

Renfrewshire's Promise

Keeping The Promise in Renfrewshire

Report on Keeping The Promise to Renfrewshire's
Infants, Children, Young People and Families.



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The Promise in Renfrewshire

This report highlights the first 5 years of Renfrewshire's Approach to Keep The Promise and recognises the key part played by Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network.



The Promise in Renfrewshire

The Promise is a priority for Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership.

“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.

Delivering The Promise in Renfrewshire is part of a wider partner vision on improving outcomes for infants, children and young people who are more likely to face poorer outcomes because of experience of inequalities, trauma and adversity.

Governance and Oversight

Renfrewshire Promise delivery is overseen by Renfrewshire’s Promise Strategic Oversight Group and this group reports to Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership.



Currently, three workstreams provide updates and are aligned to the Strategic Oversight Group and they are: Whole Family Wellbeing Steering Group; Supporting the Workforce and Renfrewshire Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership (previously known as Keeping the Promise in Renfrewshire’s Children’s Hearings). The groups are all chaired by senior managers from across the partnership.

Renfrewshire Promise delivery mapping and planning tool is informing delivery of The Promise. This mapping tool was developed in conjunction with Promise Scotland Delivery Partners. The Promise Manager has been sharing this mapping and planning tool approach with Local Authorities from across Scotland.

The Promise in Renfrewshire (continued)

Key Strategic Drivers

The work and activity around The Promise is at a key stage in the 10-year programme. The Promise Plan 24–30 was published in June 2024, and this followed the publication of the Scottish Government’s Promise Implementation Plan in Spring 2024.

The publication of The Promise Plan 24–30 has provided an opportunity to recognise and to draw on progress to date and set the next steps in the direction of travel to Keep The Promise. The plan sets out ambitions into a delivery focused route for action and carry the voice of all in order to make this a reality.

The Scottish Government’s update to Keeping the Promise Implementation Plan provided a full review of progress on the actions and the commitments that Scottish Government and other agencies have taken and commented on the next stages of the work that is required.

In Renfrewshire upon publication of both these plans there was initial mapping and planning around the implementation of the plans and what it means in relation to our planning, priorities and governance arrangements. A further review of governance arrangements has taken place to ensure the existing structures are fit for purpose. As a result of this review there has been streamlining of the number of workstreams currently reporting in the oversight group.

We are working with parents, carers, children and young people about what Plan 24–30 means for them.

The Promise approach in Renfrewshire is clearly aligned with significant other policy areas and part of a wider ambition that Renfrewshire’s children and young people are happy, healthy, safe and thriving. The Promise aligned policy areas include United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), National Trauma Transformation Programme and wider equalities strategies and legislation.

The Promise Manager has delivered presentations to Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Executive Group and Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities, which are both part of Renfrewshire’s Community Planning structure. Community Planning Partnerships have a statutory responsibility to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities in their area, so successful delivery of The Promise supports the objectives of Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.

Through these groups, The Promise Manager has raised awareness of the objectives of The Promise among Chief Officers of statutory agencies and significant third sector organisations in Renfrewshire. As a result, these organisations have considered how they can best support The Promise in their organisations.

The Promise Manager has been liaising with Policy Managers and appropriate policy leads in services within the Council and the HSCP around how The Promise relates to and impacts those services. This has included work around the development of the service’s Service Improvement Plans, Strategic Plan, Mid-Year Monitoring reports and this also includes meeting with service’s corporate management teams.

Loving and Nurturing

We make every effort as professionals to adopt a loving, nurturing approach that encourages a culture where our service users are empowered to ask us about any aspect of our services. Central to our approach to The Promise and our wider policy development work is actively listening to our children, young people and families.

Renfrewshire Promise Champs

In 2021, Renfrewshire Council Youth Services were appointed as the lead service for developing the Youth Voice for Care Experienced young people across Renfrewshire. As part of Youth Service's strategic working towards youth empowerment and participation, this includes locality-based youth voice forums and reflects the interests/needs of the most marginalised young people in our communities.

Using a UNCRC rights-based approach and in working towards the National Youth Work Outcomes, Youth Services have a proven track record of supporting young people, developing their skills and confidence to be able to use youth voice opportunities to speak out, campaign, and affect change and shape services that can better meet their needs.

What Happened?

The Promise Champions programme started with mixed attendance of the previous Champions Board members and newly recruited Youth Services Care Experienced members. The Promise Champs group since continues to change in membership with young people moving on to positive destinations and new members being recruited through youth consultation.

At the Champs first sessions they met with the Promise Ambassador, Sam Macrae who supported the Champs to grow their understanding of The Promise, look at the policies that have changed

positively within care and to explore where initial changes could be made. The Champs were supported by Youth Services, discussed youth-based issues and ways in which they as young people could make positive changes, that would benefit themselves and other Care Experienced young people living within Renfrewshire.

The Promise Champs were invited along to leadership training sessions and participated in the Youth Voice Residentials to learn new skills, engage in team building activities and meet other like-minded young people to widen their networks.

Youth Services has and continues to outreach to schools, social work area teams and to youth organisations that support Care Experienced young people to increase participation and signpost Care Experienced young people to groups and opportunities available to them.

The Renfrewshire Young Scot portal is also regularly updated with new campaign pages to signpost young people and staff/carers to a point that had information on what the Promise is, and activities that might support Care Experienced young people.



Renfrewshire Promise Champs (continued)

Summary of the Promise Champs Achievements

Promise Present Drive 2023—Promise Champs planned and organised present drive. The present drive launched in November 18th ran until the 16th of December. Over this time the champs received 195 parcels and wrapped these into bundles to create 128 presents. All of which were delivered to Care Experienced young people across Renfrewshire, supported by Youth Services, social workers and partner organisations that work to support care experienced young people.

Festive Lunch Event—The Promise Champs organised a festive lunch event that Care Experienced young people and their carers/workers could come along to chat, eat and get involved in the YO Producer's youth event afterwards. This was held within Coats Paisley on Sunday the 18th of November. 30 people attended this lunch. Care Experienced young people received a present from the present drive and an invitation to join in on the youth event.

Promise Champs Summer Club Activities—The Promise Champs consulted with other Care Experienced young people within the Art Boss programme and Promise Arts projects to find out

what they would like to take part in. From this five activities were chosen to organise and facilitate during the summer, as part of the Promise Champ Summer Club.

Promise Champs then researched and explored a variety of experiences and trips based within the west of Scotland suitable for young people aged 11–18. This included bowling, roller disco, film club to offer out to Care Experienced young people to take part in during the summer break. These trips offered places to 32 participants.

Youth Leadership Training—Promise Champs were invited to take part in leadership training where they could contribute and support the co-design of the Youth Voice Summer roadshow.

Summer Youth Voice Roadshow—Promise Champs volunteered to design the fayre games for the Summer Youth Voice roadshow. They helped host the games across nine community venues engaged with 290 participants.

Youth Voice Residential—Promise Champs were invited to take part in the October Youth Voice residential at Lapwing Lodge where they took part in team building and creative youth voice activities. They helped to design banners for the Reclaim the Night March.

Promise Present Drive 2024—Youth Services connected with Promise Keepers to nominate Care Experienced young people to receive a gift. 23 Promise Keepers nominated, 162 young people. Though the generosity of Promise Keepers and Renfrewshire community members the Promise Present drive received 185 parcels which successfully allowed for all nominated Care Experienced young people to receive a Christmas gift.

Renfrewshire Promise Champs Next Steps:

- To continue to stay connected with the Promise Keeper network to create positive working relationships across Renfrewshire to promote the work of the Promise Champs and grow the group's membership.
- To continue to consult with Care Experienced young people to find out what the issues are within care, their daily lives as young people and find out where are their needs are not being met and what they would like support with to thrive and achieve.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network is a community of local champions for The Promise who promote, advocate and improve outcomes for the Care Experienced community. There are currently 330 Promise Keepers, and this number is growing across Renfrewshire. They ensure The Promise remains at the forefront of service design and delivery.

The Promise Keeper network is diverse in terms of seniority and services represented. For example, Social Work, Education, the wider council, the HSCP, Elected Representatives, Community Planning Partners and the third sector.

Promise Keepers benefit from feeling that they are part of a wider community, committed to enacting positive change for the Care Experienced community, creating cultural and system change.

Promise Keepers cascade their learning and development with their colleagues and service users to understand The Promise. Promise Keepers are highly visible, and empowered to act in areas where they can enact changes.

