

Renfrewshire's Pinky Promise Report



The Promise in Renfrewshire

“As partners, we’re committed to working together to provide support to children and families at the earliest possible stage, as part of our commitment to The Promise.”

Renfrewshire Children’s Services
Partnership Plan 2023–26.

Renfrewshire Council is fully committed to The Promise and supporting the Care Experienced community in Renfrewshire. As part of this commitment, the Corporate Management Team in the Council created a job called the “Promise Manager,” who is responsible for making sure that all Council services and partners are working to **#KeepThePromise**.

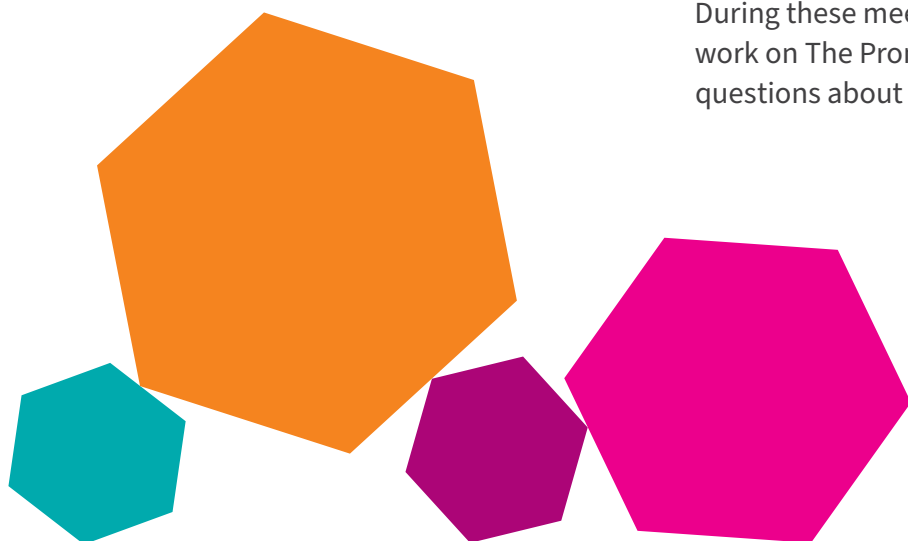
There are lots of people involved in checking that the Promise is being delivered. An important group that does this is called the “Promise Strategic Oversight Group,” which meets four times a year. Lots of different staff members attend this group, including those in social work, education, health, and housing, among others. During these meetings, they will hear about recent work on The Promise in Renfrewshire and can ask questions about this.

There is also a lot of work happening to make sure we are measuring how well we are doing with The Promise. We use a mapping and planning tool based on Plan 24–30 of The Promise with clear ways of measuring each statement, too. We regularly share our progress with other organisations and Scottish Councils to make sure we are learning from each other.

We work hard to make sure that we use a loving, nurturing approach where people who use our services feel able to ask questions. Listening to our children, young people and families is important to us for our policies and our approach to The Promise.

There are also other areas of policy that are related to The Promise that you may have heard of:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)



Renfrewshire Promise Champs

In 2021, Youth Services was made the lead service for Youth Voice for Care Experienced young people in Renfrewshire. Youth Services has a range of local youth voice groups that are our least heard from groups in Renfrewshire. Youth Services use a UNCRC rights-based approach to support young people and develop their skills and confidence to be able to speak out and make changes in services. A key part of this work has been the Promise Champions, which is a group of Care Experienced young people who come together to make sure that their voices are being heard and that they are able to access opportunities.

The Promise Champions started with a mix of previous members and new members, which has changed over the past few years. In their first sessions, they met with the Promise Ambassador, who helped the young people understand The Promise and explored positive changes in local policies. The Champs were then supported to think about other positive changes that could be made to benefit them and the wider Care Experience community.

The group attended leadership training sessions and residential trips to learn new skills, enjoy team-building activities, and meet new people.

Youth Services continues to work with local services to encourage more Care Experienced young people to get involved. The Renfrewshire Young Scot portal is regularly updated to share new campaigns with young people and staff.



Renfrewshire Promise Champs (continued)

Key Achievements:

Present Drive

Each year, Youth Services supports the Promise Champions by hosting their Promise Champions Present Drive.

“As Care Experienced young people, we know that some of us won’t receive many presents at Christmas. We want to change this to help make these young people’s Christmas feel a little more special.”

The young people create a wish list of gifts that they know other young people would love to receive. The list is shared across council networks, and staff can support the young people by purchasing gifts. The gifts are then wrapped and delivered to Care Experienced young people across Renfrewshire.

