

Stage 3 Debate: Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

March 2026

This briefing is intended for all MSPs ahead of the Stage 3 debate on 18th March. It builds on previous briefings provided to the Education, Children and Young People Committee for Stage 2.

It represents the views of both The Promise Scotland and Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor - the promise.

The cross-party support secured during the Independent Care Review has been sustained throughout this parliamentary term and **is essential for Scotland to keep the promise by 2030.**

Members of the Scottish Parliament from across the Chamber have given due consideration to what needs to be included in this Bill; listening to those who will be responsible for how it will be delivered, and most crucially – to those whom this legislation is for.

This is a clear indicator of their unwavering dedication six years on from the promise being made, and their understanding that their work is not yet done.

The children, families and care experienced adults to whom the promise was made are relying on this Bill to set out rights and entitlements that, when realised, will make a meaningful difference to their lives. Those working every day to keep the promise are relying on this Bill to provide all the scaffolding they need to do this – now and in the future.

The changes proposed in this Bill are significant and many will not be straightforward to implement. For the Bill to ensure well-intentioned policy and legislation are translated into sustainable actions, it must be accompanied by coherent plans for sequenced implementation with clarity on how resourcing will be prioritised and allocated.

Only then, those to whom the promise was made will know when all aspects of it will be kept. And those charged with keeping the promise will know what is expected of them, by when and how they will deliver.

The Bill in front of MSPs at Stage 3 is significantly strengthened due to changes that have been made at Stage 2. The promise must be kept by 2030, and continued responsible stewardship of the Bill through its final stage can take Scotland a step further towards that.

We urge all MSPs to support the Bill at Stage 3, in order to ensure the promise made to children, families and care experienced adults can be realised.

the promise

In February 2020, the [Independent Care Review](#) published seven reports, including [the promise](#). Over three years, more than 5,500 people shared their experiences, including 2,000 members of the unpaid and paid workforce. Importantly, more than 3,500 children, families and care experienced adults shared their story, often about the most intimate and traumatic events of their lives. They were listened to carefully. They shared their stories in the hope that Scotland would do better, recognising that although the review could not change their lives, it could make Scotland a better place for the children, families and care experienced adults coming behind them.

The care community led calls for a root and branch review of Scotland's care system and was at the heart of the review itself. They bravely challenged the status quo because it was not working. They crafted a promise that goes beyond systems, policies and processes and instead, focuses on love, relationships, respect and experiences.

When the review concluded, Scotland made the promise, which secured and has sustained cross-party support. Wherever it is safe to do so, children must stay with their families, and when that is not possible, they must be cared for in a loving environment, with loving relationships, so that they are able to fulfil their potential.

As the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill has progressed we have been encouraged to see parties from across the political spectrum come together to discuss the legislative changes that must be made to keep the promise and to honour the courage and bravery of all who took part in the review and the care community to whom the promise was made.

Implementation of the provisions in the Bill must include serious consideration of how to deliver the legislation in full and sustainably. Many of the changes introduced by the Bill will not be straightforward and must be accompanied by clear plans for sequencing, resourcing, prioritisation and implementation. Too often, well intentioned policy and legislation is not supported by robust implementation planning and resourcing. Given the pressures already faced by those working to support children, families and care experienced adults, it is imperative that the Scottish Government and Parliament look ahead to how new rights and entitlements will be delivered.

The courage of the children, families, care experienced adults and members of the workforce that contributed to the Independent Care Review and since 2020 must be matched by the courage of decision makers and politicians who have the power to implement the required changes.

The provisions in the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill will make a tangible difference to the lives of children, families and care experienced adults. The cross-party support and engagement that has been evident across the Bill process thus far must be sustained at Stage 3 to consider what further improvements must be made in order to embed real and lasting change to keep the promise.

The Promise Scotland’s approach to considering amendments

The following briefing has been provided for all MSPs’ consideration. It focuses on highlighting our support for the amendments that, in our view, will help to ensure Scotland keeps its promise. We have endeavoured to provide this assessment in the time available to consider the large number of complex amendments.

First and foremost, our response is rooted in the voices and experiences heard by the Independent Care Review. It is guided by the strong evidence base created by the review in each of its seven published reports, and by subsequent work such as the Hearings System Working Group’s Redesign Report ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’, our [advocacy scoping paper](#) and our joint work with Staf, ‘[100 Days of Listening](#).’

All the amendments lodged are brought forward with good intentions and are designed to move forward important aspects of the promise.

Where the amendments do not link directly to the conclusions of the Independent Care Review, we have not provided comment.

The Promise Scotland uses the term ‘children’ to include anyone under the age of 18, including babies and infants.