A key component of the network is the exchange of ideas, learning and approaches across a range of mediums to ensure that we are learning from each other. The network is very cost effective and efficient within existing core budget with the minimum of running costs. The network informs the council and partners around future plans and strategic direction.



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's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

Planning and Delivery

The Promise Keeper Network was created to promote the responsibility that all of our services have to Keep The Promise and be sensitive to the needs of the Care Experienced community. A Care Experienced person will have experience of frontline Social Work services, and may also access our library service, housing or business support. It is essential that staff across the organisation are aware of their needs, and ensure they are able to support them as much as possible.

The Promise Keeper Network challenges the belief that responsibility to Keep The Promise lies solely with frontline Children's Services colleagues only. We have energised staff from across the council, partnership and wider local authority to recognise and reinforce the commitment that they have to Care Experienced people.

Promise Keepers enact small, incremental changes to their service, such as sharing their knowledge and understanding with colleagues, ensuring The Promise is on the agenda at team meetings, and promoting the use of positive and non-stigmatising language use as outlined in our Renfrewshire Language Policy.

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

Promise Keepers wear dedicated badges to ensure that they are visible within their teams, to further promote messaging around The Promise and emphasise that their service is a supportive and safe space for Care Experienced people. The badge itself is a symbol and it is voluntary for The Promise Keeper to wear. The Promise Keeper Network developed the badges in response to an ask from Promise Keepers who wished to be identifiable. The actions and the conduct of the Promise Keeper is what is key.

Our Care Experienced community have told us that they want genuine and authentic people to champion The Promise, and the dedication and commitment our Promise Keepers show further emphasises this.

We actively encourage, and they themselves are keen to share, examples of good practice across the network, as well as current opportunities that they may have available for Care Experienced young people e.g., youth clubs, outdoor activities etc. This ensures there are opportunities for partnership working both within and across services. For example, a colleague from health may share an example of good practice which could be adjusted and implemented in education.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

We have a staged application process for someone to become a Promise Keeper. Our Care Experienced Community told us that they want genuine, authentic commitment from those who are championing their needs. Anyone can apply to become a Promise Keeper, and regardless of seniority or position, each member of staff will go through this process.

There are three stages to becoming a Promise Keeper:

1. The first stage is to fill out a short application form. There are two boxes, the first asks why you would like to become a Promise Keeper, and the second asks what opportunities you see for The Promise within your service. This application is then signed by the applicant's line manager and submitted to the Promise Ambassador
2. The second stage is an informal interview. The Training and Development Manager and Promise Ambassador carry out informal interviews to gauge enthusiasm and commitment from the applicant. The conversation is very informal, and the applicant is asked about how they feel The Promise is going in their service. The interview lasts 15 minutes and is hosted online.
3. The third stage is Promise Keepers will undergo training to fulfil their role. Our training is multi-disciplinary to ensure sharing of experiences and ideas within the sessions. Partnership working and networking is at the heart of The Promise Keeper network, and we start this from the offset in the training. The training covers an overview of Care Experience, The Promise and the Promise Keeper role. Throughout the training, we encourage staff to bring their whole selves and personal identities, drawing parallels to the strength of feeling they may have for the infants, children and young people in their personal lives, to the strength of feeling we should possess for the Care Experienced community. We reinforce throughout the training that staff do not come along as empty vessels and will have unique knowledge and experience of The Promise which they will build on. They are experts in their own roles and services and will therefore be experts around how the services can improve their offer to the Care Experienced community.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

We promote a range of post-training support. The Promise Ambassador is accessible and available to provide support and guidance to Promise Keepers at any stage of their roles. This can involve sense checking work, which is being implemented, or co-presenting at team meetings with Promise Keepers who may be nervous or apprehensive around giving presentations to large audiences for the first time.

We host quarterly catch-up sessions. These are one-hour long sessions, with an online session, and an in-person session available. This is to mirror the diverse needs of our network whereby for example, our education Promise Keepers may not be able to physically leave school to attend. These sessions allow us to provide central and national updates, as well as celebrate good practice and recent achievements. The networking element of this allows Promise Keepers to make wider connections in a supportive environment.

At each of the catch-up sessions, we emphasise that we are always open to feedback and suggestions, or if Promise Keepers require any particular resources of support. An example of this is during one of our sessions, a Promise Keepers noted it would be beneficial to know who all the Promise Keepers are. We listened to this feedback and developed a Promise Keeper Directory and sought consent from all Promise Keepers to share their name, job title and email address within this list. This list is shared on the communal Teams channel and is circulated every six months via email to ensure all agencies are able to view this.

“Promise Keepers play a crucial role into 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 are keen to continue to learn from our Promise Keeper network. Glenburn Pre-5 Centre have successfully trained all of their staff members as Promise Keepers. To build on this further, they were keen to open this opportunity to staff and carers within the nursery. We were able to create a bespoke interactive session covering Care Experience and The Promise which was very well received.

This works both ways, as we often call on our Promise Keepers to get involved in ongoing work around The Promise delivery in Renfrewshire. Promise Keepers, and the young people they work with were central to the development of the Renfrewshire Language Policy to ensure that this directly listened to the views and experiences of Care Experienced young people and staff.

Promise Keepers are not only experts in their professional roles, but they are also encouraged to bring their “whole selves” to the role, as emphasised in The Promise. Many of our Promise Keepers have direct or indirect lived experiences of care.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

Innovation and Leading Practice

There are a number of ways that the network is innovative and continually a conduit for Promise Keepers to be actively involved in future development within the network and most importantly in their own services delivering and Keeping The Promise.

It is a very different approach from what has gone before in relation to Champions, Ambassadors etc. The recruitment of Promise Keepers is via a prescribed recruitment process with the requirement of an application and following this an interview. This is innovative as this would not be considered standard practice to make staff and/or partners follow a number of steps for a voluntary role such as this. This is driven by an underlining commitment made to our Care Experienced community.

The approach on how we promote the network across the sector is innovative by being planful, methodical and true to our values. While it is explicit that each service have a minimum of one Promise Keeper it lies within the individual council/partner service around the number and how they wish to grow the network, we do not set a target. Once a Promise Keeper is in place, the Promise Keeper encourage staff in their teams and who they work closely with to join the network.

The momentum around the Promise Keeper work has never dwindled, which has been a core part of the project design. We host regular sessions for our Promise Keepers ranging from external inputs such as Promise Scotland, to inputs from local services. We routinely see a turnout of around 25% per session.

Promise Keepers are actively engaged in the continued development of the project. A recent example is being approached by Barnardo's to host two sessions for our Promise Keepers about children's rights, given the success of our other inputs.

The Promise Keeper network has strong governance, leadership and operational delivery processes. There are three key roles in the organisational and operational delivery of the network, The Promise Ambassador, Training & Development Manager and The Promise Manager. All three are fully committed Promise Keepers who are key to the ongoing success and sustainability of the project. This ensures there is a clear strategy for the Promise Keeper Network growth, ongoing planning and sustainability of the network.

There is considerable senior leadership buy in and support for this project and this includes the Chief Executive Officers of Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire's HSCP and OneRen. There is strong support from the Council's Management Team and Senior Leadership at Childrens Services. This can be evidenced by some services including a specific action in their Service Improvement Plans around growing the number of Promise Keepers in their service and the role of Promise Keepers has been built into ongoing related Promise Projects.

This means that there is clear planning for services to increase their engagement within the Promise Keeper Network. We have high ambitions of representation from every team in the local authority. It is quite significant and beneficial to the future of the network that a high number of senior staff across the local authority are Promise Keepers.

The Promise Keeper Network is continually evolving and there is an ongoing review and evaluation of the activity taking place and this has also led to innovation being shared across the network as well as having an effect on increasing the number of Promise Keepers.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

There is a scrutiny aspect to the activity of the network. The Promise Ambassador reports to Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group where this group can challenge and query various aspects of the activity and direction of the Promise Keeper Network.

During 2024/25 there was an engagement plan to grow the network within Renfrewshire's Third Sector partners and this work is being carried out in partnership with Engage Renfrewshire and this connection will lead to increased ongoing membership.

We work closely with our appropriate communications colleagues across the council, Renfrewshire HSCP, COSLA, Promise Scotland to continually promote and raise awareness of the Promise Keeper Network.

In addition, we have also supported other local authority areas to get their own network of the ground.