Festive Lunch

The Promise Champs designed posters, invites and labels for the Present Drive and Festive Lunch. They created a wish list and worked with Art Boss members to organise the food, decorations, and activities for the event.

The Champs invited Care Experienced young people and their carers and workers to a Festive Lunch. This was an opportunity to chat, have lunch, and get involved in the YO Producer’s youth event afterwards. Thirty people attended this event.

Summer Club Activities

The Promise Champs consulted with other Care Experienced young people within other Youth Services groups to find out what they would like to take part in. They picked out the top five activities and organised them as part of the Promise Champs Summer Club. This involved trips to bowling, roller disco and film clubs. These trips offered spaces to 32 people.

Youth Leadership Training

The Promise Champs were invited to take part in leadership training where they could support the design of the Youth Voice Summer roadshow.

The Promise Champs designed the games for the roadshow and hosted the games across nine community venues, engaging with 290 participants.

Youth Voice Residential

The Promise Champs took part in the October Youth Voice residential at Lapwing Lodge where they took part in team building and creative youth voice activities.

Next Steps

- The Promise Champs will continue to work together with other services across Renfrewshire to share their work and encourage new Care Experienced young people to join.
- The Promise Champs will continue to speak with Care Experienced young people to find out what is important to them and what they would like to see changed.

Renfrewshire's 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 330 Promise Keepers in Renfrewshire, and this number will continue to grow.

"The rollout of the Promise Keeper training is going very well, in my view."

Promise Keepers make sure that their services are thinking about the needs of the Care Experience 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, and people who work for charities.

We work hard to make sure that 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.

"Promise Keepers play a crucial role in getting the Promise, and the values behind the Promise, implemented in practice. Promise Keepers can help "snowball" the implementation of the Promise in a way that works across different services and a variety of roles."

We want 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 of our Promise Keepers have changed the language used in their service to be more inclusive and less negative.

We want Promise Keepers 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. We want this badge to mean that this is a place which is safe and supportive for everyone, including those with Care Experience.



Keeping the promise

"We're all proud to be Promise Keepers at Glenburn Early Learning and Childcare Centre. The training has really improved our awareness of the needs of care experienced families and enhanced our understanding of children's rights. These insights now inform the activities and practical support we offer every day."

Annmarie Mullen, early learning childcare officer

Learn more about The Promise and our Promise Keeper network

 Complete our training course on **iLearn**.
For more info contact thepromise@renfrewshire.gov.uk

 **#Keep The Promise**

 Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

Our Care Experienced community have told us that they want real and honest people to champion The Promise. We work hard to make sure that our 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.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper network is informed by the Care Experienced community; they are at the very heart of what we do.

For someone to become a Promise Keeper, they must do three things. This process is the same for all staff.

1. First, staff must fill out an application form telling us a little bit about why they want to be a Promise Keeper and what they want to see a change in their service.
2. Secondly, staff are invited to an interview. This is a light-hearted interview, but it makes sure that the person is going through this process for the right reasons and has passion and enthusiasm. This interview lasts for 15 minutes and is hosted on Microsoft Teams.
3. Thirdly, Promise Keepers will come along to training, where they will be told more about Care Experience, The Promise, and the work in Renfrewshire. During the training, staff get a chance to meet new people and share different experiences.

Promise Keepers are encouraged to bring their whole selves to the role, with many having lived experience of the care system, too.

“This approach encourages everyone to think about how they can support Care Experienced children in their practice. Keep up the great work.”

Next Steps

- We will continue to tell people about The Promise Keeper network and grow it.
- We will continue to celebrate good practice and share good examples of work.
- We will continue to make sure that Promise Keepers feel supported.

Promise Keeper Conference 2024

On the 5th of December 2024, we held our second annual Promise Keeper event. We brought together around 100 Promise Keepers to hear about examples of good work across Renfrewshire. We started the morning with some speakers from Educational Psychology, NHSGCC and Blue Triangle who shared some of their fantastic work around The Promise.

We were keen to make sure that those who came to the conference had lots of opportunities to speak to each other. We designed an exercise called “Professional Speed Dating”, where staff got the chance to talk to different services about The Promise.

These were:

Engage | Health for All | Youth Services
Whole Family Wellbeing | Barnardo’s
Skills Development Scotland and Invest
OneRen | Glenburn ELCC | Home Start

The feedback from the event was very positive, with staff sharing that they felt it was a very worthwhile and useful event.

“The input was excellent. It allowed for a very good and thought provoking discussion at the tabletop discussion time. Very beneficial in relation to thinking about our practice.”