Notwithstanding the need to avoid system language, for the purposes of clarity, this briefing reflects the language used in the legislation.

Group 1. Aftercare

Amendments 91, 6, 7, 8, 92, 93, 9, 96, 97, 13, 14, 15, 33, 209, 88

We support	We do not support
91, 6, 7, 8, 93	92

We understand that **amendments 13, 14, 15, 33, 209 and 88** are technical.

The Independent Care Review heard from care experienced young people and adults about the ‘cliff edges’ of care and the lack of support they felt when their legal orders ended before their sixteenth birthday. The promise concluded that ‘aftercare’ must take a person-centred approach, with thoughtful planning so that there are no cliff edges out of care and support (Pg 92). It was clear that the current system does not ensure that those who leave care prior to their sixteenth birthday are able to access legal entitlements, even though they have been removed from their families by a decision of the state (Pg 188).

We therefore welcome the Scottish Government’s commitment to addressing this issue, and the extension of ‘aftercare’ within the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill to children and young people who left care prior to their sixteenth birthday.

We recognise that a number of the amendments at Stage 3 in this grouping appear to resolve issues that have been raised relating to how the provisions around aftercare were originally drafted. However, in the time available it has been difficult for The Promise Scotland to be confident that the drafting fully reflects the conclusions of the promise and consider the full implications and impact on children, families and care experienced adults.

That said, we outline an initial assessment below:

We understand that **amendments 91 and 6** aim to resolve the concerns that have been repeatedly raised by Clan Childlaw relating to the drafting of the section on ‘aftercare’ in the Bill as laid at Stage 1. We are pleased that the amendment makes clear that all 16, 17 and 18 year olds will be able to access the same kind of advice, guidance and assistance, regardless of when they left care. We note that this means that for those children who stopped being looked after before their 16th birthday, this is not an automatic entitlement—they must go through the additional step of making an application. However, once the application is made, the local authority must provide the support.

It will be important, however, to ensure that the application process is not cumbersome and that children and young people are made aware of their right to access aftercare. Further regulations and guidance may be necessary in this regard.

We recognise that **passing amendments 96 and 97** offer an alternative approach.

Amendment 7 is clear about the types of assistance available to children and young people leaving care, including assistance in kind or in cash, with provision for regulations to specify further detail.

We are supportive of **amendment 8**, which ensures local authorities establish procedures for considering representations (including complaints) about the discharge of their functions relating to aftercare, and **amendment 93**, relating to cooperation between local authorities.

We **support amendments 91, 6, 7, 8 and 93** (Natalie Don Innes)

We **do not support amendment 92** (Roz McCall)

Group 2. Provision of accommodation and continuing care

Amendments: 99, 100, 101, 102, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 144

We support	We do not support
106, 108	99, 100, 101, 102, 98, 103, 104, 105, 107, 144

The Independent Care Review concluded that “young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility **must have a right to return to care** and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them” (the promise, Pg 92). This **reinforces pre-existing Scottish Government policy**, which is clear that “care leavers must be able

to return to care placements or a more supportive care setting—if and when they meet with any difficulty” (Staying Put Scotland, 2013).

The Independent Care Review found that “many care experienced young adults have told the Care Review that they felt abandoned and ill-prepared as they moved from childhood into adulthood” (the promise, Pg 92). Ensuring that children and young people have a clear and accessible right to return to care where their transition has not progressed as planned, or as hoped, would help prevent avoidable hardship, instability, and the risk of experiencing homelessness. Such a right would enable care experienced young people to access appropriate support at the point of need, improving their stability and strengthening their ability to move on from care successfully over time.

Although certain rights already exist through the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, our understanding is that many of these rights are currently poorly understood by local authorities and other duty bearers, applied inconsistently and that implementation is undermined by resource pressures such as availability of suitable accommodation and use of homelessness route to accommodation.

As a result, care experienced children and young people who find themselves without a home after leaving care are directed to homelessness services or local housing associations; placed in unstable, unsuitable adult temporary ‘homeless’ accommodation for extended periods; end up in accommodation which is not suitable for children and/or for welfare needs; and do not have planned, relationship based support. They do not have equity with many of their non-care experienced peers who can return home, when and if they need to, into adulthood. **The provisions in this Bill change that.**

We are delighted that the Bill before MSPs at Stage 3 includes amendments that passed at Stage 2 that strengthen existing duties to provide accommodation for ‘children in need’ and accommodation for care experienced people. The Bill also extends continuing care to children returning to care and enables the future extension of continuing care to age 25.

This approach will better reflect the support typically available to young people within family settings, where moves towards independence are often gradual, flexible and non-linear. It would also align with the intent of the promise, which states that “Scotland must be a parent that encourages young people toward a life of independence, self-reliance and stability, but also recognises that, often, young people will need to stay ‘at home’ or come home for some time and at various times” (the promise, Pg 92).