Results & Impacts

The design and launch of the Promise Keeper network sought to increase visibility and awareness of The Promise across the local authority. We envision everywhere from Social Work frontline services to our libraries and museums understanding what The Promise means to them. They do not necessarily need to know every in-depth aspect about the changes happening, and it is essential they understand what their role is within this, and that this is being cascaded to their colleagues and service users.

"The roll out of The Promise Keeper training is going very well in my view."

We can also recognise the success of the network when we have new services approaching with interest in finding out about the network and joining, which means positive anecdotal feedback has been shared with them by a colleague.

We are able to recognise success as we see the uptake of Promise Keepers increase in diversity across services who had previously not had representation. We can then build positive working relationships with the Promise Keeper in that service and gain a good understanding of the progress being made, providing support and guidance as required.

This is beneficial when contributing to reports and updates across the service and partnership as we have an excellent level of involvement in this work.

We are always looking to celebrate the progress of our Promise Keepers, no matter how small the impact is, and we recognise the importance of this. We have a newsletter and regular catch-up sessions where Promise Keepers can share this work and encourage others to replicate in other services.

We have seen innovative and impactful projects being launched in response to the work of Promise Keepers with direct benefit to the Care Experienced community. The Promise Ambassador is accessible to all Promise Keepers and receives regular queries and updates from Promise Keepers to sense check work, ask questions and enquire about support available.

In our educational establishments specifically, we can recognise the impact of a Promise Keeper by looking at School Improvement Plans. Schools with Promise Keepers have increased mention of The Promise and Care Experience built into their School Improvement Plans, with clear mention around how the role will inform work within the school. We also see this within Service Improvement Plans, such as that of our Health and Social Care Partnership.

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network (continued)

Within the management, operation and delivery of the Promise Keeper Network there is a strong culture of improvement and learning. We recognise that to ensure the network is making a real difference to our Care Experience community that we have an ongoing commitment and process to measuring impact and success.

We are also very mindful of the existing environment our Promise Keepers will have within their own services as we work collectively to support our service users during the cost-of-living pressures while recognising challenges around funding and recruitment.

One of the core principles of the Promise Keeper Network is that it is a learning network, as a Promise Keeper and as a network, we are constantly learning from each other.

As noted earlier we have carried out a number of formal evaluations and developing case studies, additionally we have encouraged our Promise Keepers within their own services to do the same.

All the training sessions including materials are evaluated, and feedback is regularly requested from Promise Keepers who have undertaken the training and the feedback is acted upon, and resources amended accordingly.

The Promise Team have worked with Improvement Scotland and COSLA around the development of a story of change case study in Renfrewshire and The Promise Keeper Network is seen an enabler in delivering The Promise across Renfrewshire.

We make considerable use of Promise related data and intelligence, for example Children's Services data, and this can be broken down by Care Experienced Pupils and this allows us to track and monitor progress in relation to Promise Keepers working in Education.

Senior Leaders in the Council's Management Team, the Director of Education, Heads of Education and Senior Social Work Leaders are kept aware of the number of Promise Keepers, areas for growth, key trends, and are supportive of the future planned direction of the network.

The impact and success of The Promise Keeper Network is reported to the Childrens Service Partnership Group and the Promise Strategic Oversight Group.

At all stages our partners, colleagues and communities are part of measuring success as outlined. As we mentioned earlier, we correlate data, insights and feedback from our Care Experienced community.

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

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Network Next Steps:

- Continue to raise awareness and grow the network.
- Celebrate success and share case studies.
- Support our current Promise Keepers.

Promise Keeper Conference 2024

On the 5th of December 2024, we hosted our second annual Promise Keeper event. This event brings together Promise Keepers in one room for a half-day event, to hear about examples of work and good practice across Renfrewshire around The Promise. We had an attendance of around 100 people.

The event was split into two sections. The first half of the day brought together three keynote speakers, including Fiona Williams from Educational Psychology, Joanne Byrne from NHSGGC and Adrian McKechnie and Richard McPike from Blue Triangle.

Building on the evaluation from last year's conference, attendees noted that they wanted more emphasis on networking and more chances to meet and speak to different people. We designed a Professional Speed Dating Exercise which allowed for groups of staff to spend ten minutes at a time with an organisation to hear about their work around The Promise and supporting the Care Experienced Community.

These services included:

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

The evaluation reflected very positively on the Professional Speed Dating exercises, with attendees reflecting that this was a fantastic way to meet lots of people in a short space of time and hear about the inspirational work taking place across the organisations. Attendees also reflected that it was a different approach to other conferences, so it felt new and engaging.

"I really enjoyed this, and it was an excellent use of time to make sure we heard as much as we could. Worked well."

"It was very useful to be able to hear direct from the services. Having each table timed allowed for a smooth and quick transition and information session from each."

"I thought this was a fantastic way of getting people a lot of information in a short time frame. I think more activities like this should be done. It keeps people interest."

"Great exercise and would hope that it is a feature at the next conference. Really beneficial and engaging."

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

"Fantastic event. It was really well-organised and engaging. I really enjoyed the presentations—good mix of speakers and discussion. Venue was great. Food was great. Good opportunities for inter-agency networking."

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

Renfrewshire's Promise Keeper Conference Next Steps:

- Reflect on evaluation and learning.
- Plan for Conference 2025.

Renfrewshire Language Policy

The Renfrewshire Language Policy was launched in April 2022 and was created through consultation with Care Experienced young people and staff from the Promise Keeper network around words they felt were negative or stigmatising.

The Language Policy is a set of guidelines for how we speak about, describe Care Experience, and Care Experienced children and young people. This language will continue to evolve, and services and organisations are encouraged to review their language. The policy is helping us to move away from overly professionalised words and phrases to adopt person-centred language, which challenges existing stigma.

Staff across all services at Renfrewshire Council as well as council partners, have been asked to consider the impact of our language when engaging with children, young people and their families and modify it where possible.

For many of us, acronyms such as LAC/LAAC had been embedded in our everyday language and practices for several years. However, for a child or young person, they may hear this and think they are “lacking” in something. We recognise that “Looked After” is a statutory, legal term, and are encouraging staff to use the term in full “Looked After Child” or “Looked After and Accommodated Child.”

We must continue challenging the language used to tackle the stigma associated with Care Experience. It is also important to rethink how we describe the behaviour of our Care Experienced children and young people, moving away from terminology such as “challenging” and towards “distressed behaviour.” This ensures we take a trauma-informed approach and recognise that all behaviour is communication.

Staff across all the council are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policy and work to find ways to embed this in their roles. Renfrewshire Council staff are being supported in the roll out of the policy by the Promise Ambassador.

Considerable work and effort has taken place to share the Language Policy across Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership. The Promise Ambassador has offered staff who would like to learn more about the Language Policy or arrange a session to discuss it with their team to contact the Promise Ambassador.

We have also been working with our communications team at Renfrewshire Council to raise awareness of the policy across the Council and beyond. We are also using the opportunity to raise the importance of language with our partners across Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire Language Policy Next Steps:

- In 2025/26 we will review the language policy in consultation with the Care Experienced community and produce an updated policy.

Supporting the Workforce

We have a working group in place for Supporting the Workforce which is co-chaired by Felix Haggerty (Training and Development Manager) and Sam Macrae (Promise Ambassador). This group is attended by a range of staff from across the partnership and third sector. The group have actioned the below key items around the theme of Supporting the Workforce and improving employment opportunities for the Care Experienced community.

The Promise Human Library

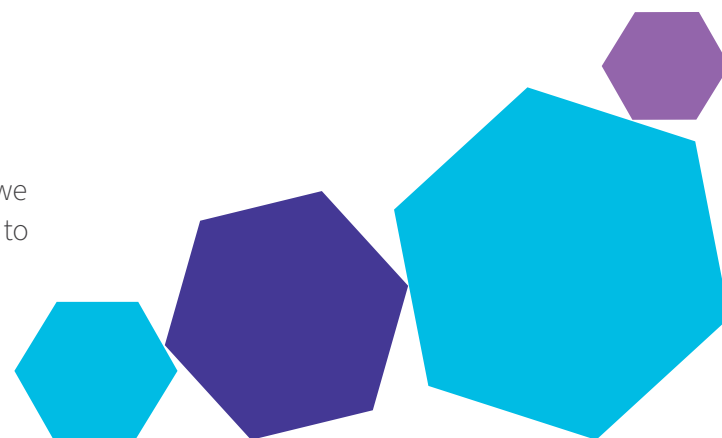
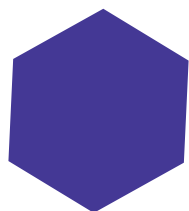
Across our Promise Keeper Network, we have a wealth and diversity of professional career experience, and we are keen to ensure that our Care Experienced community can benefit from this. We are in the process of creating a “Promise Human Library” where we “match” young people with Promise Keepers who work in a career field that they might be interested in. The Promise Keeper would be able to decide in terms of capacity how they can support the young person, this may be a phone call, an email exchange or an office visit.

