayrshire during 2019/20. 13.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in South Ayrshire during 2019/20.

95 children were living in temporary accommodation in South Ayrshire on 30 September 2024.

65 children were living in temporary accommodation in South Ayrshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2955 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Ayrshire. This represents an average of 17.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4887 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in South Ayrshire. This represents an average of 24.7% of children in South Ayrshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3348 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Ayrshire. This represents an average of 19.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2252 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Ayrshire. This represents an average of 13.3% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2651 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Ayrshire. This represents an average of 15.2% children.

In South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024, there were 10 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020, there were 10 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 84.3% in South Ayrshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in South Ayrshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In South Ayrshire, 5 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 34 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

36.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in South Ayrshire.

47.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in South Ayrshire.

21.1% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in South Ayrshire.

11.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in South Ayrshire.

84.2% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in South Ayrshire. 89.5% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in South Ayrshire during 2023.

93.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in South Ayrshire. 96.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in South Ayrshire.

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.

117 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 60% of all children who were 'looked after' in South Ayrshire on that day.

199 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 66% of all children who were 'looked after' in South Ayrshire on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in South Ayrshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

47 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in South Ayrshire.
48 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in South Ayrshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

14.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

43.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in South Ayrshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by South Ayrshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 0 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.0 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 254 households living in temporary accommodation in South Ayrshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 266 households living in temporary accommodation in South Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 728 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in South Ayrshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 694 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in South Ayrshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

FAMILY: Poverty

How are you making sure that the people who support me know if and how my family are being affected by poverty, and provide us with help and support me if we are?

[How are you making sure that the people who support me know if my family is financially able to provide everything I need to have a happy, healthy, safe childhood, and if not they have plans in place to support us?](#)

[Many people in South Ayrshire are unable to manage financially](#), with many families living in fuel poverty and struggling to pay their bills and feed their children. Reducing poverty is a key priority for the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership.

[Shine even brighter fund](#) for young people is a small grants scheme codesigned by people with lived experience of care to challenge stigma and address the inequalities of being care experienced. The awards scheme supports Care Experienced young people directly through listening to what they feel they need to help them improve their wellbeing and to grow up safe, loved and respected.

[The information and advice team provides a free, confidential, and impartial information](#) and advice service to people living in South Ayrshire. Advisors are fully trained to deal with welfare and benefit issues, and they can refer people to a number of partner agencies to ensure they receive all of the support needed, tailored to individual circumstances.

VOICE: Participation & Engagement

[How are you making sure that my experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on?](#)

[Champions for Change \(South Ayrshire's Champions Board\)](#) support young people with experience of care to work alongside those who make decisions about the care system. In this way, they are involved in the decisions that affect their own lives. The Champions Board approach is characterised by genuine relationships being formed between young people, staff, and Corporate Parents, ensuring the voices of those who use our services are amplified with peer-led consultations having taken place. This shift in culture from consultation to participation, from 'doing to' to 'doing with' is key in a Champions Board approach.

The Champions for Change Team [provide a platform for young people with care experience to talk directly to council staff](#), councillors and service providers and ensure they have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Young people are able to use their lived experience to influence improvements in services and support to share South Ayrshire's care system.

How are you making sure that the words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed?

South Ayrshire Council has been working with care experienced young people to help shape the language that is used around what matters to them. In February 2023, one hundred participants attended 'Language creates realities'. The event aimed to encourage the workforce to talk differently and intentionally about care experience, and tell a new story, reframing care. While there has not been resistance in relation to the underpinning values around language, there is still a fear amongst some staff in relation to using language that feels 'too informal.'

Between January to March 2023, 55 care experienced young people helped shape the new naming convention for the South Ayrshire 'Looked After Child Review' and concluded that the language used throughout a person's care journey should reflect the real-time position, with the care experienced young person at the centre. As a result of this, as of the 1st of November 2023 all 'Looked After Reviews' naming conventions changed. Instead of 'The Initial Looked After Child review' this will now be called 'Jack's first meeting' (example name used) and all meetings thereafter are referred to as 'Jack's meeting., 'jack's next steps' etc.

PEOPLE: Recruitment & Retention

How are you making sure that people who help me are getting all the support, time and resources they need as individuals, to be able to do a good job?

Since 2020, South Ayrshire has collaborated with The Promise Scotland on 'Doing Data Differently,' aiming to assess existing data sources, identify gaps, and improve data usage. The initiative revealed 49 data sets in South Ayrshire, prompting efforts to establish connections and pinpoint information gaps. This involvement increased the organisation's confidence in being more creative with data, emphasizing its integrity as crucial to designing and delivering services.

In September 2021, Promise posts were established in South Ayrshire with £50k funding from The Promise Partnership, two of which were reserved for those with care experience. The workers, drawing on their own experiences, organised events like Care Day, reshaping the care narrative which was over 1000 participants take part. They actively contributed to consultations, including national GIRFEC materials, short breaks, and the commissioning framework in

South Ayrshire, and played a role in the review of family support across South Ayrshire.

[Decisions made across South Ayrshire are underpinned by Children's rights](#) and there will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation.

- Introduce Children's Rights training as essential for all South Ayrshire Council Staff to include training on completing Children's rights impact assessments as part of Equality Impact Assessment process
- [South Ayrshire will recognise that children's rights are](#) most often realised through relationships with loving, attentive caregivers.

Partners in South Ayrshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- [South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership will design and develop](#) their Family First "Team Around the Cluster" model to respond to local need in South Ayrshire. Their aim is to enhance collaborative early support across their communities in South Ayrshire and in turn, improve outcomes for our children, young people and families.
- The alignment of agendas around the Signs of Safety, National Trauma Training programme and the Family First Model, has resulted a greater understanding of the importance of choice and control, early help, and whole family approaches.
- The approach to embedding the Promise in corporate parenting through South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise builds on the work that has happened since 2018 to raise awareness around corporate parenting.
- Collaboration and commitment to embedding the Promise is also evident in the inclusion of the Promise and care as a protected characteristic in South Ayrshire's Integrated Impact assessment process.
- South Ayrshire's ambition is that there will be no blanket policies or guidance within South Ayrshire that prevents the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them poses a range of challenges.
- Awareness raising and engagement around the promise has been led by the Champions Board which has designed and delivered promise information sessions and bespoke workshops across the workforce and commissioned services. This work has exceeded the target of 1,000 participants over 12 months.

- The benefit tracker and associated processes has allowed us to look at the impact of Promise actions. Tracking and monitoring meetings are chaired by the Head of Service and Promise Lead and supported by South Ayrshire's Strategic Change Team.
- There has been significant work locally to keep children in families and out of Out With Authority Care: local leads have reported a reduction of 53% over 5 years.
- South Ayrshire has identified [10 specific areas for improvement](#):
 1. South Ayrshire's workforce and commissioned services will have a comprehensive understanding of the promise including how to embed the promise values in their approach
 2. Services and provision will be designed based on need and with clear data, rather than on an acceptance of how the system has always operated.
 3. Decisions made across South Ayrshire are underpinned by Children's rights and there will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation.
 4. Trauma informed and nurture approaches are standard and widespread practice across South Ayrshire
 5. South Ayrshire recognises that 'language creates realities' those with care experience must hold and own the narrative of their own lives
 6. 10 principles of intensive family support are embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning and delivery) across all South Ayrshire's directorates and commissioned services
 7. There must be significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for South Ayrshire's children, families and communities.
 8. South Ayrshire must support the workforce to contribute to a broader understanding of risk. South Ayrshire must understand, through its people and structures, the risk of children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences.
 9. A framework of support will be in place to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged, and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision and environmental conditions.
 10. Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with

education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.

South Lanarkshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

South Lanarkshire is located on the southeast border of Glasgow City, and has a [population of around 327,056](#) and spans 1,772 square kilometres. The area combines densely populated urban centres in the north with expansive rural areas in the south and west. 755 of South Lanarkshire's population live in urban areas. It is part of the Lanarkshire Police Division which has [16 police stations](#).

[There are 142 schools within South Lanarkshire](#) serving a population of approximately 50,000 pupils across, nursery, primary and secondary schools. There are 19 secondary, 123 primary schools and 72 early learning and childcare establishments. In 2021 there were approximately 39,482 children aged between 5-15 living in South Lanarkshire. In 2022/23 there were 27 Asylum Seeker and 119 Refugee pupils across Primary, Secondary and Additional Support Needs [establishments](#).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1883 third sector organisations operating in South Lanarkshire, including 502 dedicated to social care](#). There are 57 GP practices in South Lanarkshire and it is served by [7 hospitals](#).

In December 2023, South Lanarkshire had an [employment rate of 77.1%](#), which was higher than the overall rate for Scotland. Approximately 4,700 people aged 16 and over were unemployed in South Lanarkshire in the year ending December 2023, representing an unemployment rate of 2.9%. This marks a

decrease from the previous year, when the rate was 3.3% for the year ending December 2022.

According to the [2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\)](#), 88 data zones in South Lanarkshire, 20.4% of the area, are among the 20% most deprived in Scotland, with the highest concentrations in Hamilton, Rutherglen, Cambuslang, Blantyre, and Larkhall. 40,695 (12.8%) of people are income deprived (Scottish average - 12.1%), with 17,313 (43%) of people living in the 20% most deprived data zones.

Between November 2020 and March 2023, there were 19,325 applications from South Lanarkshire for the Scottish Child Payment, accounting for 6.1% of the national total. Over a similar period, 770 applications were made for the Young Carer Grant, resulting in 475 payments totalling £147,913. Homelessness also remains a key concern, with South Lanarkshire Council receiving 2,515 homelessness applications in the year to March 2023, an 18% increase on the previous year. Latest data shows more households are struggling with fuel poverty (22%) and an increased reliance on foodbank support.

Key reporting in South Lanarkshire

- [Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire's Children, Young People, and Families Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Children's Services Plan annual progress report 2023-2024](#)
- [South Lanarkshire's Local Child Poverty Action Report](#)
- [South Lanarkshire Council Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [South Lanarkshire Community Plan 2022-23](#)
- [South Lanarkshire Integration Joint Board Annual Performance Report](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in South Lanarkshire June 2020](#)

The most recent data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 697 children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 786 children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 13 per 1000 children in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 145 children who entered the 'care system' in South Lanarkshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 195 children who entered the 'care system' in South Lanarkshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

109 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 15.6% of children who were experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

193 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 24.6% of children who were experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 627 children experiencing care who were living in the community in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 90.0% of children who were experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 711 children experiencing care who were living in the community in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 90.5% of children who were experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 349 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 50.1% of children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 294 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 37.4% of children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

161 children were living in foster care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 23.1% of all children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

202 children were living in foster care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 25.7% of all children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 70 children living in residential care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This is 10.0% of all children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 75 children living in residential care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This is 9.5% of all children experiencing care in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 257 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in South Lanarkshire, 162 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 3 per 1,000).

16.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in South Lanarkshire during 2022/23. 18.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in South

Lanarkshire during 2022/23. 15.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in South Lanarkshire during 2022/23.

16.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in South Lanarkshire during 2019/20. 17.1% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in South Lanarkshire during 2019/20. 14.1% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in South Lanarkshire during 2019/20.

470 children were living in temporary accommodation in South Lanarkshire on 30 September 2024.

450 children were living in temporary accommodation in South Lanarkshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 8559 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 15.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 14389 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in South Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 23.0% of children in South Lanarkshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 9449 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 17.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 6612 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in South Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 11.9% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 7523 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families,

before housing costs, annually in South Lanarkshire. This represents an average of 13.6% children.

In South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024, there were 24 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020, there were 51 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 83.2% in South Lanarkshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 86.0% in South Lanarkshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In South Lanarkshire, 85 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 146 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

44.6% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in South Lanarkshire.

43.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in South Lanarkshire.

10.7% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in South Lanarkshire.

13.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in South Lanarkshire.

92.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in South Lanarkshire. 71.4% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in South Lanarkshire during 2023.

88.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in South Lanarkshire. 83.3% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in South Lanarkshire.

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.

510 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 73% of all children who were 'looked after' in South Lanarkshire on that day.

496 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 63% of all children who were 'looked after' in South Lanarkshire on that day.

13 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in South Lanarkshire.
6 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in South Lanarkshire.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

141 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in South Lanarkshire.
152 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in South Lanarkshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

45.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

38.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in South Lanarkshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by South Lanarkshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 34 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.7 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by South Lanarkshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 14 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 749 households living in temporary accommodation in South Lanarkshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 729 households living in temporary accommodation in South Lanarkshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 2212 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in South Lanarkshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 1702 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in South Lanarkshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Family

There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community.

[South Lanarkshire has established Family Support Hubs](#) in Hamilton, East Kilbride, Lanark, and Cambuslang to promote a 'no wrong door' approach for families seeking support. Designed to encourage early help and reduce stigma, the Hubs allow walk-ins, support self-referrals, and feature welcoming, informal spaces. Each Hub brings together multidisciplinary teams including social workers, family support and group workers, peer workers, Children 1st staff, and therapists to deliver whole-family support aimed at preventing crisis, reducing inequalities, and improving child development and overall family wellbeing. Increasing self-referrals indicate the Hubs' success in offering accessible early help and support, while ongoing efforts are focused on strengthening third sector and universal referral pathways and supporting staff to manage the demands of holistic, family-centred care.