“Good and balanced mix of both discussing and hearing from the guest speakers.”

“Fantastic event. It was really well organised and engaging. I really enjoyed the presentations. Enjoyed Janie’s input at the beginning. Michelle’s inputs throughout were excellent—a good mix of speakers and discussion. The venue was great. The food was great. Good opportunities for inter-agency networking.”

Next Steps

- We will reflect on the feedback from the conference to make sure we can improve in future.
- We will work to plan the 2025 conference.

Renfrewshire Language Policy

In early 2022, we worked closely with Care Experienced young people and staff across Renfrewshire to identify words and phrases that were negative and stigmatising and to identify new words that could be used instead.

We launched the Renfrewshire Language Policy, which is a clear guide for professionals on how to speak about Care Experience. The policy is helping us to move away from complicated words and phrases that children, young people, and families might not understand. We are working on using more human language in our services. The policy is a list of words and phrases with their new replacement language.

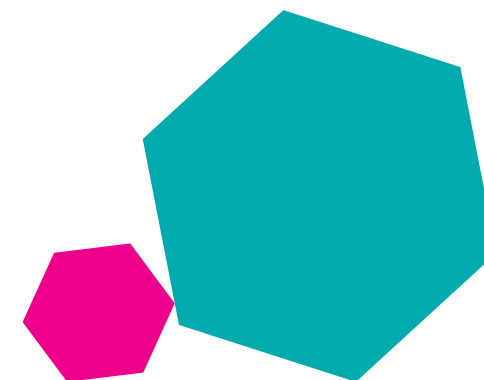
We understand that language will continue to change, and we encourage services and organisations to think about their own language use. This will help us make our services better and more inclusive for everyone.

An example in the policy is the word “LAC/LAAC.” For many years, words such as LAC/LAAC were part of our everyday language. However, children or young people may hear this and believe that they are “lacking” in something. This is an example that has been changed from the Renfrewshire Language Policy, as we now encourage staff to say “Looked After” or “Looked After and Accommodated” instead.

You can view the policy online on the Ren10 website under the Care Experienced tab.

Next Steps

- In 2025 we will review the language policy to make sure it is up to date and produce a new policy.



Supporting the Workforce

There is a group of staff who attend a group called “Supporting the Workforce”, which aims to make sure that all staff are supported to keep The Promise and that we are improving employment opportunities and support for the Care Experienced Community. The group is led by Felix Haggerty (Training and Development Manager) and Sam Macrae (Promise Ambassador).

iLearn Module for all Staff

An online learning course has been made for all staff to access and make sure that they have a basic understanding of The Promise. The course has lots of information about how they can get involved in The Promise in Renfrewshire.

Next Steps

- We will continue to promote the iLearn course across the council and partners.

The Promise Human Library

Across our Promise Keeper Network, staff have lots of different job experiences and knowledge. We want the Care Experienced community to be able to benefit from this.

We are working to create a “Promise Human Library” where young people can be “matched” with someone who works in an area that they are interested in.

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 that they are interested in. We hope that this project can support this.

Next Steps

- We have started to recruit Promise Keepers to the library. Once this process is finished, we will be sharing information about how young people can access this.



Supporting the Workforce (continued)

Development of a Care Experienced Staff Network

In 2025, we will be launching a Care Experienced network for staff, like existing networks for LGBT+ staff or staff with caring responsibilities.

This network will be a safe space for Care Experienced staff to meet other staff from similar backgrounds and life experiences. The network would also be able to share learning with the Council about how they could support their Care Experienced staff better.

This network will be for people who have been in Care themselves and those who have been close to someone who has been in Care, such as a Foster Carer or someone whose parent was Care Experienced. Staff will never have to tell us anything about their Care Experience in detail.

We have met with lots of organisations that have Care Experienced Staff Networks to learn from what has worked well for them and what they would change.

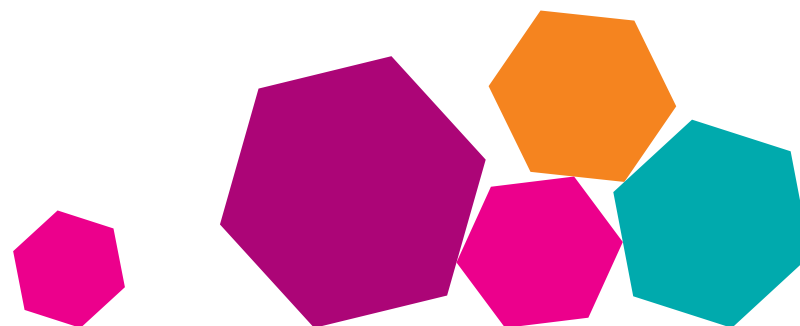
Next Steps

- We are aiming to launch the network over the coming months and will work with the members to decide what they want from the group.