This project aims to address the lack of social capital that many Care Experienced young people face when accessing informal information and experiences about job opportunities, while complimenting the existing support on offer from our employability services.

At the end of 2024, we started to ask for Promise Keepers to sign up to the Human Library and are working to continue to recruit. Once we have a sufficient number of Promise Keepers signed up, we will offer this to the Care Experienced community to access, who will be able to sign up.

The Promise Human Library Next Steps:

- Continue to recruit staff to the Human Library, with the aim to launch this project for Care Experienced young people to access in 2025.



Supporting the Workforce (continued)

Development of a Care Experienced Staff Network

In 2025, we will be launching a Care Experienced network for staff, similar to existing networks for LGBT+ staff or staff with caring responsibilities. We envision that staff would meet quarterly and we are keen to ensure the sessions remain stigma and judgement-free, as well as a safe space for staff to meet other people with experiences similar to theirs.

One of the network aims is to share the living experience of Care Experienced staff to inform improvements around how we can better support Care Experienced colleagues in the Council. Most importantly, the network will provide a space for individuals seeking peer support and a safe space to create and experience a sense of community and belonging.

Within this, there is also scope for informal mentoring to occur between senior and junior staff, as well as providing Care Experienced staff with learning and development opportunities which they can use in their roles.

This network will be for people with both direct and indirect Care Experience to ensure a breadth of experiences. We will continue to be mindful of the balance between these two groups and ensure that both are given appropriate space to share their views.

Those with indirect experience will act as allies within the group, given their proximity to the issues that affect Care Experienced people. Staff will at no point be asked questions about the nature of their Care Experience, but rather will be asked if they identify with being Care Experienced (direct or indirect) to ensure we are capturing the correct audience and protecting those within the group.

We carried out extensive research into how Care Experienced staff networks can work in other organisations. During this stage we met with NHS Lothian, the UK Civil Service, Police Scotland and Sports Scotland and have been able to take this learning into designing the Renfrewshire network.

We are aiming to pilot the network over the coming months and will work closely with the Marketing and Communications, Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development colleagues during this process.

During the first meeting, we will be working on a group agreement to ensure that all members agree and understand what the group will entail. This will cover the privacy element to ensure that all members agree to confidentiality around what is discussed and who attends.

We will also discuss if there is anything the group would like to take forward as a starting point or any information they would benefit from, e.g. trade unions, adviceworks, etc.

Development of a Care Experienced Staff Network Next Steps:

- Continue to work closely with colleagues in Marketing and Communications and HR. We aim to launch this network for staff in 2025 for a pilot over a six-month period before evaluating.

Supporting the Workforce (continued)

Guaranteed Interviews for Care Experienced People who meet Minimum Job Requirements

We have been working closely with HR colleagues to ensure that Care Experienced people are able to receive support when applying for council roles. We are working on introducing guaranteed interviews for Care Experienced people who meet the minimum requirements for job roles in the council.

This project aims to level the playing field and address some of the barriers that many Care Experienced people may experience when gaining experience and qualifications. This will be clearly displayed on all application forms for roles, with an explanation of Care Experience. Care Experienced people would be able to self-identify on this form if they choose to, however there is no requirement to do so.

We are also working closely with HR around this project to ensure that hiring managers are able to provide a good package of feedback if the person is unsuccessful to ensure they are able to bring that feedback to their next interview.

Guaranteed Interviews for Care Experienced People who meet Minimum Job Requirements Next Steps:

- Continue to liaise with HR and CMT colleagues to launch this work.
- We will be working closely with hiring managers around the time of the launch to ensure they are educated about this and understand the significance.

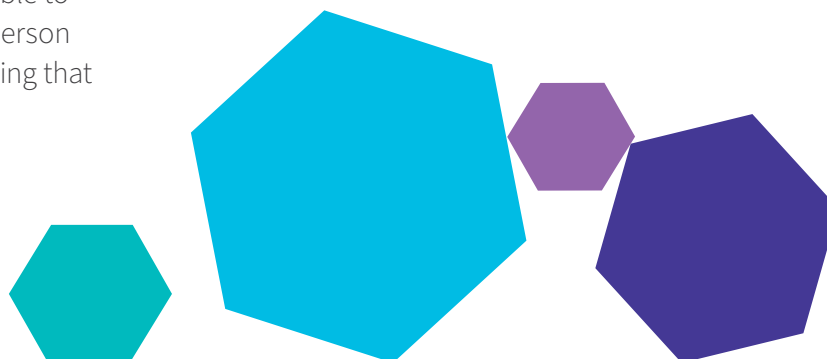
iLearn Module for all Staff

An iLearn module has been developed to ensure that all staff can access basic information about The Promise and can be signposted to further information and how they can get involved locally. The module covers the journey from the Independent Care Review to The Promise, highlighting key issues and why this work was needed. It also covers examples of local practice such as the Promise Keeper Network and Renfrewshire Language Policy.

The module is accessible to all staff on the e-learning platform and can be requested by external organisations who can receive a bespoke link.

iLearn Module for all Staff Next Steps:

- Continue to promote the iLearn module across the council and partners.



Data, the Care Experienced Data Dashboard Development and The Promise Progress Framework

Promise Team Data:

329

The number of Promise Keepers in Renfrewshire (20-Dec-2024).

95

Attendees at the Annual Promise Keeper Conference (Dec-2024).

40

Number of Promise Team Engagements with internal partners around Renfrewshire’s approach to The Promise.

37

Number of Promise Team Engagements with external partners around Renfrewshire’s approach to The Promise.

5

The Promise Ambassador and Promise Managers are involved in a number of Promise specific projects.

Care Experienced Data Dashboard Development

Renfrewshire Council’s Childrens Services Data and Evaluation Officer along with the Promise Manager have been working on the development of the Care Experienced Data Dashboard. This dashboard brings together data in the one place, as a convenient tool which draws together lots of the data that is hosted on the School Education Data platform.

The aim is for Care Experienced Data in one place that would evolve over time and include data on attendance, exclusions, attainment, key figures, wellbeing etc.

The dashboard will allow for the analysis and comparison of Care Experienced data including trends over time. Also, can provide the Childrens Services Partnership and the Promise Strategic Oversight group with data to information decision making.

The dashboard will assist providing evidence impact in the future through analytics around how many times the dashboard is accessed in the future.

The Promise Progress Framework

2025 will be a very significant year in terms of how Scotland better understand the progress being made to Keep The Promise by adopting of The Promise Progress Framework.

The Promise requires transformational change across organisations, and it is fully recognised that to fully understand the work and pace of change an agreed way of tracking progress is necessary. Understanding progress across the breadth and depth of The Promise requires very different types of data, collected, and analysed at different levels.

A joint Local Government, Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland framework will be used to demonstrate how Scotland is Keeping The Promise and Renfrewshire’s approach will be informed by the Framework.

Data, the Care Experienced Data Dashboard Development and The Promise Progress Framework (continued)

Background on Framework

In May 2024, the COSLA Children and Young People Board agreed to support the development of the framework, recognising that this will be iterative and evolve over time. The purpose of the framework was agreed—to understand if we are Keeping The Promise, and what the enablers and barriers in doing so are.

Since May, activity has taken place to consider the data and indicators currently available. This includes data that Local Government collects, but importantly data that other public sector organisations hold, as we know that Local Government alone cannot keep The Promise.

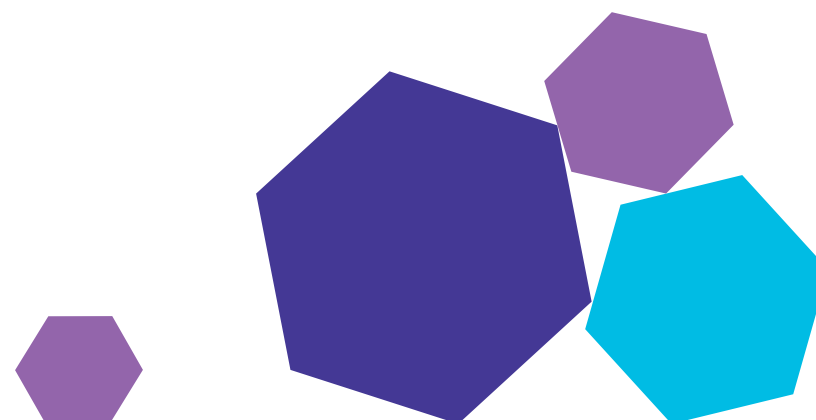
The progress framework has been shared in draft a number of times with the Local Government Promise Programme Board, Scottish Government's internal Promise Board, and The Promise Collective, and informed by their knowledge, insights and experiences. It is acknowledged that there are gaps in the data currently collected across all partners. However, the agreement was that the first published iteration would include the indicators that are currently available.