In our view, amendments 106 and 108 further strengthen the provisions that passed at Stage 2.

Amendment 106 brings the provision relating to the extension of continuing care up to 26 (as opposed to 25 in the provision as currently drafted). This is in line with the current aftercare duties set out in Part 10 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The effect of **amendment 108** is to make it unequivocal that a care experienced young person has a right to return to continuing care during the period that right applies. This seeks to provide children who would otherwise be eligible for continuing care but leave by their own choice the right to return to care. This is an important safety net to give care

experienced young people the confidence to transition to independent living and complements and strengthens the provisions that passed at Stage 2.

It is our understanding that **amendment 108** can only be incorporated into the Bill at Stage 3 if **amendments 99, 100, 101 and 102** do not pass. Although we support the intention behind these amendments, which would bring some of the relevant sections of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 into this Bill and therefore into the scope of the UNCRC, **we strongly advise an approach which would favour amendments 106 and 108 passing.** There will also be unintended consequences from bringing further parts of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 into the Bill in a piecemeal way.

We **support amendments 106 and 108** (Martin Whitfield).

We **do not support amendments 99, 100, 101, 102, 98, 103, 104, 105, 107 and 144** (Martin Whitfield).

Group 3. Family Group Decision Making

Amendments 10, 94, 95, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 203, 84

We support	We do not support
10, 94, 95, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 203, 84	

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is a voluntary, strengths-based approach designed to bring together family members where there are concerns about a child or children. The promise states that “family group decision making and mediation must become a much more common part of listening and decision-making” (Pg 33). [Plan 24-30](#) states that by 2030 Scotland needs to make sure that “decision making challenges traditional power dynamics. It is clear that FGDM must be accessible to all children and families who want it in every local area in Scotland.”

Our view is that FGDM must be consistently available for all children and families across Scotland. However, the current provision of FGDM across Scotland is inconsistent. We have consistently supported a statutory underpinning for FGDM, building on the existing provisions through Part 12 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the related Order.

We were pleased to see many thoughtful amendments laid at Stage 2 which demonstrated clear cross-party commitment to this issue, and we welcome this grouping of amendments at Stage 3 which represent a significant step forward in strengthening the provisions on FGDM. Together, these amendments will ensure every child has a right to access FGDM; that children and families are made aware of FGDM services available to them; and that guidance will help services be consistently delivered and be of high-quality across Scotland.

We **support amendments 10** (Natalie Don-Innes), **94, 95, 203** (Willie Rennie), **79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84** (Miles Briggs).

Group 4. Kinship care:

Amendments 11 & 12

We support	We do not support
12	11

We recognise the good intention of **amendment 11**, which aims to change the offer of an assessment for kinship carers to a guaranteed assessment. However, some kinship carers may not want or need such an assessment and we therefore consider that it should be for kinship carers to decide whether one takes place.

We support **amendment 12**, which states that an assessment or review must be carried out no later than three months after the application was received.

We **do not support amendment 11** (Jeremy Balfour).

We **support amendment 12** (Jeremy Balfour).

Group 5. Corporate parenting

Amendments 16, 17, 109, 18, 19, 19A, 19B, 110, 20

We support	We do not support
16, 19, 19A, 19B, 109	18, 110

We understand that **amendments 17 and 20** (Natalie Don-Innes) are technical amendments and the sections in the Bill as amended at Stage 2 that they repeal have been replaced by alternatives.

Removal of the age limit for corporate parenting

Although we recognise the positive intent behind the change that passed at Stage 2 relating to the removal of the age limit for corporate parenting, in our view there is a clear need for a more intense period of support being available to young people leaving care. The age of 26 must not be a 'cliff edge' of support, however, and other provisions within the Bill are clear that support - including advocacy - must be available for a much longer period for care experienced people. The work that will be undertaken collaboratively alongside the care community to finalise a definition and guidance relating to care experience must take this into account. We therefore **support amendment 16**.

We **support amendment 16** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Amendment 109 would ensure that corporate parenting plans include information on how corporate parents exercise responsibilities in a way that delivers the recommendations of the Independent Care Review. The conclusions of the Independent Care Review must be delivered by 2030 and these duties will extend far beyond that period. Corporate parenting plans must therefore report on delivery against the conclusions until 2030 and thereafter on how corporate parents are continuing to ensure the promise is kept to all children, families and care experienced adults.

We **support amendment 109** (Willie Rennie).