Guaranteed Interviews for Care Experienced People who meet Minimum Job Requirements

We have been working to make sure that Care Experienced people are able to get support when they apply for jobs at the council. We want to make a change that will mean that if a Care Experienced person applies for a job at the council, they will get an interview if they meet the basic requirements for the job. There will be a section on the application form where people can identify as Care Experienced if they want to.

We are also working closely with the HR team in the council to make sure that if the person does not get the job, they get a good level of feedback so that they can work on this and improve for their next interview.



Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

In response to GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child), funding was given to the Renfrewshire Children's Service Partnership as part of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. This involves the launch of a family support service, an online request-for-help system and increased support for the third sector. This approach aims to ensure that families can receive support at the earliest possible stage to prevent crisis support from being needed.

The Promise also shapes this work, as early help can mean that families are supported early and are able to stay together where it is safe and possible.

There are important parts of Whole Family Wellbeing support which are:

- Children and families should be at the centre, and their rights must be respected
- Families must be involved in designing the services
- Services must be easy to access and find
- Family support must involve working with different services

An important part of Whole Family Support is that families can reach out to services directly for support rather than needing to be formally referred. The new “request for assistance” system has been introduced, where families can request help online. They will then be contacted by a member of the Family Wellbeing Team, who will meet with them and discuss their needs.

Many third-sector organisations in Renfrewshire have received funding to support this work, too. They do this in a range of ways, such as providing holiday and weekend support for families, support for children with additional support needs, or support for Care Experienced parents.



The Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland and COSLA

Across our work on the Promise in Renfrewshire, it is important that we are connected to the work that is happening elsewhere in Scotland. This makes sure that we are on the right track with The Promise and allows us to learn from other people, as well as share some of the work that has been taking place in Renfrewshire.

We meet regularly with the Keeping the Promise Team within the Scottish Government and have been able to share our work on the Renfrewshire Language Policy and Renfrewshire Promise Keeper Network with them.

Recently, we supported the consultation on “Developing a Universal Definition of Care Experience,” which is being carried out by the Scottish Government.

This is one of several consultations carried out by the Scottish Government at the moment, along with “Moving on from Care into Adulthood,” “Children’s Hearing Redesign,” and “Consideration of the Future of Fostering and a New Strategic Approach”.

Keeping The Promise in Children’s Hearings

There have been lots of changes taking place over the past year within Children’s Hearings.

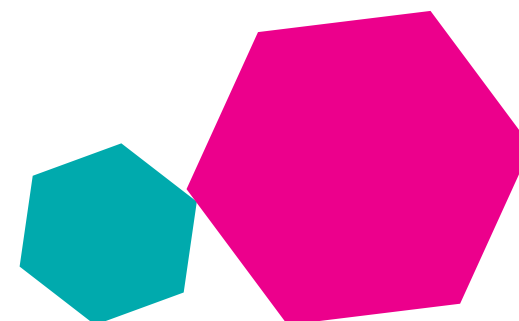
The Child-Friendly Scheduling project allows every child or young person attending a hearing to choose the date, time, and location of the hearing. Children and young people had told SCRA that this had made their experience better.

The Taking Control of My Hearing project supports children and young people in understanding the process and makes sure that they are prepared for their Hearing. There have been changes to the way that children and young people can visit the Hearing centre before their meeting. There have also been changes to the information that is sent to children and young people before their meeting.

Keeping The Promise in Community Learning and Development

Case Study: Promise Arts and Culture Programme

The Promise Arts and Culture Programme aims to increase involvement in the arts with Care Experienced young people and Young Carers. This has involved working with artists across different types of art, such as Film Making, Animation, Graffiti and Fashion and Textiles, to encourage young people to explore their creative voices. Many of the young people who were involved in these projects are now attending Art Boss within Youth Services.



Promise Projects

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 of our 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.

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

Promise Projects (continued)

Who Cares? Scotland—Communities that Care Project

In partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, there is a programme for primary and secondary schools to educate all children and young people about Care Experience. This project aims to make schools more understanding and inclusive of Care Experience. Within this project, there is also a course which is delivered to all staff in schools to ensure that they have a good understanding of Care Experience.