Wider indicators that are not specifically about Care Experienced children and young people have been included, as some provide important contextual information, and some can potentially be used as proxy measures or are known risk factors for a child becoming looked after. These are important, as the wider context all children are growing up in cannot be forgotten—we cannot focus on one part of a system without considering others.

Work is ongoing with Public Health Scotland to consider what health indicators could be developed. There will be ongoing conversations with the Care Inspectorate and other public sector organisations about how their data could be developed or included in future iterations of the framework.

Data, the Care Experienced Data Dashboard Development and The Promise Progress Framework Next Steps:

- In 2025 this framework will be taken to Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group with the intention that The Promise Progress Framework be adopted by the end of 2025, with annual updates to follow.



Engagement with the Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland and COSLA

Over the last number of years The Promise Team has developed strong, constructive and positive relations with the Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland and COSLA. The Chief Social Work Officer, Renfrewshire's Promise Manager and Promise Ambassador are very well connected to The Promise national delivery mechanisms at the Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland and COSLA.

We have hosted visits from COSLA and Promise Scotland to highlight our progress on implementation of The Promise. We are an active participant in COSLA's Promise Lead Group where we share our learning and activities with partners across Scotland's Local Authorities.

The Promise Team have had ongoing engagement with the Scottish Government's Keeping the Promise Team, and we have shared some of our progress and activity with them including highlighting our Renfrewshire Promise Keeper Network and our Renfrewshire Language Policy as well as been involved in Scottish Government's Consultation activity.

In particular the Promise Team have supported the "Developing a universal definition of 'care experience'" consultation currently underway by the Scottish Government. This consultation is part of a wider package of consultation and engagement that had taken place in 2024 on areas of work being progressed to Keep the Promise.

This includes a number of public consultations and Childrens Services colleagues have supported this:

- **'Moving on' from care into adulthood—** (opened 11 July 2024) This consultation is about ensuring that young people leaving care and moving into adulthood have the right scaffolding of support available to ensure they thrive.
- **Children's Hearings Redesign—** (opened 20 July 2024) This consultation is part of a series of steps to ensure that Scotland's children's hearings system can be redesigned to build on its strengths so that it can deliver the best possible experience to the children and families in need of its support. It focusses on areas which may require changes to the law.
- **Consideration of the future of fostering and a new strategic approach—** launched Autumn 2024.

Engagement with the Scottish Government, The Promise Scotland and COSLA Next Steps:

- Continue to have positive working relationship with The Promise Scotland, the Scottish Government and COSLA.
- We will monitor the results of the ongoing consultations and legislation, such as a Promise Bill, closely and support where required.



Whole Family Wellbeing Approach in Renfrewshire

The Scottish Government aims to ensure that all children and young people have access to the resources and opportunities they require to grow to their full potential. The policy framework, 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) is adopted nationally and outlines a shared understanding for professionals supporting children and young people. It emphasises that wellbeing captures all aspects of a child's life, including their physical and mental health, and their connections with their family, the community, and wider society.

Building on GIRFEC processes and shaped by The Promise the national Whole Family Wellbeing approach is built on the understanding that most families can benefit from universal provision that improves accessibility, while specialist provision can support those families whose needs are more complex. As such, the Scottish Government aimed to develop a whole family wellbeing approach that joins up early intervention and preventative services that are offered by different organisations across each local authority. It was predicted that upscaling and shifting resources to these services should support, safeguard, and promote wellbeing, thereby reducing the number of crisis interventions in each local authority.

The core components of whole family wellbeing support were outlined by the Scottish Government. These are:

- Children and families at the centre, as a rights-based approach is adopted and families can contribute to each aspect of service design.
- Availability and access are prioritised to ensure all families know how and where to access this support.
- Family support is delivered via a whole family approach that involves collaboration, multi-agency, and multi-disciplinary work between services.

Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership (RCSP) have received funding from the Scottish Government, as part of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF). There has been significant progress across the local authority to date, including the launch of a family wellbeing service, the introduction of a digital request for assistance system and increased collaboration and capacity building with third sector partners.

Prior to the WFWF, Renfrewshire Council Education Service had three key local authority services delivering family support: Families First; Home Link and Care Experienced Home Link. Families First teams operated in selected Renfrewshire localities and worked with families with children up to aged 8. The Home Link service was a school-based service which supported children, young people, and families where there were barriers to learning. The Care Experienced Home Link Team worked with those children, young people and families who were experiencing crisis impacting on the education of the child/young person. In January 2024, these services merged to form one Family Wellbeing Service in Renfrewshire with three teams: the community team (who were previously Families First); the schools' team (previously Home Link) and the Interrupted Learners team (previously Care Experienced Home Link). This ensures that when a family seeks support, there is a range of support at the appropriate GIRFEC stage of intervention. It was also envisaged that this would allow for greater collaboration between these teams, enabling families to receive holistic support that is tailored to their needs reducing duplication for families.

Whole Family Wellbeing Approach in Renfrewshire (continued)

In addition to local authority services, third sector organisations (TSOs) are also involved in the delivery of family support in Renfrewshire. In 2023, five TSOs were awarded grant funding to deliver services in Renfrewshire under the WFWF. An additional 10 TSOs were also recently granted funding in March 2024. Evaluation work is currently underway to ascertain further funding to TSOs within the final year of the national funding approach.

To determine how and where a family should access support, Renfrewshire Council developed a tier system that would identify the level of support families require.

This system consists of three tiers:

- **Tier 1**—universal prevention and early intervention services. These are delivered by the community team.
- **Tier 2**—tailored, targeted support. These services are delivered by the schools' team.
- **Tier 3**—intensive support that either prevents or is a response to statutory interventions. These are delivered by specialist services.

One of the national principles of holistic whole family support is that families can reach in, as opposed to being referred to for support. Therefore, a new request for assistance system has been introduced in Renfrewshire to ensure equity of access. Families or other agencies can now request for assistance online, and this is followed up by a member of the Family Wellbeing team who will meet and discuss the support they require. This information is then considered through our request for assistance process to identify whether the family require support under tier 1, 2, or 3.

In addition to the request for assistance process, a Fast Online Referral and Tracking (FORT) system has been introduced to manage families currently accessing support within Renfrewshire. This system aims to improve accessibility for teams supporting families by holding all necessary information on each family and improving collaboration across teams as families may access support from a number of services. It also supports the evaluation of the WFWF, by holding information regarding the number of families taking up supports across services and data monitoring the impact of these.



Whole Family Wellbeing Approach in Renfrewshire (continued)

During 2024 the achievements of the Whole Family Wellbeing approach in Renfrewshire included the following:

- A family wellbeing service development day in January 2024 to launch the new service with staff.
- A launch to professionals in May 2024 which brought together the family wellbeing service, the third sector and a wide group of multi-agency professionals.
- A development day in July 2024 for the Whole Family Wellbeing multi-agency steering group.
- Four well attended family engagement events in November 2024 to engage with families about the support they require.
- The launch of a Request for Assistance approach for professionals and families to ask for support from the community family wellbeing teams and the third sector.
- The implementation of a new software system FORT, to track referrals across the community family wellbeing teams and the funded third sector organisations.
- The launch of a multi-agency steering group involving parents, to support families of children with additional support needs.
- Partnership with 15 funded third sector organisations in Renfrewshire who are working with us to support families in a range of innovative ways including: the provision of weekend and holiday support for families of children with additional support needs; music support for children with additional support needs; nurture support for primary school age children; early years support for parents; support for Care Experienced parents; family art activities; parenting support groups; water therapy for children with additional support needs; support for parents of neuro-diverse children to have their voice heard and their views represented.
- Provision of a wide range of family supports and interventions including: Nonviolent resistance support (NVR); Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC); Let's introduce anxiety management (Liam); Seasons for Growth training.
- The development of a framework for family wellbeing support that aligns with the GIRFEC staged intervention framework. This clearly shows which family wellbeing team supports which level of family need.