Voice

[*My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on.*](#)

South Lanarkshire has implemented a range of measures to support delivery of The Promise, including the establishment of a Promise Board at chief officer level to provide strategic oversight and shared accountability. A Champions Board enables care experienced children and young people to share their views and contribute to the development of services. In 2021, a dedicated Promise Participation Team was created in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, with the aim of increasing opportunities for care experienced young people to engage on issues that affect them.

The Champions Board relaunched in January 2024 with new members, who began influencing the work of the Keeping the Promise Thematic Group. The Champion's Board is working closely with housing officials to design and implement a dedicated housing protocol, ensuring young people leaving care receive the right support as they move into independent living. In addition, some members recently took part in a 'Care and Prejudice' seminar, raising awareness of the Champions Board and their work to improve outcomes for care-experienced children and young people.

The Getting it right for South Lanarkshire's Children, young people and Families Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 sets out the following outcomes to be achieved that were developed with support from the Champion's Board:

- Put voice at the heart of all decision-making processes at all levels
- Increase the number of care experienced people accessing further and/or higher education opportunities and successful employment
- Reduce poverty amongst care experienced people
- Improve lifelong support for care experienced people
- Improve support into long term housing for care experienced people
- Improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of care experienced people

Care

[I have been properly prepared for and am supported with independent living.](#)

In August 2024, Barnardo's Scotland launched the '[South Lanarkshire Futures](#)' initiative, a dedicated service aimed at supporting care-experienced young people aged 16 to 26 as they transition to independent living. Developed in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council Housing & Social Work and funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the programme offers intensive, wraparound support for care experienced young people. This includes access to accommodation and a consistent point of contact to assist with practical challenges such as budgeting, setting up utilities, and maintaining a household. The initiative seeks to address the link between care experience and homelessness by providing the necessary resources and guidance to help young people successfully manage and sustain their own homes.

Partners in South Lanarkshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- South Lanarkshire Council has developed strong governance arrangements to ensure accountability to keeping the promise. This includes a Promise Board which is attended by Directors and Corporate Parents, and a promise strategic group.
- South Lanarkshire Council has established Early Help Hubs to strengthen early help and preventative support for families. This forms part of the implementation of the Whole Family Wellbeing Strategy, designed to build capacity for timely, coordinated assistance. The model supports the delivery of Keeping the Promise and is aligned with key policy areas including Community Access to Mental Health, Child Poverty, Whole Family Support for alcohol and drug services, and Shaping Places for Wellbeing.

- [Health and Wellbeing](#): Promoting accessible, community-based mental health and wellbeing services using a preventative, strength-based approach.
- [Tackling Poverty and inequality](#): Includes measures like increased school clothing grants, improving childcare access, and financial advice to combat the impact of poverty.
- A care experienced Hub has been developed by South Lanarkshire. The hub offers informal, non-stigmatising spaces for care experienced children and young people to share their views and access support. A range of support is available to young people relating to substance use, mental health, housing and access to financial advice.
- South Lanarkshire have been testing partnership approaches to support young people to move into their own tenancy with outreach support from housing and social work.
- A whole systems approach team is working to support young people who experience the criminal justice system. The team works to support the use of diversion and bail supervision, as well as access to community-based supports.
- South Lanarkshire has recruited teachers dedicated to supporting care experienced young people in education. In addition, a task group has been established with a focus on supporting care experienced students in further and higher education to study and access opportunities.
- Student Services team at South Lanarkshire College has two Guidance and Support Advisors who provide named staff contacts for all care experienced students.
- Following the “Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in South Lanarkshire” in June 2022, priority areas for improvement were identified. One of these was “Care leavers were not always being supported to transition successfully into adulthood. There was a lack of systematic approaches to monitoring the health and wider wellbeing needs of looked after young people who had left school and care leavers”. This was also recognised within the Board and Partnership as being a gap in current provision and an opportunity for developing support systems for care experienced young people. To address this priority area for improvement and through consultation with Who Cares Scotland and care experienced young people, South Lanarkshire led on establishing a Throughcare Aftercare service in 2022 by appointing 2 Nurses. The service ensures that care

experienced young people and adults are able to maintain positive relationships with supporting professionals & care leavers experience consistency and personalised support, proactive engagement with services, reducing the likelihood and need for crisis responses and enhancing individuals' sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.

Stirling

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Stirling has a [population](#) of about 92, 530, of which around 18, 194 are babies, children and young people. It is [semi-rural](#) with a mix of both urban and rural communities with the city of Stirling being the largest, with a population of around 37, 910. The council area is [served by 7 secondary schools and 39 primary schools](#) and is also home to Stirling University. There are 24 GP practices in Stirling and it is served by [1 hospital](#). It is part of the Forth Valley Police Division which has [11 police stations](#).

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [791 third sector organisations operating in Stirling, including 190 dedicated to social care](#).

There are currently [18,194 children and young people aged 0-18 years in Stirling](#), comprising 19.5% of the total population. For those aged 0-15, there is projected to be a small decrease in the total population of 1.9% from 2018-28. Almost twice as many residents live within a rural area (33.4%) than the Scottish average (17.2%). Almost three quarters (72.5%) of pupils in P5-S6 agree that their local area is a good place to live compared to 65.5% in Scotland. Almost all (91.3%) said they feel safe when out in their local area always or most of the time compared to 87.1% nationally.

[In session 2023/24](#), Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding in Stirling was made up of: £293,694 Strategic Equity Funding; and £1,452,975 of Pupil Equity Funding. Pupil Equity funding was provided directly to school, with allocations ranging from £1,409 to £131,035 with only two primary schools receiving no allocation. Stirling also received an allocation of £185,220 Care Experienced

Children and Young People Funding (CECYP) in session 2023-24. [In December 2023](#), Stirling Council recognised those with care experience as a vulnerable group and resolved to consider them when making any decisions in relation to its policies or formulating plans, in addition to those groups with protected characteristics highlighted in the Equality Act 2010.

In Stirling the [Children's Services Plan](#) outlines the educational experiences of care experienced learners. 62.7% of care experienced pupils between P5 and S6 agreed that adults were good at taking their views into account, compared to 57.4% of all learners; whilst 62.5% of care experienced pupils say they always have an adult in their life they can trust in comparison to 68.2% of all pupils at this stage. 71.4% of care experienced pupils in S1-S3 participate in positive leisure activities, whilst this is true of 84.9% of all pupils in this age group.

[Stirling has one of the lower levels of employment deprivation](#) in Scotland, however there is significant inequality between Stirling's least and most deprived residents. In the SIMD 2020 employment domain, 7% of the population of Stirling's working age were employment deprived (4,215 working age residents). This compares to 9% across Scotland as a whole. Across Stirling's 121 datazones, 7 have employment deprivation ranging from 20% to 31%. By contrast, 58 datazones show a rate of less than 5% employment deprived

Whilst having better than the Scottish average levels of educational attainment, crime, poverty, health and other social outcomes, the gap between the best and poorest performing areas is significant. The Stirling-wide picture of poverty masks large inequalities across the different communities within Stirling. In 2022/23, the percentage ranged from 5.7% (Dunblane and Bridge of Allan) to 27.8% in Bannockburn. Across all wards there has been an increase in poverty since 2014/15, with the largest increases seen in Stirling East and Bannockburn. Twenty-one out of 100 children in Stirling live in relative poverty, compared to 24 in 100 across Scotland.

Key reporting in Stirling

- [Children and Young People's Services Plan \(2023-2026\)](#)
- [Children's Services Plan Annual Report \(2023-2024\)](#)
- [The Promise 10 Year Strategy](#)

- [Corporate Parenting Promise Plan 2024 to 2027](#)
- [Local Child Poverty Action Update Year 6 \(2023-24\)](#)
- [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2027](#)
- [10 Year Strategy: Thriving Stirling](#)
- [Schools, Learning and Education Improvement Plan 2024-2026](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 195 children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in Stirling on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 246 children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 14 per 1000 children in Stirling on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 49 children who entered the 'care system' in Stirling from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 60 children who entered the 'care system' in Stirling between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

33 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This is 16.9% of children who were experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024.

76 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This is 30.9% of children who were experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020.

There were 184 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This is 94.4% of children who were experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024.

There were 223 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This is 90.7% of children who were experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020.

There were 116 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This is 59.5% of children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024.

There were 99 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This is 40.2% of children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020.

31 children were living in foster care in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This represents 15.9% of all children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024. 48 children were living in foster care in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This represents 19.5% of all children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020.

There were 11 children living in residential care in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This is 5.6% of all children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2024.

There were 16 children living in residential care in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This is 6.5% of all children experiencing care in Stirling on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 75 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Stirling, 65 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

21.2% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Stirling during 2022/23. 17.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Stirling during 2022/23. 16.4% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Stirling during 2022/23.

11.8% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Stirling during 2019/20. 13.5% of children had a

developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Stirling during 2019/20. 10.4% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Stirling during 2019/20.

180 children were living in temporary accommodation in Stirling on 30 September 2024.

110 children were living in temporary accommodation in Stirling on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 1972 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Stirling. This represents an average of 13.4% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 3628 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Stirling. This represents an average of 20.9% of children in Stirling.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2234 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Stirling. This represents an average of 14.4% children.

In Stirling on 31 July 2024, there were 20 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Stirling on 31 July 2020, there were 28 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 87.3% in Stirling.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 86.0% in Stirling (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Stirling, fewer than 10 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 21 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

44.4% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Stirling.

34.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Stirling.

11.1% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Stirling.

13.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Stirling.

88.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Stirling. 77.8% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Stirling during 2023.

70.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving

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.

school in Stirling. 45.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Stirling.

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.

147 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Stirling on 31 July 2024. This represents 75% of all children who were 'looked after' in Stirling on that day.

147 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Stirling on 31 July 2020. This represents 60% of all children who were 'looked after' in Stirling on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

17 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Stirling.

51 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Stirling.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

13.8% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Stirling on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

97.0% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Stirling on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Stirling between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 10 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.2 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Stirling between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 316 households living in temporary accommodation in Stirling.

On 30 September 2020, there were 310 households living in temporary accommodation in Stirling.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 471 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Stirling.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 543 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Stirling.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local Change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Voice: Listening

How are you making sure that my experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on?

Stirling Champions Board (Champs) is supported by a full time Champions Board Development Worker. The young people involved in Champs have been key contributors to the development of services over the last six years. Champs is a safe, inclusive, participatory environment where views and experiences of children and young people with experience of care are heard by senior leaders, and through their influence, positive action is taken. This constructive dialogue between young people with experience of care, and key members of the Council and care experience relatives, provides a place where all can work together, and services can be shaped to evoke positive change.

This group has elected to rebrand “Corporate Parents” as “care experience relatives”. This followed significant discussion with a range of partners around the language and terminology of care and corporate parenting, which young people described as *institutional and unloving*. Stirling Council is committed to further exploring the use of “care experience relatives” wherever possible in local strategic planning.

In 2024, Stirling Council engaged in the Bright Spots Programme, a research and service improvement project to understand what is important to children in care and care leavers, and share learning about what makes life good for them. The

work identified areas of good practice, as well as areas where more progress needed to be made:

- (60%) of young people (11-17yrs) felt they saw their brothers and sisters just the right amount, significantly higher than the Bright Spots comparator group (41%)
- The number of Stirling young people (11-17yrs) who answered that they had had three or more Social Workers in the previous year was 1/3 of the amount reported by the Bright Spots comparator group.
- 20% of the children and young people did not know who their social worker is, significantly above the results for the Bright Spots comparator group.
- Overall, 74% (42) of children and young people reported that they 'always' felt safe in their home, significantly below the 88% figure for the Bright Spots comparator group.

SCAFFOLDING: Health

My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different.

Kooth is an online platform that allows users to access a range of emotional wellbeing and mental health supports as and when they need it through an app for a mobile phone or tablet, or via its website. In Stirling, it was launched in 2022 for young people aged 10-18 living or attending school in Stirling; and was expanded in 2023 to include young people up to the age of 26 living within the Stirling Council area. During 2023/24 231 children, young people and young adults accessed Kooth's services, with the profile of the service being raised through focused engagement with schools, local college and university, libraries, Stirling Voluntary Enterprise, and with Job Centres. 73% of log-ins to Kooth have been out of typical office hours. The presenting issues for those accessing the service include: anxiety & stress; body image; loneliness; issues eating; relationship with partner/boyfriend/girlfriend; school/college; self-harm; self-worth and suicidal ideation.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

I have access to support that helps me feel better, and more able to manage, whenever I need it, at different points in my life.

Enhancing Whole Family Support is one of six priorities identified in the [children's services plan](#). A short-term outcome within the plan is for Intensive Intervention to be in place for families who are in crisis or only just coping. To date over 120 children and their families have received support through at least one project. Collectively, an increased number of families within Stirling are receiving family support from services that are more accessible and tailored to a family's individual needs.