Tek Care—Digital Maker Space Project

Tek Care provides digital skills and training opportunities for young people with Care Experience. The project aims to increase the skills and confidence of the key people in a Care Experienced person's life, such as foster carers or residential staff, so that they can support them with their digital skill journey. This project involves five partners: YMCA Scotland, Barnardo's, Mhor Collective, Scottish Tech Army, and Youth Link Scotland.



Promise Team Biographies

Promise Manager/ Promise Lead Officer

Maurice Gilligan, Promise Manager,
maurice.gilligan@renfrewshire.gov.uk

My name is Maurice Gilligan. I am Renfrewshire's Promise Manager, and I am a member of Renfrew-shire Council's Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and a key officer in Renfrewshire's Children Services Partnership. I work closely with the Scottish Government, COSLA, Promise Scotland, and other agencies around all aspects of The Promise. I have been in this permanent role since October 2022. I manage the Children's Services Partnership's response to the implementation of The Promise in Renfrewshire. I have the lead role in strategic planning activity relating to The Promise across Children's Services and with key stakeholders, including the Health and Social Care Partnership and GGC Health Board, the Police and voluntary sector partners.

Promise Ambassador

Sam Macrae, Promise Ambassador,
samantha.macrae@renfrewshire.gov.uk

My name is Sam Macrae, and I am the Promise Ambassador for Renfrewshire Council. I have been working at the Council since July 2021 and was involved in the Independent Care Review. My role focuses on supporting staff and services to think about how they can #KeepThePromise and the needs of the Care Experienced community. I also co-chair the Supporting the Workforce group for The Promise to make sure that the Council is providing employment opportunities and support to Care Experienced people. I also help staff to think about how they can listen to Care Experienced people in their services.



Maurice and Sam

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Glossary

Care Experience

The Care Experienced community is made up of anyone who is or has been in care or is from a looked-after background at any stage in their life. That is anyone who is or has been in foster care, adopted, kinship care (looked after by a relative), resident in a children's home or have been looked after at home under a Supervision Order for any length of time. It also includes anyone who is or has been on the edges of care (in contact with social work and the wider care sector) at any point.

Corporate Management Team (CMT)

The Heads of Service across the Council meet regularly to discuss important issues. Together, they make up the Corporate Management Team. The CMT includes the senior officers of the Council, OneRen and Renfrewshire HSCP.

COSLA

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the national association of Scottish councils and acts as an employers' association for its 32 member authorities. COSLA works on councils' behalf to focus on the challenges and opportunities they face, and to engage positively with governments and others on policy, funding and legislation.

GIRFEC

This is Scotland's national approach to promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people. It provides a consistent framework, shared language and common understanding of wellbeing. GIRFEC puts the child or young person at the heart and helps children and young people get the right support from the right people at the right time.

Health and Social Care Partnership

Health and Social Care Partnerships, (HSCPs) are organisations formed to integrate services provided by Health Boards and Councils in Scotland. The NHS and local authority jointly run each partnership. Renfrewshire HSCP delivers adult social care services and all community health services for adults and children in the Renfrewshire area.

Lived Experience

Lived experience is the knowledge and understanding you get when you have personally lived through something.

Our Hearings, Our Voice

Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV) is an independent board for children and young people from across Scotland between the ages of 8–18, who have experience of the Children's Hearings System.

Ren10

REN10 is a network of people who work or volunteer in the Renfrewshire area. There is a variety of early help services for your mental health and wellbeing.

SCRA

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is a national body focused on children and young people most at risk. SCRA's main responsibilities are:

- To facilitate the work of Children's Reporters
- To deploy and manage staff to carry out that work
- To provide suitable accommodation for Children's Hearings

The Independent Care Review

Between 2017 and 2020, Scotland's Independent Care Review heard the experiences of over 5,500 people, who included:

- Care Experienced infants, children, young people and adults
- Members of the paid and unpaid workforce of Scotland's "care system."

Their vision was set out in the Independent Care Review's conclusions. In 2020, the Scottish Parliament agreed to keep these conclusions in full. And, when it did, it made a promise. See also Appendix 2.

The Promise

Scotland's ambition is that every child and young person should grow up safe, loved, and respected. The conclusions of Scotland's Independent Care Review set out the changes that need to take place to achieve this for Care Experienced children and young people. Scotland's promise is that these conclusions will be implemented in full—by 2030 at the latest. See also Appendix 2.

UNCRC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the base standard for children's rights and sets out the fundamental rights of all children. The UNCRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world and sets out the specific rights that all children have to help fulfil their potential, including rights relating to health and education, leisure and play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard.