For further information regarding the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund in Renfrewshire please contact: Susan Bell, Education Manager (Whole Family Wellbeing) and/or Toni Byrne, Project Manager, Whole Family Wellbeing/Connected Communities.

Whole Family Wellbeing Approach in Renfrewshire Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager will continue to attend Steering Group meetings and have a close working relationships with the Whole Family Wellbeing Team.
- There is representation from this team on the Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group.

Renfrewshire's Promise Partnership Funded Projects

Renfrewshire currently has two Keep The Promise Funded Projects and one project from the Promise Partnership Youth Led Grant Programme, both funds come under the provision of the Scottish Government's Promise Partnership Fund. In 2022 the Scottish Government appointed Corra to administer the Promise Partnership Fund from December 2022 until March 2025.

Both Renfrewshire's Keep The Promise Funded Projects focus on the key theme of Supportive School Structure (Right to Education) and prioritise creating school structures that provide support, opportunities and a sense of belonging.

Keep The Promise Funded Project 1

This project is taking place at Johnstone High School and aims to reduce exclusion of children and young people with Care Experience by ensuring they have a key person who is their advocate. The advocate will support attendance and participation in education and has been co-produced and designed by the Care Experienced community in Johnstone High School.

A part of this project is Contextual Safeguarding activity in Johnstone High delivered by Barnardo's. Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their home environment. Working collaboratively with the

school management team, Barnardo's will work to identify the concerns within the school and the immediate community.

Together, they will test and capture evidence of how schools are creating safety for young people and areas where safety strategies can be increased.

A key aspect of this project is around sharing the learning and ensuring this informs future planning and development in relation all Renfrewshire Promise strategic delivery. An agreed process has been put in place to ensure this through the Promise Oversight Group and Promise workstream delivery mechanisms. The project itself is overseen by The Promise Manager and learning including insights from this work informs the wider Childrens Service's Partnership response to the implementation of the Promise across Renfrewshire.

The Promise Strategic Oversight Group receive regular updates as to progress of the project and this update is given by Head of Education (Inclusion) to the Oversight Group and this facilitates the sharing of learning.

The work on this project is also captured on Renfrewshire's Promise Mapping Tool—this ensures oversight and linkages with the national Promise work. Activity captured on this mapping tool is shared across the Childrens Services Partnership, Renfrewshire Promise Partners and through the Promise Keeper Network.

As the work of the project continues, we have plans to disseminate learning through our Promise Keeper Network, with our Education Managers and with our School Senior Leadership Networks.

We are also working with Promise Scotland Communications colleagues around the Stories of Change Project, and we have an agreed plan in place with that will see learning and progress from this project being shared across Scotland.

A full end of year 1 report was produced 21 December 2023 and for further information around this report please contact The Promise Manager.

Keep The Promise Funded Project 1 Next Steps:

- The project will complete end of school year 2025 (June 2025) and a full report on progress and learning will be produced.

Renfrewshire's Promise Partnership Funded Projects (continued)

Keep The Promise Funded Project 2

This project is taking place at St Andrew's Academy and is focused on transitions for Care Experienced pupils. Transitions are a natural part of school life and for some Care Experienced young people transitions can be particularly difficult. The project is exploring how through the creation of a Promise Team in our largest secondary how we overcome the issues that "last minute" transitions can cause.

This project will use The Promise Team to research what works well from the current transition programme and look creatively at how this can be amplified to provide intensive support for any child (in particular Care Experienced Child) who are allocated a space at secondary towards the end of their P7 year.

We are capturing learning in conjunction with our Renfrewshire Promise Mapping Tool and monitoring the progress of the project to the projects oversight groups. We are also actively engaging with the Promise Scotland (producing PowerPoint presentations and updates) as well as keeping to our contractual obligations with Corra.

We have made a point of sharing progress and learning with the Community Planning Partnership Executive Group, to the Children's Services Partnership and to the Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group. This ensures learning is shared widely, not just internally to Children's Services colleagues but to wider external children's services partners.

Learning from the project has also informed Renfrewshire's Education Improvement Framework and key messages sent out to School Senior Management Teams. The Head of Education (Inclusion) regularly meets with the Promise Manager, the schools CMT and is involved in the forward planning around how this work is informing development of future policies and the direction of the activity of the inclusion portfolio.

In 2025 a key phase of the project will be underway, and this is around learning from the research and findings including policy development and resources for sharing across Renfrewshire Schools. Development of School Improvements Guidance and associated activity has been planned and fully supported by the Head of Education (Inclusion).

A full end of year 1 report was produced 20 June 2024 and for further information around this please contact The Promise Manager.

Keep The Promise Funded Project 2 Next Steps:

- The project will complete end of school year 2025 (June 2025) and a full report on progress and learning will be produced.

Renfrewshire's Promise Partnership Funded Projects (continued)

Youth Services Promise Partnership Youth Led Grant Programme

In September 2024 Renfrewshire's Youth Services were awarded funding through the Promise Partnership Youth Led Grant Programme to deliver a youth led programme by facilitating and supporting children and young people with Care Experience to put their ideas into action and make change happen.

This Youth Led Grant Programme is designed to give children and young people with Care Experience the opportunity to say what matters to them and for them to decide what change needs to happen in their communities to make them feel loved, safe and respected.

The programme aligns with The Promise Scotland's Plan 24–30, by focusing on voice, and enhancing the well-being and opportunities for children and young people with Care Experience.

The purpose of this programme is to facilitate and support children and young people with Care Experience in their community to put their ideas into action and make change happen.

Youth Services has established best practices for involving young people in planning, co-designing, and delivering projects that align with their needs and aspirations. Their approach includes several successful initiatives, during which young people play critical roles in planning and organisation, encouraging them to reflect on their personal challenges and the broader experiences of their peers, fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

Youth Services Promise Partnership Youth Led Grant Programme Next Steps:

- A full plan of work has been devised, and Youth Services will be providing feedback on progress to Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group.



Renfrewshire's Promise Programmes and Projects

Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee—Sub-group 'Voice':

Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC) has actively responded to The Promise and one such example is around 'voice'. To ensure that the work of RCPC is informed by the perspectives of children and young people, a temporary subgroup was established to agree a strategy in relation to this.

The recent report of the joint inspection of services for children at risk of harm highlighted that:

"The partnership knew themselves well and identified the ongoing work and the improvements needed. They had strong foundations in gathering children's voices, but aimed to enhance this process, especially for children with additional support needs and younger children. The previously mentioned RCPC subgroup Voice was identified as a way to address this. Professionals recognised they had listened to young people but were sometimes unsure about the actions taken in response. Leaders recognised the need to better capture service users' voices, including adults, acknowledging strong individual partner efforts but lacking collective coherence. This indicated the partnership had a priority lens on participation."

The group has met on three occasions with a subgroup established, led by Youth Services and focusing on young people's participation. The Promise Ambassador sits on this group.

A strategy and action plan are being developed which will form part of the RCPC plan and will be provided to RCPC for approval in March 2025.

It is proposed that strategy and plan will focus on the following priorities:

- the voice of children, young people and families involved in child protection processes;
- voice of young people;
- seldom heard voices focusing on children with disabilities; and
- the voice of infants.

Sub-group 'Voice' Next Steps:

- The Promise Ambassador will continue to represent The Promise on this group.

Renfrewshire's Promise Programmes and Projects (continued)

Children at Risk of Harm Inspection Report

In the recent published report inspectors recognised that Prevention Strategies and Initiatives Partners had embedded a community-based, relational approach to protection, grounded in a refreshed Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) strategy and their response to The Promise. In addition, RCPC objectives were aligned with national policies, including the UNCRC and the drive to Keeping the Promise.

“Children and young people's experiences of services were transforming as a result of relationship-based approaches. This was underpinned by the partnership's work to embed the Promise.”

The inspectors noted under quality indicator 2.1: Impact on children and young people one major strength that the RCPC had made significant positive impacts on children and young people's experiences noting:

Children at Risk of Harm Inspection Report Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager and The Promise Manager will link in with RCPC colleagues to support the areas for improvement identified in report.

The Stronger Start Project

Stronger Start is a person-centred wrap-around service which provides embedded Money Advice and Advocacy to pregnant women and their families who engage with maternity services across Renfrewshire and the wider Clyde area. Stronger Start is a comprehensive support service that provides money, welfare, debt and financial capability services, as well as providing vital advocacy support. In turn, this may prevent homelessness, and will tackle debt issues, as well as addressing other health and poverty-related issues. Stronger Start embodies both The Promise and trauma informed approaches.