The local authority has [highlighted](#) that the late notification of grant allocations and challenges relating to the recruitment and availability of staff have meant that it has taken longer to set-up projects. Multi-agency partners have agreed that remaining funding will be spent both on enhancing the current projects and on new projects that will support the strategic shift towards early help, support and prevention and include:

- Establishing five rural 0-2 groups to improve parenting skills and wellbeing.
- Neurodiversity training for health visitors to enhance the support they provide.
- Development of training materials for work with perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Development of a Family Flexible Fund to support families who face financial hardships to access leisure activities that support whole family wellbeing.

Partners in Stirling have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- [The Better Off Stirling Platform](#), managed and maintained by the Advice Services and Welfare Reform team. There is a working group which meets regularly to ensure the accuracy of the platform content, due to continuous changes in legislation within Welfare Reform. The team identify community groups and organisations that would benefit from awareness sessions on the platform and deliver sessions to promote and build confidence using this.
- The Council's Money Advice Team has:
 - Between April 2023 & March 2024 supported 1,845 new clients to secure additional financial gains of just over £5 million.

- Since the introduction of Scottish Child Payment in February 2021, assisted 99 families with Scottish Child Payment resulting in financial gains of £144,487.00 for these families.
 - Supported 23 families in 2023/4 to secure additional income of £52,300.00.
- Stirling GP Outreach Project has advisers embedded in Fallin, Cowie, Tor, Killin & Drymen practices. Since the start of the project in September 2023 the advisers have supported 124 clients to secure financial gains of £419,498.94.
- Whole family support is being prioritised, via a Family Wellbeing Team who are working to deliver support at the earliest opportunity according to the 10 principles of family support. The Team's work continues over weekends complementing the efforts of services that only operate during the week.
- The Housing First for Families Service has been established to support families most at risk of homelessness.
- Enhanced support for Newly Qualified Social Workers helps ensure they have the knowledge and skills to support young people as effectively as more experienced colleagues.
- Investment in a local *Grow Your Own Social Worker* scheme to retain staff who have existing relationships with children and families, by supporting Family Support Workers to qualify as Social Workers. This is a longer-term recruitment plan, and is not without challenge due to an inability to backfill when staff are undertaking study.
- Supporting transitions - a dedicated Continuing Care and Aftercare Team has been established, recognising the importance of specialist supports as young people move into adulthood/independence. The Housing Service is working to improve the level of support available for young people with care experience which has been well received by them. However, a lack of housing stock makes it more challenging.
- Prioritise working with partners around community-based alternatives when children are at risk of experiencing care, or coming into conflict with the law, with a focus on meeting needs earlier to further reduce the need for compulsory measures.
- Mapping of available additional funding streams – what is available, for what, when do they end etc. The aspiration will be to align strategic leads and coordinate and maximise future funding bids to minimise workload and target appropriate groups.

The Highland Council

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

The Highland Council area covers a third of the land area of Scotland, including the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the country. [Highland has a population of approximately 235,710, making it the 7th most populated area in Scotland. Between 2001 and 2021 the population has increased by 13.9%, in comparison to a Scottish increase of 8.2%.](#) 52% of people in Highland live in remote rural areas, accessible rural areas or remote small towns. It is part of the Highlands and Islands Police Division which has [35 police stations](#).

[Of the people aged 16 to 64 in Highland, 76% were employed in the year ending December 2023, which is an increase from the previous year. Unemployment has also fallen since the year earlier to 2.5% - lower than across Scotland as a whole.](#) By 2034, there is projected to be a 9% fall in the working age population in Highland.

[Communities in Highland are served by 184 primary schools, 29 secondary schools, 3 special education schools, and nearly 200 nurseries.](#) The University of Highlands islands operates campuses cross the Highland Region. There are 86 GP practices in Highland and it is served by [one District General Hospital, Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, and three Rural General Hospitals: Belford Hospital in Fort William, and Caithness General Hospital in Wick](#) According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [3799 third sector organisations operating in Highland, including 830 dedicated to social care.](#)

[Highland's current Child Poverty Plan states that in 2023/24, 9,776 children in Highland were living in poverty after housing costs.](#) This means the average primary school class of 25 pupils in NHS Highland now has around five children

living in low-income families, and in some of the most deprived areas, this figure can be as high as 12. At the time of the Plan's publication, 11,975 children in Highland who were living in low-income families already receiving qualifying benefits, received the Scottish Child Payment.

The characteristics of rural and island life are recognised as potential compounders of the main drivers of child poverty. Highland's Child Poverty Plan highlights that income from work and earnings can be seasonal and unpredictable, and living costs can be higher with high levels of fuel poverty, higher prices for goods, and unaffordable housing. [Low levels of take-up of welfare support in rural and remote areas has been highlighted as a challenge.](#)

Key reporting in Highland

- [Highland Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Highland Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Highland Promise Plan 2025-2028](#)
- [Highland Local Child Poverty Action Update Report](#)
- [Keeping The Promise in Highland: Evaluation Report](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023/24](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Highland December 2022](#)

The most recent data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 432 children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 24 per 1000 children in Highland on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 495 children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 11 per 1000 children in Highland on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 145 children who entered the 'care system' in Highland from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 136 children who entered the 'care system' in Highland between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

110 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Highland on 31 July 2024. This is 25.5% of children who were experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024.

141 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Highland on 31 July 2020. This is 28.5% of children who were experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020.

There were 375 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Highland on 31 July 2024. This is 86.8% of children who were experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024.

There were 411 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Highland on 31 July 2020. This is 83.0% of children who were experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020.

There were 81 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Highland on 31 July 2024. This is 18.8% of children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024.

There were 98 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Highland on 31 July 2020. This is 19.8% of children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020.

141 children were living in foster care in Highland on 31 July 2024. This represents 32.6% of all children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024.

152 children were living in foster care in Highland on 31 July 2020. This represents 30.7% of all children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020.

There were 57 children living in residential care in Highland on 31 July 2024. This is 13.2% of all children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2024.

There were 84 children living in residential care in Highland on 31 July 2020. This is 17.0% of all children experiencing care in Highland on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 166 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Highland, 152 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 4 per 1,000).

12.9% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Highland during 2022/23. 16.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Highland during 2022/23. 13.6% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Highland during 2022/23.

8.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Highland during 2019/20. 12.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Highland during 2019/20.

140 children were living in temporary accommodation in Highland on 30 September 2024.

205 children were living in temporary accommodation in Highland on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 5783 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Highland. This represents an average of 15.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 10627 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Highland. This represents an average of 23.2% of children in Highland.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 6219 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Highland. This represents an average of 16.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4560 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Highland. This represents an average of 12.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4970 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Highland. This represents an average of 12.8% children.

In Highland on 31 July 2024, there were 59 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In Highland on 31 July 2020, there were 45 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 83.3% in Highland.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 87.0% in Highland (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Highland, 67 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 204 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

31.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Highland.

57.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Highland.

10.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Highland.

21.1% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Highland.

82.8% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Highland. 69.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Highland during 2023.

64.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Highland. 69.4% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who

experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Highland.

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.

222 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Highland on 31 July 2024. This represents 51% of all children who were 'looked after' in Highland on that day.

250 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Highland on 31 July 2020. This represents 51% of all children who were 'looked after' in Highland on that day.

5 children were admitted to secure care during 2024 in Highland.

9 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in Highland.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

140 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Highland.

182 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Highland.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

61.4% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Highland on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

17.1% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Highland on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Highland between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 9 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.7 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 536 households living in temporary accommodation in Highland.

On 30 September 2020, there were 880 households living in temporary accommodation in Highland.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 1306 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Highland.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 1091 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Highland.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Voice

The words people use when they're speaking or writing don't make me feel different, embarrassed, singled out or blamed.

Mind your Ps and Qs – Highland's preferred language academy

This project includes a preferred language academy and a 'Keep the Promise' [language guide](#). This work was developed through engagement with children and young people with experience of care and professionals working with children.

The language guide seeks to change system language, and more importantly, the practice associated with that language as demanded by the promise to ensure young people, and families do not face othering and stigmatisation.

My experiences have been sought out, listened to, valued and acted on.

My Journey Journal

The Highland Strategic Partnership's 'Moving On' Subgroup, a partnership of third sector organisations including Aberlour, Barnardo's, Action for Children and Inspiring Young Voices, developed the 'My Journey' book.

The '[My Journey Book](#)' was created to be a journal for care experienced young people to fill in what will help them feel in control of what is happening on their care experience journey. It was co-designed with and written by care experienced young people in Highland, sharing that they would like to empower

other young people to have a voice and feel in control of the decisions being made about them.

Family

[People are working together to make sure my family and I are getting help early on, as soon as we need it, so that we can get through difficult times and stay together.](#)

Families 1st Strategy

In 2023 Highland's Children's Services developed its Families 1st strategy to ensure that children and young people are able to remain with their families within their Highland communities where it is safe to do so.

As part of this, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) was introduced in June 2023 as part of a 12-month pilot. Three FGDM co-ordinators were appointed to deliver the service and, since the pilot commenced, the team has supported 33 children and their families to develop family plans or contribute to the child's plan. An evaluation is underway, and Highland Council have committed to maintaining and expanding the service across [Highland](#).

Highland have also developed flexible models of childcare in rural areas, including increasing the number of childminders to support parental [employment](#).

Home to Highland Programme

The programme aims to return care experienced young people to Highland who are living in a home outside of the local authority whilst also developing services to avoid needing specialist Out of Authority provisions and allow children to remain in their communities. The [number of children](#) living outwith Highland is at the lowest levels recorded since the programme began in 2018. The number of children living in residential homes out of the local authority has reduced from 48 in June 2018 to 12 in December 2023.

Although the original focus of Home to Highland was to bring children back to Highland, integrating this into the Families 1st Strategy has enabled Highland to focus on practice improvements alongside increased community resources so that children don't need to move outwith the area.

Partners in Highland have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- The Conversation Café was developed for those working to keep the promise to hear about activity happening in Highland, engage with colleagues across the workforce, and to share ideas of practice.
- Highland are prioritising raising awareness of what keeping the promise means across the whole workforce.
- Highland is prioritising changing system language so that it does not stigmatise children, young people, families and care experienced adults.
- The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) are:
 - Investing in additional staffing resource within their Access & Transitions team and employing an additional 1FTE role to directly support their care experienced learners.
 - Establishing a 365-day lease in their student halls to support stability of accommodation.
 - Appointing a dedicated funding adviser for care experienced learners.
 - Introducing budgeting support which is offered to all care experienced students.
 - Establishing a new programme in partnership with the local authority to re-engage care experienced young people, aged under 25, into further education.
 - Having all curriculum managers and front-facing student support team managers engage with training on trauma informed practice with Each and Every Child and signed up to CDN Trauma Informed College programme.

Several priority areas are identified in Highland's children's services plan:

Getting Started: Pre- birth – 5 years

Highland will:

- Reduce financial barriers on families and mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.
- Ensure that unborn babies, infants and children in early years get the right help at the right time and are protected and safe.
- Honour The Promise by developing a family centred trauma informed approach to support.

- Ensure children's rights are evident in practice.
- Enable and empower families to good health and develop approaches to codesign support.
- Develop a whole family approach to drugs and alcohol which effectively recognises and supports parents, unborn infants and babies affected by drugs and alcohol.

Growing Up: Primary Years

Highland will:

- Reduce financial barriers on families and close the poverty related attainment gap.
- Support the development of prevention and early help and support approaches to protect children through their primary years.
- Ensure Whole Family Support to ensure all of Highland's children are support in their local community to stay with their families wherever possible.
- Ensure children's rights are evident in practice.
- Support a whole family, whole community, whole system approach to improving health and wellbeing, and develop its partnership workforce in mental health and wellbeing.
- Revise and improve the programme of substance use education and prevention in schools and wider settings to ensure it is good quality, impactful and in line with best practice.

Moving on: secondary to young adulthood

- Highland will:
- Reduce financial barriers and mitigate the cost-of-living crisis,
- Ensure young people are protected and their needs and voices are considered particularly those at risk from community harm.
- Ensure there is robust support for care experienced young people to move into adulthood.
- Ensure children's rights are evident in practice.
- Enable, empower and support healthy choices for young adults particularly supporting self-management of their own mental health and wellbeing/
- Support early help and support amongst young people who are at higher risk of developing problem alcohol and drug use.

The Moray Council

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

Moray is a council area in north-east Scotland, bordered by the Moray Firth to the north and stretching into the Cairngorms National Park in the south. Covering around 2,239 km², it has a relatively low population density of about 43 people per km². As of [2022 the population was estimated at 95,780](#) with approximately 18,093 children under 18 years old.

[Moray Council oversees 53 schools](#), comprising 45 primary schools and 8 secondary schools, serving a student population of approximately 12,110 pupils as of the 2023/24 academic year. It is also home to Moray College UHI. According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1017 third sector organisations operating in Moray, including 252 dedicated to social care](#). There are 16 GP practices in Moray and it is served by [4 hospitals](#). It is part of the North East Police Division which has [40 police stations](#).

Despite a relatively low unemployment rate of [3.0% as of May 2024](#), economic inactivity rose to 24.7%, higher than the national average. Between 2014 and 2022, child poverty in Moray rose to 24.1%, just below the national average of 24.5%, but representing the [fastest rate of increase in Scotland](#). Tackling poverty and inequality has been identified as a priority in [Moray's Corporate Plan 2024–29](#), emerging as the strongest focus area in a recent public consultation. Current efforts to address poverty include strengthening collaboration across services such as children's services, transport, housing, and expanding wraparound childcare; including improving educational attainment; increasing youth work engagement; and enhancing access to income support and advice.