Amendment 204 would amend the aims of children's services plans to include supporting the delivery of the recommendations of the Independent Care Review. The conclusions of the Independent Care Review must be delivered by 2030 and these duties will extend far beyond that period. Children's services plans must therefore deliver against the conclusions until 2030 and thereafter on how they are continuing to ensure the promise is kept to all children, families and care experienced adults.

We **support amendment 204** (Willie Rennie).

Amendment 18 removes section 3A of the Bill as amended at Stage 2, which would have placed a duty on corporate parents in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to uphold the rights of children and young people to their identity, including their nationality. We are unclear why **amendment 18** seeks to remove this section from the Bill.

We **do not support amendment 18** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Guidance on corporate parenting (Amendments 19, 19A, 19B)

We are supportive of the introduction of a statutory duty for Scottish Ministers to introduce guidance about corporate parenting. In our view amendments 19A and 19B strengthen alignment of this duty with the UNCRC.

We **support amendments 19** (Natalie Don-Innes) **and 19A and 19B** (Martin Whitfield).

Pathways to employment and training (amendment 110)

We recognise the positive intent behind **amendment 110** relating to corporate parents providing pathways to employment and training, including the appointment of employment officers. Most parents would see it as part of their role to support their children to find ways into work or training, and so we understand the underlying principle of the proposed amendment. However, as we highlighted at Stage 2 this amendment places the duty on all corporate parents in Schedule 4 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. We do not think it is practical or appropriate to apply this duty on all corporate parents and therefore we are unable to support it at Stage 3.

We **do not support amendment 110** (Martin Whitfield).

**Group 6. Advocacy services for care-experienced persons:
Amendments 21, 22, 111, 23, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 24, 117, 25, 26, 27, 29, 29A,
86**

We support	We do not support
29	111, 112, 116, 117, 24

We understand that **amendments 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 86** are procedural or clarifying amendments that underline the importance of choice for care experienced children and adults and of their right to independent advocacy. We note that **amendment 23** pre-empts **amendments 112, 113, 114 and 115.**

We do not consider amendments **111, 116 and 117** are necessary given the changes that have been made and the provisions in the Bill relating to circumstances being specified about the availability of care experience advocacy services.

We **do not support** **amendment 111** (Martin Whitfield) **and amendments 116 and 117** (Jeremy Balfour).

Opt-in advocacy (Amendment 24)

We are unclear the intent behind **amendment 24**, given that advocacy services at present are 'opt-in'.

We **do not support** **amendment 24** (Jeremy Balfour)

Definition of 'independent' for children's advocacy services (Amendment 29)

Amendment 29 seeks to define independence in statute, clarify that individuals involved in decisions about care cannot be advocates, and allow services commissioned by local authorities or health boards to still count as independent.

We welcomed calls during Stage 2 of the Bill for greater clarity on what constitutes "independent" advocacy. The promise is clear that care experienced children and adults must have the right to and access to independent advocacy at all stages of their experience of care and beyond (p.115). We therefore welcome that the Bill now places a definition of independence on the face of the legislation.

Throughout the passage of the Bill a range of views have been expressed about how independence should be defined in practice. The promise emphasises that "independent advocacy organisations must be commissioned to ensure that advocacy is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from statutory organisations and service providers" (Pg 115). Careful consideration is therefore required to ensure that any definition of independence reflects these principles and supports advocacy that children, young people and adults can trust.

The current amendment does not explicitly address circumstances where care providers also deliver advocacy services within the same local authority area.

Consideration is therefore required during implementation to ensure that the principles of independence set out in the promise are realised in practice.

It is also important that the definition of independence does not unintentionally limit the availability of advocacy or reduce the choices available to children, young people, and adults in the areas in which they live. Implementation must therefore ensure that there are sufficient independent providers across Scotland and that existing arrangements which are working well, including within the Children’s Hearings System, are not negatively impacted.

We are supportive of the intent of **amendment 29A**, which amends **amendment 29** to ensure that advocacy cannot be provided by a person who is contracted by the local authority to provide ‘care services’ under a contract or arrangement by the local authority. However, we are concerned that the way this amendment is drafted risks impacting on the current operation of the National Practice Model for the Children’s Hearings System, which we understand is working well. Further clarification is needed to ensure that the definition of ‘care services’ is clear and does not unintentionally exclude providers of advocacy who have other care services in local areas that are separate to advocacy, residential or secure care, for example fostering. The legislation and associated regulations and guidance must be clear that the advocate works for the care experienced child or young person—and not for anyone else.

We support **amendment 29** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Group 7. Structure of Act:

Amendments 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 42, 43, 87, 89, 90

We understand that the amendments in this grouping are technical, to improve understanding and comprehension of the Act.

Group 8. Guidance in relation to care experience:

Amendments 3, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133

We support	We do not support
121	

We support **amendment 121**, which strengthens the current reference in the Bill as it relates to rights-based, trauma-informed practice.