Stronger Start was developed through a Steering Group established and chaired by Renfrewshire HSCP Health Improvement Team and consisting of key partners, including Council services (including The Promise Manager), Royal Alexandra Hospital Maternity, Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (RCAB), Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire HSCPs.

The Steering Group has worked closely with RCAB, to support them in being awarded funding from the Improving Lives National Lottery Community Fund. Initial funding was secured in September 2023 to deliver a one-year stronger start pilot, with an additional two years of funding being secured from the lottery in November 2024 so that service is funded until January 2027.

The Steering Group has responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the service, as well as exploring potential future funding opportunities. Work is ongoing with the Improvement Service on the evaluation to demonstrate key outcomes and cost savings/ cost avoidance as a direct result of Stronger Start.

The Stronger Start Project Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager will continue to attend the Steering Group.
- The project lead will be provided an opportunity to present an overview and update to Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group.

Renfrewshire's Promise Programmes and Projects (continued)

Communities That Care Whole School Approach

The Communities that Care programme, is delivered in partnership by Who Cares? Scotland, was initially developed and piloted in Renfrewshire and is currently being funded and extended throughout Renfrewshire.

The goal of the programme is to create more caring and inclusive school environments for Care Experienced pupils. The Who Cares? Scotland Communities that Care whole-school approach creates the conditions for Care Experienced children and young people to be nurtured and supported in their schools and communities across Scotland, through local training and awareness-raising activities.

Background: Care Experienced people can experience stigma and discrimination within their communities due to lack of public knowledge and understanding of Care Experience, perpetuated by media stereotypes and depictions of Care Experienced people as damaged.

Schools provide an ideal setting to improve attitudes, understanding and perceptions of Care Experienced people amongst the next generation, and to support a ripple effect from that learning within the wider school community. School pupils will grow up to become adult community members, they are the future employers, future workforce and future corporate parents.

Creating school environments which are more supportive and inclusive provides the scaffolding required to ensure that Care Experienced learners have the opportunity to realise their educational aspirations and reach their fullest potential.

The Approach: The Communities that Care whole-school approach ensures that Care Experienced children and young people are nurtured and supported in their schools by educating entire school communities (pupils, staff, parents/carers) about what Care Experience is and creating an ethos of empathy and understanding towards their Care Experienced pupils.

The programme provides opportunities for Care Experienced pupils to be together, learn about their rights and care identity and to use their voice to influence change within their school.

PSE Curriculum Resource Packs: At the heart of this whole-school approach are the “Learning About Care Experience” PSE Curriculum Resource Packs which contain lessons for children and young people to learn about Care Experience in a developmentally appropriate way from Early Years through to S6.

Communities That Care Whole School Approach Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager, along with the Head of Education will continue to meet regularly and support the partnership project where required. The Development Worker for Communities that Care has a position on Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group and is welcome to provide relevant updates where required.

Renfrewshire's Promise Programmes and Projects (continued)

Circuit Digital Maker Space Project

Circuit Scotland (originally called the TekCare initiative) is a project that is creating pop-up maker spaces in Renfrewshire and Dundee, designed to meet the needs of young people who have care experience. Every project decision is made by a group of Project Consultants; young people who have lived Care Experience, who are paid to provide the Project Lead with advice and guidance.

The first pop-up maker space was launched in Dundee with a local youth work partner, NEoN Digital Arts. Over 12 weeks they took a group of young people through the basics of turning on a laptop and how to point and shoot a camera, right through to using Canva to design packaging and creating stickers with vinyl cutting machines. This launch is very exciting because the Project Consultants were able to test their ideas and plans: from the programme length and the contents of the workshops to the wall decals and Ikea chairs. Every step of this maker space was deliberated and designed by young people who know exactly what it is like to navigate living in care. As part of the launch, Circuit worked with Youthlink Scotland to broadcast the project with local and national press.

Work has now taken place to identify a space in Renfrewshire for a Digital Maker Space. The Project Lead worked with one of the Project Consultants from Renfrewshire to physically map the ideal locations for a maker space, considering public transport, existing services and the communities where young people with care experience live. The Project Lead has worked with prominent community organisations in Renfrew, Paisley and Johnstone to find a partner with the right experience and premises to deliver a Circuit programme.

This collaborative project was funded by The Life Changes Trust over 3 years. The project is about providing digital skills training opportunities for care experienced individuals (those in care now and care leavers). One element to this is the upskilling, support and building confidence of people in the Care Experienced person's life i.e., foster carers, social care staff, and residential staff so they feel confident in supporting the Care Experienced people on their digital skills journey. The original consortium bid was made up of partners YMCA Scotland, Barnardo's Scotland, Mhor Collective, Scottish Tech

Army, Youth Link Scotland and Renfrewshire Council. The work of this project feeds into the council work around The Promise and the council Digital Strategy (Digital Citizen/Inclusion). The Promise Manager and a representative from Youth Services represents Renfrewshire Council on the Programme Board.

Circuit Digital Maker Space Project Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager and a representative from Youth Services will continue to represent Renfrewshire Council on this Steering Group. The programme Lead will be invited to provide an update to Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group.

Keeping The Promise in Children's Hearings

In August 2020 it was agreed that the Renfrewshire Better hearings Group be re-named to “Keeping the Promise in Renfrewshire’s Children’s Hearings”. It should become the forum for implementation of The Promise reforms to Children’s Hearings within Renfrewshire whilst also continuing to identify and implement local improvements to Renfrewshire Children’s Hearings. It should sit within the governance arrangements for The Promise work in Renfrewshire. This group has led on a number of activities in relation to Better Hearings informed by The Promise, such as:

- Guidelines on preparing children and young people for attending a Children’s Hearing.
- The Renfrewshire Charter—Our commitments to children and young people attending Children’s Hearings.

The work of the group has also been informed by SCRA’s Keeping The Promise Route Plan. This plan sets out what SCRA are doing to Keep The Promise. Over the years the group has discussed many items including Child Friendly Scheduling with one of the principal areas of focus over the last 12/24 months has been making how making arrangements for hearings better for children.

A project is ongoing in Renfrewshire aimed at reducing the number of deferred hearings and providing a more personal service to every child and young person attending Hearings by giving them flexibility about the date, time and location type of Hearing.

The current Renfrewshire project is to be further developed to take cognisance of the Taking Control of My Hearing project that aims to promote and encourage meaningful participation of children and young people in their Hearings by ensuring that they are better prepared.

This project was co-designed with young experts from Our Hearings, Our Voice. The project has two parts to it:

1. Pre-Hearing visits to the Hearing centre have been redesigned to improve the experience for children and young people.
2. A Taking Control of My Hearing Scrapbook, designed by young people in response to what young people have told us they need, will be sent out to children and young people to support them to prepare for their Hearing and empower them to take control of their Hearing.

Lots more improvement work will be getting underway in 2024 and in 2025 and at the heart of activity will be listening to children and young people about their experience and how it can be better.

In the Hearings For Children report In December 2023 the Scottish Government told everyone what they thought about what the Hearings for Children report recommended. They said they were pleased with the improvement work already happening in SCRA and with other organisations involved in the Children’s Hearings System. Recently the group has been focusing on the Scottish Government’s response to the Hearings for Children Report and looking to develop a new Renfrewshire Action Plan built around some of the Hearings For Children recommendations.

The Chair, Nicola Harkness (Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA) regularly presents an update, as well as giving opportunity for comment, at the Renfrewshire’s Strategic Promise Oversight Group meetings.

Keeping The Promise in Children’s Hearings Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager will continue to attend all relevant meetings about the changes in the Children’s Hearing System in Renfrewshire.
- The Chair of this group attends and will continue to give relevant updates to Renfrewshire’s Promise Strategic Oversight Group as required.

Community Learning and Development and The Promise

In Community Learning and Development, we ensure that we make every effort as Community Learning and Development professionals or wider delivery partners to adopt a loving, nurturing approach that encourages a culture where our service users are empowered to ask us about any aspect of our services. Central to our approach to The Promise and our wider policy development work is actively listening to our children, young people and families.

In our Community Learning and Development activities we are ambitious for our Care Experienced children and The Promise is a key priority for us to ensure children who are Care Experienced have all they need to thrive, while recognising that they may experience unique challenges.