According to the [Moray Children's Services Plan 2023–26](#), there were 35 children were living in temporary accommodation at the time of publication. Many

children affected by poverty live in households where at least one parent is in employment. Poverty in Moray is not confined to the most deprived areas as only 7.1% of income-deprived residents live in the most deprived geographic zones. [The plan](#) also highlights a sharp rise in food insecurity and growing demand for financial assistance among families. Fuel poverty remains a significant concern: data from 2017–2019 showed nearly one-third of households were fuel poor, with 19% in extreme fuel poverty. Given recent economic pressures, the proportion of households affected is likely to have increased.

Key reporting in Moray

- [Moray's Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Children services plan Annual report 2022/23](#)
- [Children's Rights and Participation Plan](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2024](#)
- [Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- [Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Moray community planning partnership January 2024](#)

The most recent data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 177 children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 21 per 1000 children in Moray on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 188 children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 10 per 1000 children in Moray on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 69 children who entered the 'care system' in Moray from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 52 children who entered the 'care system' in Moray between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

37 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Moray on 31 July 2024. This is 20.9% of children who were experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024.

40 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in Moray on 31 July 2020. This is 21.3% of children who were experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020.

There were 138 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Moray on 31 July 2024. This is 78.0% of children who were experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024.

There were 153 children experiencing care who were living in the community in Moray on 31 July 2020. This is 81.4% of children who were experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020.

There were 44 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Moray on 31 July 2024. This is 24.9% of children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024.

There were 48 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in Moray on 31 July 2020. This is 25.5% of children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020.

55 children were living in foster care in Moray on 31 July 2024. This represents 31.1% of all children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024.

60 children were living in foster care in Moray on 31 July 2020. This represents 31.9% of all children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020.

There were 39 children living in residential care in Moray on 31 July 2024. This is 22.0% of all children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2024.

There were 35 children living in residential care in Moray on 31 July 2020. This is 18.6% of all children experiencing care in Moray on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 102 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in Moray, 84 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 5 per 1,000).

11.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Moray during 2022/23. 12.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Moray during 2022/23. 11.7% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Moray during 2022/23.

2.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in Moray during 2019/20. 4.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in Moray during 2019/20. 4.0% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in Moray during 2019/20.

25 children were living in temporary accommodation in Moray on 30 September 2024.

30 children were living in temporary accommodation in Moray on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2575 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Moray. This represents an average of 16.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4095 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in Moray. This represents an average of 22.8% of children in Moray.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2607 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in Moray. This represents an average of 16.6% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2047 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Moray. This represents an average of 13.1% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2146 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in Moray. This represents an average of 13.7% children.

In Moray on 31 July 2024, there were 28 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 83.4% in Moray.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 89.0% in Moray (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In Moray, 22 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 156 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

35.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Moray.

37.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in Moray.

10.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Moray.

12.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in Moray.

70.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Moray. 70.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Moray during 2023.

84.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in Moray. 72.2% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in Moray.

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.

99 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Moray on 31 July 2024. This represents 56% of all children who were 'looked after' in Moray on that day.

108 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in Moray on 31 July 2020. This represents 57% of all children who were 'looked after' in Moray on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

61 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in Moray.

54 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in Moray.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

26.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Moray on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

52.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in Moray on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by Moray between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 7 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 1.2 children per 1000.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 110 households living in temporary accommodation in Moray.

On 30 September 2020, there were 150 households living in temporary accommodation in Moray.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 397 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Moray.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 344 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in Moray.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

Voice

[I am meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that affect me.](#)

[The Better Meetings Project](#) is led by a group of care experienced young people and aims to ensure that children and young people have real choice and feel fully involved in shaping their own meetings.

Since starting in 2019, the group has shared their personal experiences of how meetings and Children's Hearings feel from their perspective, highlighting how professionals can better support them. Working in partnership with *Out of the Darkness*, a local theatre company, they produced three powerful films – *Your Voice Matters*, *Fearing the Hearing*, and *The Voice that Matters*. These films have helped raise awareness and amplify the voices of care experienced young people both locally and nationally.

As a result of this work, the group co-produced a practitioner's guide to help professionals better support young people before, during, and after meetings. They are also developing child-friendly meeting spaces and practical checklists for all involved.

In October 2022, the young people hosted an event to showcase their work to Sheriff David Mackie and members of the National Hearings System Redesign Group. In January 2023, the Better Meetings approach was officially launched across Moray, and the practitioner guides were rolled out. By March 2023, the project was presented to the multi-agency Child's Planning Group, who are now applying the approach to child's planning meetings across Moray.

The [Moray Champions Board](#) is a forum for care experienced young people aged 16 and over to engage directly with key decision-makers and help drive positive change within the care system. The Board has 20 young people actively involved. Those aged 10 to 16 have their own dedicated forum, known as Little Fix. Key achievements include young people leading the planning and delivery of events to celebrate national Care Day and taking a central role in the commissioning of advocacy services and residential children's homes in Moray.

Care

[All transitions are planned out with me and I know what to expect.](#)

In 2022, care experienced young people who had faced homelessness were invited to share their views to help identify where improvements were needed for those transitioning out of care. One key area highlighted was the importance of tailored support to help young people maintain their tenancies. Their input directly shaped the development of a local Housing Needs Protocol for care experienced young people, which is now being put into practice.

Housing services are now involved earlier in planning young people's transitions to independent living. In addition, the Throughcare and Aftercare team has introduced a new planning tool called *My Future, My Plan*, which takes a holistic approach to supporting young people through their journey from care into adulthood.

Scaffolding

[I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.](#)

The [Mentoring Young Talent Programme](#) supports young people in secondary school (S1 to S6) who need extra help to build confidence, learn new skills, and gain qualifications. The programme has been running for three years.

In 2022, after speaking with members of the Moray Champions Board, the decision was made to focus more on care experienced young people, as they were facing more difficulties moving on to work, training, or further education compared to their peers.

Seven care experienced school leavers were matched with mentors. As a result, all of them (100%) went on to study at UHI Moray.

Overall, the project has helped improve the number of care experienced young people in Moray moving on to positive destinations. Recent figures show that in 2021, 75% of care experienced children moved on to a positive destination and in 2022, this increased to 81%.

Partners in Moray have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- [The Children's Services Plan](#) recognises the need for pooling collective resources and the willingness of a skilled workforce to support Moray's children and families. Efforts are being made across the community planning partnership to align various multi-agency strategies at local level

that are all working to improve the lives of children and families, including the community learning plan, community safety strategy and alcohol and drug partnership strategy.

- Strategic planning and reporting within children's services have been strengthened by aligning the priority areas of the Children's Services Plan with the relevant strategic groups. These groups are responsible for delivering their respective action plans and providing quarterly progress reports to the GIRFEC Leadership Group and the Community Planning Partnership.
- Moray Council has established a dedicated Promise Team, comprising a Project Lead and an Engagement Officer—both with care experience—under the management of the Promise and GIRFEC Lead Officer. The team is developing a Promise Keepers Network, which currently includes 50 representatives from Health, Education, Social Work, Police, and third sector organisations.
- The whole systems approach to early help and support and youth diversion for young people who experience the criminal justice system has made progress. There is now a single point of contact with the police for each residential children's home in Moray which is supporting positive relationships to be built with young people. All justice social workers have taken part in trauma-informed report writing training and improvements have been made to identify care experienced young people within the criminal justice system.
- Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) is a Scottish Government initiative aimed at securing stable, long-term homes for care experienced children and young people. Since its implementation in Moray, the number of young people experiencing three or more moves has reduced by 50% since 2020.
- Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has been used to appoint a Virtual School Head Teacher. This post has enabled improved identification and understanding of the challenges care experienced young people can face in education. Work to improve data collection and analysis to inform improvements across children's services.
- The Virtual School Head teacher will work alongside key partners to analyse data on exclusions, attendance and attainment to build an improved understanding of how to support and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people in school.
- A new model of holistic family support is being tested in Moray, the findings from the test phase will inform changes to how family support is delivered.

- In response to the decline of foster carers Moray has been leading a campaign co-designed with current foster carers to share experiences. This has led to eight new foster care households.
-

West Dunbartonshire

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[West Dunbartonshire](#) has a population of 88,750, accounting for 1.6% of the total population of Scotland, with 26.5% of the population aged 25 and under. West Dunbartonshire's total population has been falling over time as Scotland's has risen, linked to a steady decrease in the birth rate year on year. By 2039 the population of West Dunbartonshire is projected to be 83,922, a decrease of 6.7 % from 2014. The children and young people of the area are [served by 32 primary schools, five secondary schools, and three additional support needs schools](#), as well as the Clydebank campus of West College Scotland. There are 17 GP practices in West Dunbartonshire and it is served by [2 hospitals](#) . According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [731 third sector organisations operating in West Dunbartonshire, including 227 dedicated to social care](#).

West Dunbartonshire has life expectancy rates that are [below the Scottish average, with the second lowest](#) life expectancy at birth of all Scottish Local Authorities. Locally, the average life expectancy for females is 79.2 years (80.8 years Scotland) and 74.3 years for males (76.8 years Scotland) . In terms of [healthy life expectancy](#), for females this 56.7 years (61.1 years Scotland) and for males 56.4 years (60.4 years Scotland).

There are 3,900 children (aged 0-15 years) in West Dunbartonshire living in [relative low income families](#). This is the highest number since 2017. With 2,934 children affected, 2021 had the lowest number of children in poverty. This is generally attributed to an increase in the provision of Universal Credit during the covid-19 period. 26.6% of children in West Dunbartonshire live in poverty, higher than both Great Britain and Scotland proportions.

[West Dunbartonshire](#) has the highest percentage of children with at least one developmental concern being identified at the 27–30 month health visitor assessment. In addition, 13% of the children accessing funded early learning and childcare have social, emotional and behavioural difficulty compared to the Scottish average of 5%.

Domestic Abuse rates in West Dunbartonshire are the second highest in Scotland, at [153 incidents per 10,000 population](#) reported to Police Scotland. Children are adversely affected by domestic abuse with the average number of people involved per incident remaining at four (victim, perpetrator and two children). This is the second highest reason for referral to SCRA on non-offence grounds in 2023/24.

Key reporting in West Dunbartonshire

- [West Dunbartonshire Children's Services Plan](#)
- [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan](#)
- [Child Poverty Annual Report](#)
- [HSCP Strategic Plan](#)
- [HSCP Performance Report](#)
- [Chief Social Worker Officers Report 2023/24](#)
- [Outcome of supported improvement work in West Dunbartonshire – Care Inspectorate April 2023](#)

The most recent data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 475 children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 41 per 1000 children in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 506 children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 29 per 1000 children in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 100 children who entered the 'care system' in West Dunbartonshire from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 84 children who entered the 'care system' in West Dunbartonshire between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

71 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 14.9% of children who were experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

113 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 22.3% of children who were experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 427 children experiencing care who were living in the community in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 89.9% of children who were experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 461 children experiencing care who were living in the community in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 91.1% of

children who were experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 237 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 49.9% of children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 212 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 41.9% of children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

115 children were living in foster care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 24.2% of all children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

114 children were living in foster care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 22.5% of all children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

There were 48 children living in residential care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is 10.1% of all children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024.

There were 45 children living in residential care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is 8.9% of all children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 114 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in West Dunbartonshire, 84 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 5 per 1,000).

6.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in West Dunbartonshire during 2022/23. 27.7% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in West Dunbartonshire during 2022/23. 24.3% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in West Dunbartonshire during 2022/23.

3.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in West Dunbartonshire during 2019/20. 20.6% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in West Dunbartonshire during 2019/20. 21.2% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in West Dunbartonshire during 2019/20.

115 children were living in temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire on 30 September 2024.

55 children were living in temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2937 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 19.5% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 4373 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in West Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 26.6% of children in West Dunbartonshire.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 3452 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 22.2% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 2239 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 14.9% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 2721 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Dunbartonshire. This represents an average of 17.5% children.

In West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024, there were 33 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020, there were 30 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

There were 475 children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 41 per 1000 children in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 506 children experiencing care in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 29 per 1000 children in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 84.5% in West Dunbartonshire.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 88.0% in West Dunbartonshire (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In West Dunbartonshire, 26 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 76 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures

are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

57.1% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in West Dunbartonshire.

43.5% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in West Dunbartonshire.

17.9% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in West Dunbartonshire.

13.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in West Dunbartonshire.

89.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in West Dunbartonshire. 82.1% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in West Dunbartonshire during 2023.

66.7% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in West Dunbartonshire. 66.7% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in West Dunbartonshire.

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.

352 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. This represents 74% of all children who were 'looked after' in West Dunbartonshire on that day.

326 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020. This represents 64% of all children who were 'looked after' in West Dunbartonshire on that day.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

105 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in West Dunbartonshire.
80 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in West Dunbartonshire.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

7.9% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)

71.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in West Dunbartonshire on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by West Dunbartonshire between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 17 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 3.0 children per 1000.