We **support amendment 121** (Roz McCall).

The remaining amendments in this group seek to change ‘guidance’ with respect to care experience to ‘regulations’. We are unclear why this is necessary, and support the Government’s approach to developing guidance for care experienced persons.

Group 9. Permanence:

Amendments 134, 135

Amendment 134 would ensure Scottish Ministers undertake a review in relation to permanence for persons who are, or have been, looked after by a local authority. Similarly, **amendment 135** would ensure Scottish Ministers undertake a review of the impact of delays to decisions relating to permanence for children within 2 years after this section of the Bill would come into force.

We are supportive of further work to determine how systemic drift and delay in decision making for children can be significantly reduced. Further work is also required to ensure families are provided with the help and support that they need within appropriate timeframes. We understand that the Minister has already committed to further consultation in this area and are unsure whether legislation is needed in order to progress it.

Group 10. Children’s residential care services: profit limitation

Amendments 35, 36, 136, 137, 37, 138, 139, 38, 140, 39, 40, 2, 141, 3, 142, 41, 143

We support	We do not support
36, 3, 141	2, 136, 137, 142

We understand that **amendments 35, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41** (Natalie Don-Innes) are technical or clarifying amendments that will strengthen this section of the Act.

Amendment 36 strengthens the regulations imposed on care providers to provide information on their profits made by extending this to the providers’ wider parent company. We understand this would close existing loopholes and manage the complex structures of companies operating to provide children’s care to ensure full transparency and compliance with legislation.

We **support amendment 36** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Amendments 2, 136, 137 and 142 seek to provide an exception to the profit limitation requirement for registered charities and require them to demonstrate any surplus is used for charitable objectives.

We recognise concerns raised by third sector children and young people’s organisations who require surplus funds to deliver services, maintain full staffing levels and to

reinvest into delivering high-quality care and support to the children and young people they care for. We also recognise that charities operate under a different governance framework and that many provide high quality care.

However, the legislative framework should not assume that one organisational form automatically guarantees alignment with children and young people’s interests. Creating a blanket statutory exemption from profit limitation risks undermining the principle that Scotland’s ‘care system’ should not generate profit from care and removes flexibility from Ministers to regulate consistently. There must be the ability to apply consistent standards across providers, whilst ensuring that any regulatory framework appropriately recognises the charitable model.

We **do not support amendments 2, 136, 137 and 142** (Willie Rennie)

Amendments 3 and 141 would ensure Scottish Ministers treat the wellbeing of children looked after by local authorities as the primary consideration, ensuring the interests or operational preferences of local authorities cannot outweigh it.

We strongly support the principle that the wellbeing of children must be the primary consideration in decisions about their care. This reflects the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and Scotland’s wider commitment to children’s rights.

However, we would note the issue is less the absence of duties and more ensuring they are realised in practice, and the current capacity and resource context is particularly challenging for decision makers. We would therefore welcome associated non-legislative support to ensure the intent of this amendment is fully realised in practice.

We **support amendments 3 and 141** (Willie Rennie).

Group 11. Allowances and other payments

Amendments: 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 210

We understand that the amendments in this section are intended to strengthen the provisions relating to allowances for carers. We refer MSPs to the briefings from the Fostering Network and others with expertise in this area. As above, these amendments required sufficient time to ensure the drafting fully reflects the conclusions of the promise and fully consider the full implications and impact on children, families and care experienced adults.

Group 12. Guidance on use of restraint and seclusion in relevant care services

Amendment 44

We support	We do not support
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44	
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We strongly support **amendment 44** which introduces statutory guidance on the definition and use of restraint and seclusion in children’s care settings, which will include information on monitoring, recording and reporting. This will apply to children’s residential homes, secure accommodation and school care accommodation provided within secure care facilities.

The promise is clear that Scotland must strive to become a nation that does not restrain its children (The Promise, pg. 85). By 2030, Scotland must be a nation that does not restrain its children unless in exceptional circumstances, and when it is unavoidable it is co-regulated, trauma-informed, lawful, recorded and used only to keep a child safe.

Following the tireless work of campaigners such as Beth Morrison and Kate Sanger, the passing of the Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2 and the work of Daniel Johnson MSP and the Scottish Government commitments to a statutory code of conduct and regulation and monitoring for mental welfare, significant strides have been made to make this a reality. This has been accompanied by work focusing on changes to culture and practice—including the CELCIS research project ‘Holding Differently’. However, there remains significant gaps in the statutory framework relating to care settings.