Community Learning and Development and The Promise Next Steps:

- The Promise Manager will continue to support the CLD team around ongoing policy developments and work related to The Promise.

Case Study: Promise Arts and Culture Programme

The Promise Arts and Culture Programme aimed to build social and cultural capital amongst Renfrewshire's Care Experienced young people and Young Carers, improving outcomes for these disadvantaged and marginalised groups in the short and longer-term.

Since its beginning in March 2022, The Promise Arts and Culture programme has brought Care Experience young people from across Renfrewshire to work with artists from different disciplines such as Film Making, Animation, Graffiti and Street Art, Design, Photography and Fashion and Textiles in order to create dynamic creative environments where young people could explore their creative voices.

The success in engaging Care Experienced young people and Young Carers across Renfrewshire in diverse creative projects has already resulted in these young people moving onto the Youth Services project Art Boss. Here these young people will continue to have creative and artistic experiences that respond directly to their needs.



Promise Team Contact Information and 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 Renfrewshire Council's Children's Services Senior Leadership Team and a key officer in Renfrewshire's Children Services Partnership. I work closely with Scottish Government, COSLA, and Promise Scotland as well as 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 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. I am Renfrewshire's Lead in the national Promise work. I am driving forward an ambitious programme of change in relation to The Promise and I participate in the improvement agenda for Children's Services in Renfrewshire.

I previously worked in senior leadership roles with Skills Development Scotland, Scotland's National Skills Agency, and I have experience of working alongside both public and private bodies to deliver on better outcomes for Scotland's people and communities. I am also a non-executive Director at Scotwest Credit Union.

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 in post since July 2021 and was involved in the Independent Care Review during its discovery stage. My role focuses on supporting individual teams and services to consider how they can #KeepThePromise and consider the needs of Care Experienced children, young people and their families. I co-chair the Supporting the Workforce group for The Promise to ensure the council is providing employment opportunities and support to people with Care Experience. My role also supports staff to consider how they can embed the voice of Care Experienced people in their service provision and design.

Outside of my role in the council, I am the Vice Chair of ProjectChange, which is a charity focused on supporting the creation of an inclusive and supportive care community. In addition to this I am also a trustee of the Unite Foundation who provide free accommodation and scholarships to Care Experienced and Estranged young people at partner universities.



Maurice and Sam

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Appendix 1—Renfrewshire’s Promise Strategic Oversight Group

Since 2021, Renfrewshire’s Promise Strategic Oversight Group has been chaired by John Trainer. The Oversight group has representation from across Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership and from Renfrewshire’s Children’s Services Partnership. This group meets 3/4 times a year.

Current membership of Promise Oversight Group (correct as of January 2025):

Angela Cramb—Development Officer: Creating Communities that Care, Who Cares? Scotland

Carolanne Robertson—Community Development Manager, Renfrewshire Council (RC)

Emma Henry—Head of Education, RC

Felix Haggerty—Professional Training and Development Manager, Renfrewshire Children’s Services & Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership (RHSCP)

Fiona Robertson—Promise Delivery Partner, Promise Scotland

Fiona Williams—Depute Principal Educational Psychologist, RC

Jamie Gardyne—Community Justice Lead Officer, RC

Jane Hamilton—Funding and Organisation Development Officer, Engage Renfrewshire

Jean Brierley—Education Officer (Inclusion), RC

Joanne Byrne—Children’s Services Manager, RHSCP

Joanne Felvus—Children’s Service Manager (Threads), Barnardo’s

John Trainer—Head of Childcare and Criminal Justice/Chief Social Work Officer, RC

Kevin Smith—Children’s Services Manager, RC

Lauren Johnston—Service Improvement Manager, Children’s Services, RC

Laurie Goldie—Project Manager: Creating Communities that Care, Who Cares? Scotland

Louise Feely—Head of Housing, RC

Maurice Gilligan—Promise Manager, Renfrewshire Council

Michelle McCargo—Children’s Services Manager, Social Work

Nicola Harkness—Locality Reporter Manager, SCRA

Pauline Robbie—Interim Head of Service, RHSCP

Ruth Wallace—Child Protection Advisor, RC

Sam Macrae—Promise Ambassador, RC

Susan Bell—Education Manager (Whole Family Wellbeing), RC

Suzie Scott—Area Manager, Skills Development Scotland

Tom Irvine—Homeless & Housing Support Services Manager, RC

Appendix 2 What is The Promise?

The Promise in brief: 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.

What is The Promise?

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.

Background to The Promise—Parenting does not stop at 18. Scotland must continue to consider how to create Scotland's ambition that all children will grow up loved, safe and respected so that they meet their full potential. But in Scotland, Care Experienced people are not always as loved, safe and respected as they should be. In 2020, the conclusions of Scotland's Independent Care Review made a series of recommendations about how this had to change. The Promise is that Scotland will implement these recommendations in full by 2030 at the latest.

What was the Independent Care Review? The Independent Care Review was a consultation into how Scotland's "care system" needed to change. It came from a place of activism and voice, following the work of a movement of Care Experienced people across Scotland—who were determined to improve the life chances of people with experience of care. In 2016, this movement secured a cross-party commitment to an Independent Care Review ahead of elections to the Scottish Parliament. Following these, the then First Minister pledged her support announcing an independent root and branch review of care.

The process of the Independent Care Review—The Independent Care Review commenced in 2017 and concluded in 2020. In that time, it listened to what thousands of children, adults and families told them about their experiences of the "care system." It also heard from thousands of others: parents, carers and members of the paid and unpaid workforce. And it heard from over 500 organisations, including: schools and universities, think tanks, The Curious Collaborative of Funders, corporate parents, and national bodies. The scope was intentionally wide, so that it could be a true reflection of what was experienced for children and families as well as for those working in and around the system. The aim was to speak to everyone who would come into contact with children and their families throughout their care journeys and beyond.

Finally, over 150 volunteers used 943 research sources to produce 56 outputs in areas including: education, health, data, inspection, regulation, and justice.

Appendix 2 What is The Promise? (continued)

The Promise is formed from the Independent Care Review's conclusions.

The Care Review published its conclusions in February 2020. These conclusions were made up of seven reports:

- **The Promise**, which outlines the vision for a Scotland where Care Experienced children and young people can all grow up loved, safe and respected,
- **The Pinky Promise**, which explains this vision in a child friendly way, follow the money, which tracked where investment went in the “care system,”
- **The money**, which reflected how any investment in how we care for Scotland's children and families could be better spent to impact their lives,
- **The plan**, which laid out that for Scotland to keep The Promise, there needed to be a radical redesign of care,
- **The rules**, which highlighted the legislation, policies, and organisations which govern the care system, and
- **Thank you**, which aimed to acknowledge and thank the thousands of people who made the Independent Care Review happen.

The Promise has five foundations which change is centred around. These are:

- **Voice:** Children and young people must be listened to and involved in decision making about their care.
- **Family:** Where children are safe with their families and feel love, they should stay with them. They should be given support to overcome any difficulties.
- **Care:** When it is not possible for children and young people to remain with their family, children must stay with their brothers and sisters wherever it is safe to do so. They must also belong to a loving home, where they are able to stay for as long as needed.
- **People:** The workforce must be supported to develop trusting, compassionate relationships with those they support. They must also be aware of the importance of listening during decision making.
- **Scaffolding:** Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed: the scaffolding of help, support and accountability.

Whose role is it to keep The Promise?

Scotland committed to The Promise, so people and organisations throughout the public sector are working to keep it. Among them are: Scottish Government, COSLA, Local Authorities, The NHS, Social workers, and Teachers. This is far from an exhaustive list. As well as this, other people and organisations may also do work to keep The Promise including those in the third sector.

Who nationally helps make sure The Promise is kept?

- **The Promise Scotland:** The organisation established by Scottish Ministers to drive and support the change required for Scotland to keep The Promise.
- **The Oversight Board:** The Oversight Board monitors the pace and performance of the change required for Scotland to keep The Promise.
- **The Promise Collective:** A group that has been brought together to support the development of assessment of change.
- **Independent Strategic Advisor:** Fiona Duncan is Independent Strategic Advisor for The Promise, appointed by the Scottish Government.
- **Corra Foundation:** Corra Foundation has the responsibility in disseminating and monitoring The Promise Partnership Fund.

(Appendix 2 produced by Promise Scotland and used with their permission.)

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.

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (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.

Getting It Right For Every Child (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 (HSCP)

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/living Experience

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

Our Hearings, Our Voice (OHOV)

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.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (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.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (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.