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by West Dunbartonshire between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 0 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 273 households living in temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire.

On 30 September 2020, there were 317 households living in temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 869 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in West Dunbartonshire.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 905 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in West Dunbartonshire.

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

SCAFFOLDING: Education

I am getting the support I need to overcome things that make it hard for me to participate, learn and thrive in education.

West Dunbartonshire's Care Connections programme is a pilot project involving Education and 3rd sector organisation YSort-It. It focuses on young people who are 10-16 years old who are care experienced at home within the Clydebank area. It takes place in two local high schools and the relevant feeder primary schools across Clydebank. Care Connections offers care experienced young people an opportunity to access additional support appropriate to their needs. The programme's primary aim is to raise attainment and narrow the attainment gap between children who experience care at home and their peers. The partnership approach of the programme offers continuous support throughout the young person's school life, offering a progression route to a positive destination beyond school.

The approach differs from isolated provision and involves partnership working which allows the young person to thrive. Care Connections aims to:

- Ensure that young people who are cared for by the local authority at home are known to the YSort-it Care Connections Support Workers through close links to Clydebank schools and to work with those who would benefit from the programme on an ongoing basis
- Provide a support pathway throughout a young person's school life and beyond.
- Maximise opportunities for children and the parents of children who experience care at home.
- Offer a long-term relationship with someone who is independent and is a positive influence in their life; who is active at providing support and encouragement, helping them to overcome challenges/ barriers and

working towards goals to improve their learning, skills and personal development.

The West Partnership Promise group is supporting the development of the Promise Award for use across the partnership. The purpose of this modular course is to support schools in developing their awareness and understanding of The Promise. This learning was shared with all schools during session 2023-2024, building a 'care experienced lens' and our commitment to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for our care experienced young people.

SCAFFOLDING: Justice

If I have to be in contact with any part of the justice system, I can still thrive, my health, wellbeing, and education are prioritised, and my opportunities are not limited or negatively impacted by that contact.

Police Scotland have nationally introduced the Not At Home (NAH) process as well as the Philomena protocol in all children's houses, with the desired outcome of reducing the disproportionate criminalisation of care experienced children and young people. Within West Dunbartonshire, this has been introduced into each of the children's houses in the area.

The NAH process has helped to reduce the stigma attached to children within children's houses with unnecessary police involvement when the children fail to return home for a certain time. This is an attempt to create a more "family" orientated home.

CARE: Relationships

Where it is safe to do so, I can live with my brother(s) (and) sister(s).

In West Dunbartonshire in March 2023, 38% of children and young people stayed with all of their brothers and sisters whilst cared for by the local authority, whilst 27% of children and young people were with one, but not all their brothers and sisters and 35% were separated from all their brothers and sisters.

68% of respondents to the Brothers and Sisters survey about time together, reported that there was no formal plan in place to support their time together with brothers and sisters out-with contact with their wider family.

Actions to consider within this report span data, local policy and protocols, supporting and promoting creative practice and quality assurance. A Brothers and Sisters Charter, led by care experienced children and young people, is designed to make sure everyone is clear on the value of sibling relationships and the commitment to supporting and nurturing these relationships. It will also ensure there is a mechanism for routine data collection around the separation of brothers and sisters.

This work has been carried out as part of the Keeping the Promise Working Group on Brothers and Sisters, which aims to understand how well the area is doing at keeping brothers and sisters together currently; the factors impacting upon separation, and how well connections between siblings are being maintained when they are separated. This will support future proofing of services, building capacity and culture change within systems to ensure relationships between brothers and sisters are valued and protected.

Partners in West Dunbartonshire have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- Action to support the care experienced community experiencing poverty includes:
 - Establishing 'West Dunbartonshire for Families' hubs –providing a one-stop-shop supporting families through the 10 principles of family support.
 - Providing Council Tax exemption up to the age of 26 years for people with care experience.
 - Care experienced rent abatement in ongoing further education (including modern apprenticeships)
 - Payment of £2,000 available to for care experienced people setting up their own first tenancy.
 - Care experience and kinship care winter fuel payments and grants.
 - There is also the 'Care Leavers' Housing Protocol, which provides care experienced young people and adults with access to affordable, permanent housing. 51 young people have accessed tenancies using this.

- Families in West Dunbartonshire are able to access [help and support](#) via Hubs developed through the Whole Family Wellbeing fund. Over the last year, the three hubs in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria have supported 189 children and 36 families, with a further 75 families currently being supported via the hubs. The hubs offer a range of universal, targeted and specialist services to help and encourage families to flourish. The diverse range of specialist support includes Neurodevelopmental workers; Education Outreach workers; Speech and Language Therapists; Occupational Therapists and Family Nursing staff.
- Adoption of “Shannon’s box” providing a nurturing welcome box when children and young people begin to experience care outside of their family.
- Additional funding was allocated to recruit 10 new foster carers, with a view to recruiting carers who could support sibling groups.
- Additional funding was allocated to allow all Children’s Houses staff to benefit from Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy training. This has been received very well by staff and has been embedded within practice across Children’s Houses.
- A language campaign was also launched by young people within one Children’s House; “Words Matter Campaign”, around supporting people to reflect on the language of the care system.
- A Keeping the Promise sub-group was created in July 2022, which reports to the Children’s Services Partnership Nurtured Delivery Improvement Group (DIG). This group has representation from 23 different services, including Children and Families social work, education, health, Police, Residential child care, Youth Justice, Family Placement team, SCRA, CHS, Who Cares Scotland?, Partners in Advocacy, Further Education, Welfare Rights, Health Improvement, Elected Members, local kinship carers group, Y-Sort It (local 3rd sector organisation) and The Promise Scotland. This sub-group is increasing awareness of The Promise across partners, with members acting as champions and sharing updates with their respective teams, as well as feeding in information from their colleagues and the community they work with.
- Four Independent Reviewing Officers were appointed in May 2023. This is a new role for West Dunbartonshire. They conduct all reviews for care experienced children within West Dunbartonshire. This has brought increased accountability, consistency and independence to these reviews, and supported improving the experience of children and families in making meetings more accessible and child friendly.

- There has been an increase in the uptake of independent advocacy provided by Who Cares? Scotland and Partners in Advocacy. One potential reason for this could be the introduction of our Independent Reviewing Coordinators, who now consider advocacy at every review meeting.
 - Viewpoint, a software tool to gather children and young people's views to inform their care planning is being used. A pilot is being launched with foster carers around the use of the Viewpoint app, which has a "My Story" section; a function to upload photographs and videos accompanied by narrative. The aim is to achieve more consistent collection and storage of photos/materials to support care experienced children's life story, contributing to a coherent narrative around their time in care, now and in the future.
 - An area identified within promise work has been around infant voice and promoting infant mental health. Within the wider agenda of ensuring the voice of those with lived experience of care is embedded within planning and delivery of services, it is essential that the voice of the youngest children is heard and responded to. There is work to look at incorporating the recommendations within the [Keeping the Promise to Infants](#) (NSPCC,2023) report and the Scottish Government's Voice of the Infant: best practice guidelines and infant pledge.
-

West Lothian

Local context

Below is an outline of the local area using publicly available data and information. This data and information does not represent the entirety of the local context, and local differences mean it cannot be used to draw binary conclusions or comparisons. It also, crucially, does not reflect the voices and experiences of care experienced babies, children, young people, adults, and their families.

[West Lothian has a population of approximately 185,580](#) and is one of the fastest growing: between 2001 and 2021 the population increased by 16.7%, the fifth highest percentage increase in Scotland. By comparison, over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 8.2%. Based on 2021 mid-year population estimates, the West Lothian population of children and young people aged 0-15 years was 35,133 which is 18.9% of the total population. This is a 0.5% increase since 2001, versus a 6.1% decrease of the 0-15-year-old population across Scotland for the same time period. In 2022-23, 23.9% of children were living in poverty

The community is served by [1 hospital](#) and [17 GP practices](#). It is part of the Lothians and Borders Police Division which has [23 police stations](#).

Communities are served by [69 primary schools](#), [13 secondary schools](#), [5 stand-alone additional support schools](#), and [100 nurseries \(64 council-funded and 36 private council partner nurseries\)](#). It is also home to West Lothian College. Of people aged 16 to 64 years living in West Lothian, 74.4% were employed in the year ending December 2023. This is a decrease compared with the year ending December 2022 when the local rate was 76.9%.

According to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) there are [1442 third sector organisations operating in West Lothian, including 444 dedicated to social care](#).

Key reporting in West Lothian

- [Children's Services Plan 23-26](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Plan 23-26](#)

- [West Lothian Children's Services Annual Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2023-24](#)
- [Better Off West Lothian](#)

The most recently available data relevant to the promise says:

Where children are in their families and feel loved, they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

There were 317 children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is a rate of 22 per 1000 children in West Lothian on 31 July 2024 (percentages per population based on NRS 2023 mid-year population estimates).

There were 441 children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is a rate of 11 per 1000 children in West Lothian on 31 July 2020 (as a percentage of the 0-17 population).

There were 88 children who entered the 'care system' in West Lothian from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.

There were 131 children who entered the 'care system' in West Lothian between 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

41 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 12.9% of children who were experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024.

96 children experiencing care were living at home with parents in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 21.8% of children who were experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 275 children experiencing care who were living in the community in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 86.8% of children who were experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 403 children experiencing care who were living in the community in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 91.4% of children who were experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 113 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 35.6% of children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 150 children living with family or friends in kinship care, in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 34.0% of children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020.

119 children were living in foster care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 37.5% of all children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024.

152 children were living in foster care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 34.5% of all children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020.

There were 42 children living in residential care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This is 13.2% of all children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2024.

There were 38 children living in residential care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This is 8.6% of all children experiencing care in West Lothian on 31 July 2020.

(Note: this number includes those in local authority homes, voluntary homes, and 'other residential care', which includes 'crisis care, secure accommodation, and residential school'.)

From the 119 initial and pre-birth Case Conferences held during 2023/24 in West Lothian , 72 were added to the child protection register (a rate of 2 per 1,000).

17.5% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in West Lothian during 2022/23. 19.4% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in West Lothian during 2022/23. 15.3% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in West Lothian during 2022/23.

17.0% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 month review in West Lothian during 2019/20. 16.3% of children had a developmental concern recorded at their 27-30 month review in West Lothian during 2019/20. 12.9% had a developmental concern recorded at their 4-5 year reviews in West Lothian during 2019/20.

460 children were living in temporary accommodation in West Lothian on 30 September 2024.

310 children were living in temporary accommodation in West Lothian on 31 March 2020.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 5697 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Lothian. This represents an average of 16.8% children.

According to the End Child Poverty Coalition, across 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, there were an average of 8916 children living in relative poverty, after housing costs, annually in West Lothian. This represents an average of 23.8% of children in West Lothian.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 6066 children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Lothian. This represents an average of 17.7% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2022-2024, there was an average of 4407 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Lothian. This represents an average of 13.0% children.

According to the UK Government, across 2018-2020, there was an average of 4871 children (aged under 16) living in Absolute low income families, before housing costs, annually in West Lothian. This represents an average of 14.3% children.

In West Lothian on 31 July 2024, there were 18 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

In West Lothian on 31 July 2020, there were 58 children on the Child Protection Register with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.

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 rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2022/23 was 83.0% in West Lothian.

The rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year 2020/21 was 90.0% in West Lothian (Data for 2020/21 has been used, as data is not available for 2019/2020).

In West Lothian , 15 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year were excluded. This is a rate of 49 per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year (Note: Figures are for the local authority responsible for the 'looked after' child. 'Looked after' children may attend school in a different local authority to the one that is responsible for them).

30.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in West Lothian.

31.0% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better) in West Lothian.

3.3% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in West Lothian.

3.4% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, achieved at least one SCQF level 6 qualification (or better) in West Lothian.

60.0% of children leaving school in 2022/23, who experienced care in their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in West Lothian. 50.0% of children who experienced care in their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in West Lothian during 2023.

83.8% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, initially entered a positive destination after leaving school in West Lothian. 64.9% of children leaving school in 2020/21, who experienced care during their last year at school, had entered a positive destination 9 months after leaving school in West Lothian.

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.

232 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. This represents 73% of all children who were 'looked after' in West Lothian on that day.

302 children were 'looked after' away from home with foster carers or kinship carers in West Lothian on 31 July 2020. This represents 68% of all children who were 'looked after' in West Lothian on that day.

0 children were admitted to secure care during 2023 in West Lothian.
7 children were admitted to secure care during 2020 in West Lothian.

Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.

69 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024 in West Lothian.
107 children were referred to the children's reporter on offence grounds between 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 in West Lothian.

Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.

16.6% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in West Lothian on 31 July 2024. (Note: There is a query ongoing in relation to the accuracy of this published dataset)
73.2% of young people eligible for aftercare services were receiving services in West Lothian on 31 July 2020

Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by West Lothian between 01 August 2023 and 31 July 2024, 9 went on to continuing care. This represents a rate of 0.8 children per 1000.
Of those young people ceasing to be looked after by West Lothian between 01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020, 11 went on to continuing care.

Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.

On 30 September 2024, there were 695 households living in temporary accommodation in West Lothian.
On 30 September 2020, there were 608 households living in temporary accommodation in West Lothian.