We urge MSPs to vote for this amendment to close the existing gaps and bring the specified care settings in line with the changes that have been made in education and mental welfare and to bring Scotland closer to keeping the promise. Doing so will further support broader alignment to ensure the same statutory obligations with regards to reporting and recording of instances of restraint apply in all settings where children are cared for, which must come in the next Parliament. This will ensure the framework of statute is robust and children's rights are upheld and respected in many settings children are cared for.

We **support amendment 44** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Group 13. Report on deaths of care-experienced persons

Amendment: 153

We support	We do not support
153	

Report on deaths of care experienced people (amendment 153)

Amendment 153 places a duty on Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish a report on deaths of children who were being looked after by a local authority at the time of their death and which are notified to Scottish Ministers.

Evidence is clear that care experienced young people and adults are more likely to experience extremely poor outcomes in comparison to their peers. The Promise Scotland therefore welcomes this amendment which will help to ensure that there is a better understanding nationally of trends and learning to help prevent premature deaths.

We **support amendment 153** (Willie Rennie).

Group 14. Support for adoption

Amendments 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159

We support	We do not support
154, 158	157

The promise is clear that adoption has an important role in providing permanent, loving nurturing homes. Adoption must continue to be supported in policy and planning (Pg 75). We are supportive of all measures to ensure that adoptive parents and children living with them are fully supported, in line with the conclusions from the Independent Care Review and the ten principles of intensive family support. The promise highlighted the importance of peer support in particular (Pg 76) and we are therefore supportive of amendment 154, which introduces a duty to promote peer support services where they are available in a local area.

We **support amendment 154** (Fulton MacGregor).

Amendments 155, 156 and 159 reflect the spirit and intention of what is set out in the promise; however, we are unclear about the practical implementation of these amendments. This includes both financial and human resourcing, given the current workforce challenges. Further discussion is required with Social Work Scotland, COSLA and adoptive parents and children and there must be alignment with the Scottish Government's Adoption Vision.

Adopted persons to be recognised as having care experienced status (Amendment 157)

Amendment 157 reflects the promise's clear steer that the definition of care experience must be broad. This is an issue that must be progressed through the ongoing work on the definition of care experience, including the guidance set out in this Bill. It would therefore be pre-emptive to make legislative changes relating to care experienced status. An amendment to the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 risking further cluttering of the landscape and confusion amongst children, families and the workforce.

We **do not support amendment 157** (Fulton MacGregor).

Adoption breakdown definition and collection (Amendment 158)

The promise is clear that Scotland must avoid adoption breakdown and mitigate the impact it has on children and families. A key part of this is better understanding the experiences and outcomes of children and families who find themselves in a breakdown situation and so and collecting data on the extent and reasons for adoption breakdown is essential. That data collection must follow the experience of children whose adoption has broken down, recognising the prevalence of and impact on late teens and early adulthood (Pg 76). We therefore support **amendment 158**, which provides for Scottish Ministers to provide for a definition of ‘adoption breakdown’ and guidance on the collection and sharing of information relating to adoption breakdown via regulation.

We support **amendment 158** (Fulton MacGregor).

Group 15. Children’s Hearings: composition, functions and location of members

Amendments 160, 161, 45, 46, 162, 47, 163, 164, 49, 50, 51, 165, 166, 52, 167, 168

We support	We do not support
161, 162, 163, 164, 52, 167	45, 47, 168

We understand that **amendments 160** (Martin Whitfield) and **46, 50 and 51** (Natalie Don-Innes) are technical amendments to support understanding of the Bill’s provisions and/or make corrections where necessary.

Continuity of Children’s Hearing Chair (Amendments 161, 162, 163, 164, 52 and 167)

The Hearings System Working Group heard one message most consistently from children, families, care experienced adults and those working alongside them: **the biggest difference to transforming the Children’s Hearings System that can be made is to ensure continuity of decision makers.** Amendments in line with recommendation 6.1.3 in ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ would ensure as far as possible, the Chair will be the same Chair each time a child and their family attend a Hearing.

We therefore strongly support **amendments 161, 162, 163, 164, 52 and 167** in this grouping, which in different ways aim to ensure a statutory approach to ensuring continuity of the Chair.

In particular, **amendment 52** leaves a wider and more flexible discretion to the National Convener applying the best interest of the child test. We are supportive of this approach.

We support **amendments 161, 162, 163 and 164** (Martin Whitfield), **52** (Roz McCall) and **167** (Martin Whitfield)

Treatment and control (Amendment 49)

Amendment 49 aligns with the recommendations in '[Hearings for Children](#)' relating to the existing language around 'treatment and control.'