In the 12 months ending 30 September 2024, 976 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in West Lothian .
In the 12 months ending 30 September 2020, 1192 households were assessed as homeless by the local authority in West Lothian .

To protect confidentiality, publicly available datasets suppress small numbers, such as those relating to children in secure care. As a result, the tables in this report may not present data for a completely uniform set of indicators, as unavailable data has been excluded. In a limited number of instances, suppressed data is included in calculations and are therefore only estimates.

The most recent data has been used. Where available, 2020 (or the nearest year to 2020) is used as a comparator to align with when the promise was made.

Local change

The following section presents snapshots of activity underway in local areas, all of which are publicly available having been published by councils and partners as examples of their work to keep the promise:

VOICE: Participation and Engagement

How are you ensuring that I am actively and meaningfully involved in decisions and plans that will affect me.

Having Your Say is a well-established forum in West Lothian for care experienced children and young people that promotes participation, provides peers support, opportunities to discuss important themes and informs on children's rights. Having Your Say have been involved in recent Customer Service Excellence assessments, showcasing their achievements, highlighting the various forums they are involved in and explaining how they are supported to share their views. These children and young people are regularly involved in discussions about the strategic direction and priorities for West Lothian, for instance the corporate parenting plan.

SCAFFOLDING: Health

My mental, emotional and physical wellbeing are being consistently cared for without it making me feel singled out or different.

West Lothian is delivering [HENRY – Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young](#). There are now 3 HENRY trainers within the areas, and work is underway to consider how to increase number of courses moving forward. In 2023/4 six HENRY training sessions were delivered. Evidence shows HENRY supports:

- Increased practitioner confidence to tackle complex and sensitive lifestyle issues
- Health Visitors, and family support practitioners to continue to use the knowledge and skills gained many years after they complete HENRY training
- Practitioners to make sustained positive lifestyle changes in their personal lives, which enhances their credibility with parents
- Positive changes to policy and practice in early years settings – including age-appropriate portion sizes, healthy snacks and strengthened team working.

FAMILY: Universal Family Support

[*There are services where I live that can help me, my family, and everyone in our neighbourhood, so that getting help is an easy and normal part of every community.*](#)

Following a strategic needs assessment, West Lothian agreed that the approach to use of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding would be to develop a Public Social Partnership (PSP) known as the [WFWF Alliance \(WFWFA\)](#). A strategic group is established to oversee outcomes and measure progress of all projects contained within the PSP.

There are eighteen projects within the PSP, designed to address a broad range of areas including strengthening support for families experiencing poverty and maximising income, increasing early years support, increasing support for families where young people are in conflict with the law, provide earlier intervention for those at risk of homelessness, and improving support for young carers.

Service delivery is through a diverse range of partners. A local service directory has been developed providing a comprehensive overview of all activities within the West Lothian WFWFA. Work in progress includes provision of anti-poverty and parenting support to build on positive work developed over recent years. There has been a whole family approach to mitigating the impact of poverty and directing people to support to maximise income. Whole Family Wellbeing

Funding awarded to the council Anti-Poverty Service has enabled increased provision in work with children, families, and young people, building families financial resilience. Support is targeted for care experienced children and young people, kinship families, and families who have experienced domestic abuse. The service began accepting referrals in the final quarter of 2023/24, 26 referrals were received over this time period and of these, 7 were completed with income maximisation of £17,249 for those involved.

Partners in West Lothian have embarked on a number of change projects, including:

- As part of their work to focus on kinship care, West Lothian are working in partnership with Children 1st with 130 kinship families supported per year. Alongside this, significant prevention work has taken place to reduce external residential care provision with Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) being the expected approach to support families. In 2022/23, 99 children from 68 families were supported through FGDM work with positive impact noted, including kinship connections being identified, children being sustained informally within family networks and family relationships being sustained.
- In collaboration, West Lothian Council Advice Shop, Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) and Kidzeco are building on the capacity of existing work to increase services that are delivered to tackle poverty, inequality and child poverty. This project will also fill a significant need as the rates of child poverty continue to increase. The project ([FACTS](#)) seeks to reduce health inequalities including:
 - People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer
 - Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services
 - Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities
 - People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and well-being

- Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services
 - [Mentors in Violence Prevention \(MVP\)](#) is delivered across schools in West Lothian. This peer education programme created jointly by Police Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit and Education Scotland seeks to improve pupil understanding of key issues related to Gender Based Violence such as healthy relationships, consent, gender equality and negative stereotypes. Once embedded the programme is also shown to improve other outcomes in schools such as behaviour, attendance and attainment through creating a more respectful and supportive ethos and environment. The programme is available in every mainstream secondary school to some extent, and by the end of academic session 23/24, 68 MVP-trained staff were working across the eleven secondary schools (an increase from 38 for session 22/23), along with 234 senior pupils trained as MVP mentors across eleven secondary schools (an increase from 158 for session 22/23).
 - In response to a Learning Review concluded in 2021, the Child Protection Committee commenced a [pilot](#) of Core Group Supervision. Following feedback from this pilot, Core Group Supervision/Reflection has now been incorporated into child protection practice and is facilitated by independent Reviewing Officers.
 - Multi-agency practice reflection sessions have been introduced, focused on a single theme and delivered virtually. Practitioners receive a short input on the topic followed by the chance to discuss and reflect on their own and local practice in small multi-agency groups. Themes during 2023/24 have included learning from case reviews involving infants and parental mental health. The feedback from these sessions has been positive.
 - A Multi-agency Promise Informed Persons (PIP) Lead has been established and agreed across all service areas through Children and Families Strategic Planning. The network is co-chaired by representatives from senior leadership teams in Social Policy and Education, and has representatives from various service areas including Education, Health, Public Health, Police, Social Policy, Third Sector, Housing, Learning and Development amongst others. The group has developed West Lothian's Call to Action Implementation Plan, with progress reported back to the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group.
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Bridges, Barriers and Next Steps

It is clear from the information in this report, and from the large amount of anecdotal evidence and formal reporting, that progress is being made to keep the promise across Scotland. The [Promise Progress Framework](#) sets out where that progress is being made nationally, and work to develop [the Promise Story of Progress](#) will provide a more complete picture. It is also true that many care experienced children and adults, and families on the edge of care are not feeling that change quickly enough, or even at all. The [Education Committee heard about this in a meeting](#) last year and The Oversight Board reported in February that [Scotland is not halfway towards keeping its promise](#).

This report demonstrates the vast amount of progress, activity, and sheer hard work that is transforming systems, practice and lives locally. But it is also the case that local partners feel frustrations and challenges as they deliver on the change that children, young people, families and care experienced adults have been promised.

With this in mind, this section seeks to answer the question: ‘what does all the information within the *‘Keeping the promise: A local perspective’* mean and what should happen next?’

It begins to collate some initiatives that are working well, the lessons that must be learned and shared, and the aspects of change that must be prioritised in line with the Improvement Service’s [findings from qualitative research into delivering the promise in local government](#) and the progress and challenges identified in [COSLA’s latest progress report](#). The *‘Meeting in the Middle’* theory of change set out in Plan 24-30 has been used as a framework.

It is important to be clear that the information below does not cover the entirety of the work required or underway to keep the promise. Instead it focuses on the systemic and structural issues that local areas highlighted are getting in the way or would make a difference to work to keep the promise.

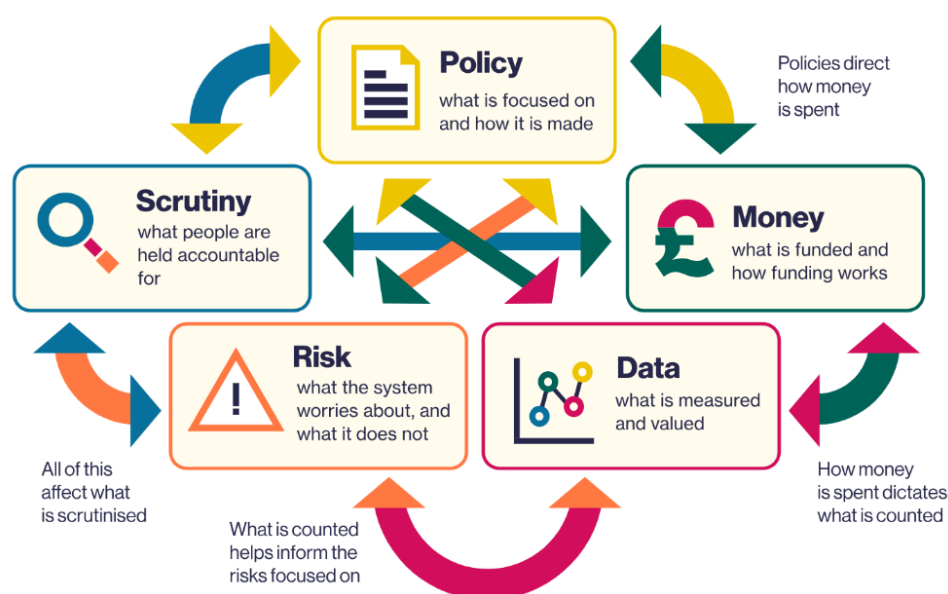
More information on specific actions can be found in The Promise Scotland’s briefings, reports and responses on the [Promise Bill](#), [advocacy](#), [governance](#), [moving on](#), [foster care](#), [Hearings redesign](#), [definition of care experience and language of care](#), [poverty](#), [secure care](#), etc.

Meeting in the Middle - bridges and barriers

As a starting position to understand the common bridges and barriers, The Promise Scotland returned to the information gathered during the development of Plan 24-30, which requested progress updates from all corporate parents and public bodies. Through this work, there were 149 documents from 109 organisations received. This included responses from national bodies, all 32 local authorities, COSLA and SOLACE, with some organisations making joint contributions. This body of evidence was then supplemented with a variety of reports and outputs produced by other corporate parents and partner organisations.

All information was then analysed to understand what was helping to keep the promise and what was getting in the way. This surfaced five common themes: policy, money, data, risk and scrutiny. Plan 24-30 refers to these as '[Meeting in the Middle](#)', the important areas where systemic change must happen for the promise to be kept. Without concerted, coordinated action to remove the barriers across these areas the promise will not be kept by 2030.

These themes have a significant impact on which local services are prioritised for resources, as well as their design, delivery and how their effectiveness is judged.



Individually and collectively, these themes can manifest as complex, deep-rooted - seemingly intractable – barriers to change. However, once overcome, they can become bridges, shifting from thwarting efforts to accelerating them.

Meeting in the Middle - a local perspective

The information in this report makes clear the many positive and negative impacts the ‘Meeting in the Middle’ themes are having on local work to keep the promise. The following outlines an assessment of this collective impact.

The work to surface where solutions are needed to keep the promise is integral to the development of the [Plan 24-30 route maps](#). Very often this requires cross-sector and system collaboration to enable change locally and nationally. Bridges and barriers to keeping the promise do not exist in isolation and have relevance across the entirety of Plan 24-30. To illustrate progress and the distance still to travel, relevant Plan 24-30 route maps have been linked throughout.

Listening and meaningful participation and engagement with children, families and care experienced adults is critical to keeping the promise to ensure that all work to deliver change is informed by what matters to the care community.

The ‘Meeting in the Middle’ themes have been used to identify:

the issues identified by the Independent Care Review	The areas that the Independent Care Review concluded must change and the solutions identified in the promise and the other.
the barriers raised through the local visibility project	Analysis of the barriers experienced by local areas and partner organisations in the information shared to help develop Plan 24-30.

What good looks like	What must be in place to address these barriers, converting many to bridges that will help make sure the promise is kept.
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A summary: Next steps

Policy	Policy cohesion and coherence to reduce siloes, based on listening to what matters to which children, families and care experienced adults, with harmonised, burden-free reporting that enables shared accountability across 'systems', shared language, clear leadership.
Money	Improved flow of money from source through to meeting need(s), enabling prioritisation of work to keep the promise demonstrable in how resources are allocated, with the removal of disincentives / and improved incentives for shared accountability across 'systems', supporting pooled budgets, cash first approaches and the removal of profit.
Data	Tech solutions to improve data sharing and linkage and support information flow, to enable evidence-based decision-making and ease bureaucratic reporting burden to focus (away from system and setting) on measuring what matters to children and families and care experienced adults (experience and outcome), making clear delivery priorities and engendering cultural change.

Risk	Shared cross-sector, multi-agency risk that demonstrates and understanding of what children, families and care experienced adults need to thrive, that makes clear shared priorities (e.g. reducing poverty), ensuring the workforce is valued, supported, trained and confident to respond to 'changing needs' and supporting those they work with where they are, with what they need, for as long as they need it.
Scrutiny	Aligned, streamlined scrutiny that recognises intersectionality and reduces bureaucracy, with a focus beyond as system and setting to include experience and outcome, that values.

POLICY

Scotland has an ambitious policy landscape, and a proactive civil society dedicated to change. This is making strides to strengthen rights and protections.

Policy siloes do not reflect that people often experience them and their associated systems simultaneously, so when they are not effectively joined up, services feel fragmented. This means that despite the ambition, the ability for services to make improvements in people's everyday lives is compromised. Too often, good people make a difference *despite* the system, rather than *because* of it. Changing this would accelerate change.

By 2030:

- A fully aligned and joined up policy landscape would help to ensure that the system understands the real lives of people and families, and provides support based on need.
- Policy alignment, cohesion in governance and accountability and coterminous initiatives are foundations on which systems, structures and services, including legislation, governance, public spending, reporting and scrutiny, can better join up.

Relevant Plan 24-30 route maps: [Legislation](#), [Governance](#), [Rights](#), [Decision Making](#), [Listening](#), [Participation & Engagement](#)

POLICY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
The 'care system' is a complex, fragmented, multi-purpose and multi-faceted entity which does not	• COSLA's annual report on the promise states that as 'more' policies and initiatives are	• Sustained cross- party support for the promise at local level.	• Sustained cross- party support for the promise. • Cross-partnership engagement in the

POLICY

the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
lend itself to easy definition... The current 'system' is underpinned by 44 pieces of legislation, 19 pieces of secondary legislation and 3 international conventions and straddles 6 out of 9 Scottish policy areas making cohesive operation impossible and creates disconnects into which children, young adults and their families can fall. This has since increased. Scotland must create a clear legislative, enabling environment that supports families to stay together and protects and allows relationships to flourish. The UNCRC should be	introduced, the burden on the workforce increases, citing lack of policy coherence and scale of policy demand to be a barrier in delivering change. • An overly complex and bureaucratic landscape: a number of different funding streams with different reporting needs with a slightly different focus; and a wide range of strategic plans each with different reporting requirements, and overlapping legislation, causing confusion about sequencing and prioritisation. • Some areas of current guidance & regulations are undermining the	• Cross-partnership engagement in the work to develop Plan 24-30 route maps. • Clarity and coherence across partnerships over national priorities, including local support for nationally driven agenda delivery. • Increased visibility of the promise across partnerships and a clear understanding that delivery extends beyond social work to all corporate parents and support organisations. • Regular opportunities for local, regional and national	work to develop Plan 24-30 route maps. • Full compliance with the UNCRC and embedding a rights-based approach across all aspects of policy and legislation, including the Promise Bill. • Working collaboratively to listen, value and respond to what is heard about what matters most to babies, children, families and care experienced adults across the entire breadth of work, to know whether change is effective, and to continuously improve services. • More focus and awareness raising the promise, who it affects, and the changes required to realise its ambitions across all those responsible for change. This includes clarity that a core focus of the promise is on earlier help and

POLICY

the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
the bedrock upon which all legislation is based to ensure that children's rights are upheld as a matter of course. There must be a significant decluttering of guidelines and procedure—giving clear permission to make connections and act in kindness. Guidelines must be targeted and necessary so that relationships take clear precedence over everything else. The level of engagement with and participation in the Care Review has demonstrated that there is a huge appetite in Scotland from people to get involved in shaping policy and practice, specifically from communities with lived experience who are experts in	approach of the promise in building relationships that are important to children, young people and care experienced adults. • Lack of clarity and understanding amongst all corporate parents about their responsibilities to keep the promise. • Each council has its own priorities which enables budgets to be allocated to meet local need but can result in inconsistencies and a lack of cross border working for children, families and care experienced adults.	sharing of barriers/ challenges faced by local areas and partners in keeping the promise with a commitment nationally to look at solutions. • The voices of babies, children, young people and care experienced adults are reflected in priority setting across the entirety of partnership planning structures. • Local partners looking beyond their local authority boundary where appropriate	support, rather than only children with experience of care. • Increased visibility of the promise and a clear understanding that delivery extends to all corporate parents and support organisations. • Regular opportunities for local, regional and national sharing of barriers/ challenges faced by local areas and partners in keeping the promise with a commitment nationally to look at solutions. • Policy governance that is better coordinated and organised around the promise, including greater alignment of national government policy areas and directorates relating to children and young people. This means reducing policy siloes, increasing coherence driven by an understanding of intersectionality and developing

POLICY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
how a system feels and behaves... Scotland must listen to care experienced children and young adults in the delivery, inspection and continuous improvement of services and of care. Scotland must never again have to commission a review or a Judicial Inquiry on this scale because participation and listening must form part of everything within Scotland's system of care. Legislation, policy and practice are vital in assuring children's rights. Yet those rights do not exist in isolation but in the wider context of children's lives. They are experienced within caring relationships. They are realised by			coterminous initiatives. There should also be clear communication over national expectation and how local areas will be supported to implement. • Decluttering of policies and legislation and a clear understanding of what legislative and regulatory changes are required. The Promise Scotland has commissioned a legal paper with options for how the legislative landscape governing the 'care system' can be improved. • All corporate parents work across organisational boundaries so people's needs can be met holistically. • At local and national level, all corporate parents look beyond geographical boundaries as appropriate. • Developing a strong legal framework around the promise

POLICY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
thoughtful, attentive caregivers (including teachers, foster carers, youth club workers, etc) who notice changes in health, behaviour or in educational attainment, and who help and support a child to lead a fulfilling life.			including acknowledging, protecting and promoting brother and sister relationships and consideration of the legal framework that governs data. The Promise Scotland briefing has specific areas for consideration in the Promise Bill and its development. • National understanding of local pressures around workforce recruitment, retention and capacity to drive transformational change at pace. This includes developing realistic timescales to support long-lasting transformational change, and clear recognition that change takes time and resource. • Detailed consideration of the impact of relevant UK government legislation, including the Children's

POLICY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		Locally	nationally
			Wellbeing and Schools Bill to ensure alignment and avoid unintended consequences for the care community and the workforce.

MONEY

Public services are not currently making maximum use of the resource available to improve the lives of care experienced children, young people, adults, and their families. The consequences of the failure of Scotland's 'care system' is the disproportionate numbers of care experienced adults requiring support from other services – such as homelessness, justice and substance misuse. Funding must shift to spend on the things that prevent crisis and make lives better. This must come from a system that measures and values what matters to children and families. By better understanding what people need, and matching resources to meet needs earlier, public services can towards preventative spend.

By 2030:

- Where funding is focused on what matters to children and families it will improve lives. Achieving this can only be done by involving care experienced people in decisions about funding.
- Funding needs to be flexible and long-term.
- Evaluation and evidence must be used to disinvest from less effective services and support once better alternatives are available.
- Senior leaders must invest in support that
 - ensures children and young people who need to be in care are, and those who don't are not.
 - ensures those in the 'care system' and leaving it have the best experience.
 - builds the capabilities of young people leaving the 'care system', and care experienced adults, to navigate the adult world, such as access to mentors, peer support etc.

Relevant Plan 24-30 route maps: [Money & Commissioning](#), [Listening, Participation & Engagement](#), [Documenting decisions](#), [workforce support, recruitment and retention](#)

MONEY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
...just as the impact of the system extends beyond the period spent in care, into the demand on services as a result of poorer experiences and outcomes... looking across budget lines, service structures and organisational inputs to understand costs in the context of the person in receipt of the services, rather than through the lens of the system providing it. The current 'care system' operates from an efficiency and cost minimisation position	• Significant budget cuts to public services and reduction of core budgets. • At present there are limited funds to test new models, including to support a shift from reactive, crisis-led responses to more early help and support for families. • The cost of out of authority care. • Difficulty in being able to strategically plan when the availability of funding opportunities is unknown and short-term funding is insufficient for services to establish meaningful impact, work through recruitment challenges, and	• Local partnerships use evaluation and evidence to redirect resources away from less effective services. This must focus on lived experience, not just quantifiable metrics. • Use of longer term, sustained funding to provide: ○ Security for those the 'system' must support ○ Security and clarity for the workforce, including the ability to recruit fully. ○ The ability to better plan and deliver collaboratively across partnerships. ○ An opportunity for successful	• Short-term funding cycles and heavy reporting requirements must be reduced to support strategic planning, break down fragmented service delivery, and encourage innovation and collaboration. • Ensure a clear focus on the delivery of holistic whole family support and on meeting the 5% goal committed to. • Long-lasting and adaptable funding structures to enable collaboration on both prevention and crisis support, and planned investment and disinvestment. • Senior leaders champion

MONEY			
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		locally	nationally
rather than a caring one that aims for quality and effectiveness. The benefit of a wellbeing economy can be understood through the lens of insulating children from risks. Yes, of course, even with insulation installed, fires still happen. But the risk will be reduced. Similarly, reducing poverty won't eradicate the need for care, but it will mitigate it and thus ease many of the pressures which can exacerbate or propel the need for care. Design of the 'care system'	support transformational change • A funding model which creates competition between partners and an often bureaucratic process that does not support a focus on what matters to children and families. • The COSLA annual report sets out the ways money is both causing and compounding pressures faces across local authorities. Budget cuts, rising demand for services and inflation is creating significant challenges, including a lack of flexibility in how local areas can respond to community needs through	projects to be embedded and sustained. • Increased investment in the children's services partnership workforce is required in order to promote practice which is truly relational. • Ensure, as far as possible, longer term and outcomes-based funding for third sector partners.	funding that prioritises the needs of children and families and includes young people and care experienced adults in decision-making. • Local and national changes to existing procurement and commissioning to promote what matters to children and families, collaboration and sustainability. • A change in funding, from short term to long term, which will allow for a change in the way services are delivered, so they work for individual lives and circumstances,

MONEY			
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		locally	nationally
as outlined in The Promise requires concepts such as 'best value' and 'performance measurement' to be re-thought. The benefit of this shift in approach to measuring impact is clear; spending on prevention is economically viable when account is taken of the costs of getting it wrong. This perspective offers a more effective use of public resources over the longer term via returns to the economy and public purse.	directed ringfenced funding pots.		and not follow standardised procedures. - Increased funding that does not just offset reduction elsewhere but supports new ways of working and a focus on early help and support. - Review of continuing care funding in line with inflation, taking account of the impact continuing care provision has on local authority resources. This includes exploring further funding models for supported lodgings for young people that leave formal care settings as part of a continuum of services. - Fees and allowances for

MONEY			
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		locally	nationally
			kinship and foster carers increasing in line with inflation, and are sufficient to meet babies, children and young people's needs. • Implementation of the Care Leavers Payment and development of work around a Minimum Income Guarantee for Care Leavers.

DATA

[Where data is focused on the wrong things](#), or is missing, it gets in the way of measuring what really matters to people and for the delivery of meaningful support. There is a considerable burden placed on the workforce to collect and report on data. However, often what is captured and analysed illustrates what matters to the system and fails to provide relevant insights about the needs and experiences of children, young people, adults, and families.

By 2030:

- The right data and intelligence must be used to make decisions. It must help to understand and improve people's experiences, processes, and outcomes both individually and collectively.
- Numbers and data should be supplemented with qualitative information explanation.
- Data must be shared between agencies to help reduce negative impact on people from re-telling their story and on bureaucracy.

Relevant Plan 24-30 route maps: [Data and information](#), [Listening](#), [Participation & Engagement](#), [Documenting decisions](#)

DATA			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
Alongside listening, access to good data can enhance good decision making but currently, official statistics report on a single 'episode of care' basis and present a series of 'snapshots' at	• Current data systems can make it difficult to interrogate data or track trends. • The siloed nature of information systems hampers the ability to gather and cross-	• All corporate parents have clear processes that ensure care experienced children and adults understand how and why information is recorded about them and how	• Continued collaborative development of the Promise Story of Progress. • Sufficient, appropriate national data infrastructure in place with clear expectations and necessary

DATA			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
specific points in time. This means that an individual's 'journey of care' and their progress over time is not represented in official statistics. Care experienced children and young adults must have ownership over their own stories and personal data so that they can understand and influence how their stories are shared. Scotland collects data on the 'care system' and its inputs, processes and outputs rather than what matters to the experiences and outcomes of the people who live in and around it.	reference data effectively. • The language of data collection continues to be stigmatising and use terms deemed as unacceptable by the care community as a result of the legal processes it is tied to. • The Improvement Service report highlights that the sector has to do better at using evidence from [people with] lived experience. The first challenge facing many local authorities is collecting good qualitative data from people with lived experience. Some local authorities are taking steps to address but it is an area for improvement for the sector. 'How to' use voices of lived experience to provide better services and	they can safely access it. • Support for the entire workforce to capture and use data and information on experiences and relationships in addition to outputs and outcomes. This includes ensuring they have the capacity and skills to use high quality, holistic data in decision making. • Fit for purpose, integrated data systems that enable the effective tracking of children's journeys, and holistic support, as well as inform planning and decision making. • Strengthened multi-method approaches across partners, combining numbers with children and families and care experienced adults' lived	technological and analytical support to capture the information required to ensure the promise is kept and to keep Scotland on track. • Coordinated action across partners to unify data standards and collection methodologies, enabling seamless data sharing between different databases across the public sector to improve service coordination and reporting. • Consideration of the forthcoming Information Sharing work (summer 2025) from The Promise Scotland. • Attention to address common data gaps and utilise data linkage as a solution where possible, for example, equalities information, information on brothers and sisters, information on wider family needs and experiences and

DATA			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
	support to care experienced young people, those on the edge of care and indeed all young people, is a further challenge and one that the sector needs to do better on.	narratives and realities. • Accessible data sharing networks, where organisations collaborate and share, ensuring children and adults do not have to retell their stories and share their information many times.	data on adoption breakdowns. • A clear, agreed-upon definition of 'Care Experience' to aid data collection and reporting. • Digital tools to ensure the voices of all children, young people and their families are consistently heard.

RISK

Public services currently too often focus on and manage short term risks, rather than bigger, longer term and more complex risks. While public services ‘address’ the short-term risks, the most important factors are ignored. Public services need to broaden the understanding of risk. Collective accountability is important to shift the balance on risk management. There must be a culture of shared ownership that works to mitigate the fears of professionals and supports them to continue to do the right thing for children, young people, adults, and families.

By 2030:

- A broader focus on risk that moves away from focusing on only short-term risks will help improve longer term outcomes for care experienced people and children and families on the edges of care. There will be inherent tensions which needs collective accountability across different sectors.

Relevant Plan 24-30 route maps: [Poverty](#), [Universal Family Support](#), [Intensive Family Support](#), [Relationships](#), [Listening](#), [Participation & Engagement](#), [Documenting decisions](#)

RISK			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
Scotland must therefore broaden its understanding of risk. This is not about tolerating more risk or becoming more risk enabling. It means ensuring Scotland has a	• Lack of suitable housing, including for young people transitioning from care into independent living and to support larger sibling groups. • Significant challenges	• Faster access to support when it is needed, including multi-agency mental health support and trauma recovery. • Opportunities for children and families	• A national, cross-sector conversation about risk—including the risks around removing children from their families and barriers to creating and nurturing loving relationships. • The Scottish Government's child poverty targets on

RISK			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
more holistic understanding of risk that includes the risk to the child of removing them from the family. There must be a shift in focus from the risk of possible harm to the risk of not having stable, long term loving relationships. The Care Review does not underestimate the scale of the challenge or the natural instinct to protect, but Scotland must acknowledge that the current system of rules and safeguards has not served its children well. It will require strong	with recruiting and retaining members of the unpaid and paid workforce, particularly social workers and foster carers. There are high number of vacancies experienced across children and families social work teams and an over-reliance on agency workers. Lack of experienced social workers working in teams, with larger numbers of newly qualified social workers meaning practice can take time to embed.	to be involved in decision-making. - Increased support for the workforce. High-quality, reflective supervision in place for the entire workforce that supports children, young people and care experienced adults. - Continuing to invest and upscale in universal family support services across all partners. - Manageable numbers of children and families for all those who work with them to enable relationship building and	track to be met by 2030. - National work, including increased investment, to address the workforce recruitment crisis, particularly relating to social workers and foster carers. - Investment in building/development of housing stock and support for innovate ideas around housing. - Addressing regulatory barriers to relationships.

RISK			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
leadership across and throughout the entire 'care system' to make the shifts needed. There must be no barriers for children to have regular, positive childhood experiences. Scotland must help the workforce to have a different conception of risk taking, where risk taking is seen as a normal part of care. This shift in mindset must be underpinned by developing the confidence of the workforce. Leadership based on a broader understanding of risk is critical.	- Increasing demand on the workforce, including increasing referrals to children's social work has an impact on how the workforce is able to work alongside children and families, and to services are delivered and to the way in which workers are able to meet the needs of their communities - An increase in the complexity of people's circumstances which have been compounded by Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. - Challenges with how the wider system	a focus wider than the family to support inclusive communities. - Support to retain workers across health, education and social care to ensure that children and families are receiving consistent support when they need it. - Further support and work to overcome the barriers to supporting brothers and sisters to maintain relationships and live together wherever it is safe to so. This includes the availability of	

RISK			
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Leadership must recognise that completing all the forms may make you or your organisation 'feel better' but may not actually minimise the risk in any given circumstance or represent defensible decision making. Scotland must understand, through its people and structures, the risk of children not having loving supportive relationships and regular childhood and teenage experiences.	understands their role in supporting schools and pupils to improve attendance, reduce school exclusions, and promote positive destinations for care experienced pupils. • Persistently high rates of child poverty. It affects educational participation, health outcomes, family stability, and increases pressure across the 'system'. • Lack of mental health support available for children and young people. • The shortage of foster carers is a major barrier	suitable housing, foster carers living in the community and workers to provide consistent relationship-based family support for as long as needed. • The importance of relationships is built into all partners strategic objectives, not just front-line practice. • Short-term risk avoidance is not prioritised over long-term wellbeing and all senior leaders must enable long-term, people-centred risk decisions.	

RISK			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
	to supporting children to remain within their local communities.		

SCRUTINY

Scrutiny is at the heart of work to keep the promise, it shapes what gets funded, measured, and ultimately experienced by children, young people, adults.

However, scrutiny often falls short by focusing on the wrong priorities, neglecting what truly matters to care-experienced children, young people, their families, and adults. This misalignment is further compounded when scrutiny is not guided by accurate or relevant data.

Scrutiny must shift from a focus on easily measurable metrics and compliance to emphasising outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families. By concentrating on what matters scrutiny bodies can ensure their efforts lead to meaningful improvements.

By 2030:

- A greater focus on outcomes and experiences, rather than compliance and minimum standards is needed.
- Scrutiny bodies must include a focus on whether organisations and their leaders have worked to align their strategies and work to the promise, being clear about the ways in which they contribute.
- Scrutiny bodies must review if scrutiny leads to and enables reflection and improvement (and if it doesn't, change the scrutiny approach).
-

Relevant Plan 24-30 route maps: [Scrutiny and inspection](#), [Relationships](#), [Governance](#), [Listening](#), [Participation & Engagement](#), [Documenting decisions](#)

SCRUTINY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
Processes are driving out a clear focus on relationships.	• A lack of systemic and consistent approaches	• An increased focus within all types of reporting on	• Implementation of the resetting public services paper produced

SCRUTINY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
There must be a complete overhaul of regulation and scrutiny that centres on listening to children about how they are cared for, their ability to flourish and thrive and that measures the things that matter to them. The promise P.27 Accountability and what is measured has a profound impact on the way professionals behave and services are run. If Scotland is to shift its practice to support, prioritise and	to ensuring the voices of children and young people inform strategic planning. Each of Scotland's 32 councils maintains its own public performance reporting framework, and there are over 32 Local Outcome Improvement Plans in operation. In addition, the enormity of reporting burden placed on local authorities in particular, made clear by the Calendar of Returns.	improving outcomes and experiences, learning and improvement, led by what matters to care experienced children and adults. - Clear commitment from all partners to robust, systematic self-evaluation and demonstrating a culture of openness and learning across all corporate parents. - Accessible plans and reports that can be easily understood by the community, coupled with strong engagement and	by The Promise Scotland and shared with the Scottish Government, which sets out five principles on what good looks like in terms of resetting public services to keep the promise. - A clear focus on outcomes and experiences, learning and improvement, and alignment to the promise within local and national scrutiny. - Nationally agreed measurements, aligned with locally set indicators, to support monitoring and reporting on the progress

SCRUTINY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
nurture relationships, then Scotland must shift its accountability structures. A new framework must be totally focused on children's experiences and their ability to find and sustain safe and nurturing relationships.	- The existence of over 25 scrutiny bodies involved in local government, over 2,000 local level performance indicators and 90+ national improvement actions. - Data that measures system and setting and not experience and outcomes means that accountability is a bureaucratic function as opposed to a human one. - Responsibility for keeping the promise is still too often viewed as	communication to provide clear routes for services and agencies to be held to account. - Improved alignment between Children's Services Plans, promise plans and reporting timescales. - Full engagement of local Child Protection Committees to engage multi-agency partners in understanding what is needed to keep the promise and supporting and monitoring the changes.	towards keeping the promise with a focus on what matters to children, young people, adults, and families. - A substantial reduction of the reporting expectations on local areas so that reporting processes are more streamlined, intuitive and less burdensome and their outputs more easily understood. - Clear and consistent information sharing and reporting lines between agencies at a national level.

SCRUTINY			
the issue identified by the Independent Care Review	the barriers raised through the local visibility project	what good looks like	
		locally	nationally
	belonging solely to Children and Families Services rather than being a shared across multiple local areas, health and directorates, and other agencies at a local and national level.		• Reduce the reporting burden by removing from the 160+ data returns / 430+ data collections any overlap (or defunct data). • Enabling a clear focus on data that measures what matters experience and outcome) to children, families and care experienced adults. • Freeing up time from reporting and production of strategies for meaningful action.

The third sector

Introduction

Many third sector organisations made a significant contribution before, during and after the Independent Care Review and now play a pivotal role in keeping the promise to children, young people, families and care experienced adults in communities across Scotland. Inevitably, the breadth and impact of this work is not fully reflected in the local area profiles. This short section attempts to provide just a small insight into the contribution made by Scotland's charity and voluntary sector.

The sector

There are currently [24,630 active charities](#) in Scotland. While the work to keep the promise is not just about the work of children's services, it is striking that 10,523 of these charities describe their work as being in support of children and young people. In addition, there are many thousands of charities delivering support for communities, which will benefit many thousands of care experienced children, young people, adults, and families. For example, there are 11,693 charities who say their purpose is education related; 8,541 whose purpose is community development; and 3,493 whose registered charitable purpose is preventing poverty.

The [TSI Scotland Network](#) estimates that for every 10 charities registered, there is likely to be on average a further eight community groups (informal or constituted) in existence.

The public sector is the single most important source of income for the Scottish third sector, worth around [£3.3 billion in 2023](#):

- Public sector funding made up 40% of the sector's income in 2023.
- Funding has stayed at 2021 levels in cash terms but has fallen by 5% in real terms (£177m).

- 4 in 10 third sector organisations get public sector funding, with many stating it is critical to enable them to deliver vital services.
- Individual giving via donations, legacies and fundraising was worth over £1.1 billion to the [Scottish third sector in 2021](#).

The value of individual giving [doubled](#) over the last decade, in part from time and effort invested by charities and third sector groups in things like new funding strategies, funding subcommittees, recruitment of fundraisers and profile raising.

The key issues facing the third sector in Scotland are captured through SCVO's [Third Sector Tracker Research](#). It highlights many of the themes that are commonly cited as being barriers and challenges to keeping the promise. These include financial challenges, recruitment and retention of the paid and unpaid workforce, poverty and poor mental health.

The third sector and keeping the promise

Third sector organisations offer a range of vital support services to children, young people, families and care experienced adults. Many of these are commissioned by statutory partners (particularly local authorities) and will often be delivered in partnership with a range of organisations. Often, services such as advocacy, therapeutic family support and community-based initiatives engage with families in ways statutory settings [cannot](#).

There are countless examples of the third sector continuing to ensure participation and engagement is at the heart of service design and delivery. This can be seen in work such as the [Bairns' Hoose](#) (led by Children First and a wide range of partners in North Strathclyde); [Aberlour's](#) work on public debt and its impact on children, young people and families; and [NSPCC Scotland's](#) work with partners to understand the best ways to support young children, to name a few.

The third sector also plays an important direct role in the delivery of the 'care system', through a variety of [care and care related services](#). Currently in Scotland the voluntary / not profit sector provides:

- 16% of adoption placement services
- 19% of children's homes
- 45% of fostering services
- 100% of secure care accommodation.

The work highlighted below highlights some of Scotland's bigger charities, all of which are strong supporters of keeping the promise. It is acknowledged that this list represents the small tip of a very large iceberg of work happening in communities. But it does give some indication of the breadth and depth of work underway in communities across Scotland:

- 800 [Barnardo's Scotland](#) staff support 11,500 children and their families, delivering over 150 services across 28 local authority areas.
- Up to 180 [Includem](#) staff supported 1,193 young people and families across 25 services delivered in 17 local authority areas.
- [Aberlour](#) provides 62 dedicated services in 28 local authority areas. This sees 654 permanent and 161 relief staff provide direct support to 5,496 people and indirectly support a further 3495 people. They also provide national level support through services such as Guardianship Scotland, and the Aberlour Urgent Assistance fund.
- [Action for Children](#) employs 850 staff in Scotland, delivering 90 services across 30 local authority areas. This has reached 38,213 children, young people, and indirect beneficiaries in the past year.
- [Children First](#) supported more than 8,600 children and over 8,800 parents and carers in 2024, with a further 9,400 people supported through the support line. This work is delivered by 295 staff in the children and family services team working across 12 local services, a number of Bairns Hoose partnerships and national services including Support Line and Safeguarder's Panel.

These organisations, and the thousands of others not listed here, are therefore having a direct impact on the lives of children and families across Scotland, everyday. The value of their contribution to Scotland's efforts to keep the promise cannot be overestimated.

Promise Partnership

In recent years, many third sector organisations have received funding from the [Promise Partnership Fund](#). Managed by Corra and supported with a Scottish Government investment of £20m over four years, the Promise Partnership is a grant programme funding structural change work within Scotland's 'care system'. The Scottish Government was the primary funder of the Partnership, with additional support from Cattanach and STV Children's Appeal. Across [five rounds](#)

of funding, 425 applications were submitted, of which 202 were successful across Scotland. The fund endeavoured to take a new approach to governance: a decision-makers panel was established, bringing a range of professional and lived experience of Scotland's 'care system' who spent 1,767 hours assessing, deliberating, debating and awarding grants.



**the promise
scotland**

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