We **support amendment 49** (Natalie Don-Innes)

Criteria when appointing Chair (Amendments 165, 166 and 45)

The Hearings System Working Group envisaged a redesigned Children's Hearings System where the Chair is respectful and supportive and understanding of the aims, ethos and welfare-based approach that the Children's Hearings System seeks to take. '[Hearings for Children](#)' describes this in further detail on Pages 165-168, specifically setting out that the Chair must have legal competence, tribunal skills, an ability to write fully reasoned decisions and personal qualities, especially communication skills ranging from engaging with children and families and members of the workforce, including lawyers. This is particularly around conducting hearings in an inquisitorial manner; working relationally alongside children and families; upholding the rights of children and their families; presiding over a robust decision-making process; commanding the respect required for working collaboratively alongside others; and having oversight of the child's order.

Our view, as set out in our initial response to the call for views and in our Stage 2 briefing, is that this must be set out in statute in the same way that the role of the Reporter is to ensure absolute certainty about the role of the Chair, and in particular the way that they are expected to conduct Hearings in an inquisitorial manner and the oversight, enforcement, accountability and overview of a child's order (Chapter 11, '[Hearings for Children](#)'). The setting of criteria for the appointment of both Chairs and other Panel Members could be achieved through secondary legislation (regulations) reflecting and preserving the independence and discretion of the National Convener in this role. Regulations can accommodate flexibility permitting changes in practice and expectation over time as required.

The functions of the Chair will already be set out in Rules and Procedures and subject to Parliamentary scrutiny, and therefore we do not consider that **amendment 45** is necessary.

We **support amendments 165 and 166** (Martin Whitfield).

We **do not support amendment 45** (Jeremy Balfour).

Location of Children's Hearings Panel Members (Amendment 47)

Amendment 47 removes 'so far as practicable' when ensuring that the National Convener seeks to make sure the Chairing Member of a Children's Hearing lives or works in the area of the local authority which is the relevant one for the child whom the hearing relates to. '[Hearings for Children](#)' was clear that where possible Panel Members should be local to the community that the child and their family are from, but there

must be a focus on matching Panel Members to children and families to whom they can relate and who are empathetic to their experiences, challenges and circumstances.

Amendments in this Bill to strengthen the role and responsibilities of the Chair should help mitigate the possibility of a Chair sitting on a Hearing outwith the area they live or work in. And although we understand the intent of this amendment, the Children's Hearings System requires flexibility in order to operate effectively.

We **do not support amendment 47** (Roz McCall)

Location of chairing members (Amendment 168)

Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 s.4(2)(b) states that the National Convener must ensure "the panel includes persons from all local authority areas" and the Rules of Procedure 2013 states that Panels should "so far as practicable, consist only of members... who live or work in the area of the local community which is the relevant local authority for the child."

'[Hearings for Children](#)' was also clear about this, stating on Pg 170 that "Panel Members must be local to the area, wherever possible, and familiar with the services and supports of the local community." Remunerating Panel Members will result in a more dynamic and diverse range of people making decisions alongside children and families. The changes that are being made through the Bill will help to increase (rather than decrease) the likelihood that Panel Members—including those Chairs who will lead single panel proceedings making administrative decisions—will be local to the community.

We **do not support amendment 168** (Martin Whitfield)

Group 16. Children's Hearings general

Amendments 48, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 175, 176, 177, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 178, 179, 180, 76

We support	We do not support
	53, 54, 55

We understand that **amendments 48, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 175, 176, 177, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 73A** (Natalie Don-Innes) **and 178, 179 and 180** (Martin Whitfield) are technical amendments to support understanding of the Bill's provisions and/or make corrections where necessary.

Guidance relating to the attendance of children at Hearings (Amendment 53)

Amendment 53 (Roz McCall) would require Scottish Ministers to publish guidance relating to the attendance of children of different ages and stages of development at

Children’s Hearings. Although we understand the intent of this amendment, as we stated at Stage 2, given the independence of Children’s Hearings, this is a matter for the National Convener and the Principal Reporter rather than Scottish Ministers. We understand that SCRA and Children’s Hearings Scotland have been leading significant improvement activity relating to children’s participation and attendance at Hearings and further work will be led by the Hearings Redesign Board. We hope that this work actively involves Sherrif David Mackie who Chaired the Hearings System Working Group and is an advisor to this Board.

We **do not support amendment 53** (Roz McCall).

Amendments 54 and 55 would provide for Scottish Ministers to specify in regulations details about the child’s engagement with the Principal Reporter. This is not appropriate given the need for the Principal Reporter to operate independently.

We **do not support amendments 54 and 55** (Jeremy Balfour).

General consideration for Children’s Hearings: inquisitorialism (Amendment 76)

The Hearings System Working Group frequently heard that the current Children’s Hearings System is ‘adversarial’. The Independent Care Review heard that the Children’s Hearings System often “operates at crisis point, with children and families being asked their views in a process and setting that can feel unfamiliar and punitive” (the promise, Pg 44).

‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ was clear that a redesigned Children’s Hearings System must work alongside children and their families. It says “the central framing of the decision-making process needs to remain the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child, or children, being discussed—but a more inquisitorial approach to the discussions should be adopted” (Pg 84). As a result, ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ recommended that:

“An overarching principle in primary legislation or procedural rules and a shared set of national standards for the workforce should be made that explicitly describes the Children’s Hearings System as inquisitorial. This will foster an inquisitorial approach and culture within the Children’s Hearings System and ensure there is a clear understanding across the entire system of what this means” (Pg 85).

We are therefore pleased that the Scottish Government has taken steps to address this recommendation in the Bill. **Amendment 76** seeks to amend the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 to make Children’s Hearings inquisitorial in nature. The amendment would apply to all Children’s Hearings.

However, despite these good intentions there are a number of concerns about this amendment that mean we are unable to support it as it is currently drafted. ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ was clear that the inquisitorial process must begin at the point after grounds have been established. We are also concerned that the qualifiers introduced in the amendment (“so far as possible”) renders the provision without teeth. Further work is required on this important provision, and we therefore consider that it would be

better for this to take place and for the next Scottish Parliament to take forward legislation in this area.

We **do not support** **amendment 76** (Natalie Don-Innes).

Group 17. Children’s Hearings advocacy

Amendments 169, 170, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193, 194, 196, 197, 78, 198, 199, 200

We support	We do not support
196, 197	169, 170, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193, 194, 78, 198, 199, 200

Opt-out advocacy (Amendments 169, 170, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193, 194, 78, 198, 199)

Although we appreciate the intent behind these amendments, we have some concerns about these amendments as drafted. In relation to **amendments 169 and 186** we are unclear how a referrer would know the grounds on which a child would be referred and the conclusion of a Children’s Hearings (around, for example, a secure care authorisation or movement restriction conditions).

In relation to the other amendments in this group (excepting **amendment 196, 297 and 200**), there are a number of different issues that must be considered to ensure there are no unintended consequences to passing these amendments. The Hearings System Working Group discussed this in detail, however ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ did not recommend that advocacy should be provided to children in the Children’s Hearings System on an ‘opt out’ basis, allowing instead for children to be provided with full and accurate information to allow them to make an informed decision. This links also to the issues identified in the Independent Care Review relating to a sometimes overwhelming number of professionals involved in the lives of children and families with different but sometimes conflicting roles.

On balance, of the amendments in this group we consider amendments 196 and 197 to be the strongest in terms of advancing the recommendations in ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ relating to children’s access to advocacy. ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ was clear that children should be offered advocacy at the earliest possible opportunity and that offer should be repeated. **Amendment 196** makes provision to ensure that the Principal Reporter offers the child an opportunity to be referred to children’s advocacy services while **amendment 197** strengthens the existing provision to ‘inform the child of the availability of children’s advocacy services’ to ‘offer the child an opportunity to be referred to children’s advocacy services’.

We **do not support** **amendments 169, 170** (Nicola Sturgeon), **185** (Martin Whitfield), **186** (Nicola Sturgeon), **187** (Martin Whitfield), **188** (Nicola Sturgeon), **190** (Martin Whitfield),

191 (Nicola Sturgeon), **193** (Martin Whitfield), **194** (Nicola Sturgeon), **78** (Roz McCall), **198** (Nicola Sturgeon), **199** (Martin Whitfield).

Children’s advocacy services (Amendments 196 and 197)

‘[Hearings for Children](#)’, was clear that advocacy must be offered at the earliest opportunity.

Amendment 196 makes provision to ensure that the Principal Reporter offers the child an opportunity to be referred to children’s advocacy services while amendment 197 strengthens the existing provision to ‘inform the child of the availability of children’s advocacy services’ to ‘offer the child an opportunity to be referred to children’s advocacy services’.

We **support amendments 196 and 197** (Martin Whitfield).

Non instructed advocacy (Amendment 200)

We agree that non-instructed advocacy can be an important aspect of upholding children and adults’ rights to ensure their voices are heard when undertaken by highly skilled and trained advocacy workers. We have heard that this is particularly important for children, young people and adults who lack capacity.

However, we have some concerns about access to non-instructed advocacy for babies and infants, given that, in our view, other important adults in their lives may know them better and be able to safely interpret their behaviours. Consideration of additional access to non-instructed advocacy for babies and infants must be firmly rooted in evidence relating to the effectiveness of this approach and in the context of the changes to a redesigned Children’s Hearings System as outlined in ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’, including a highly-skilled, paid Chair that will seek to ensure all children’s voices are heard. We would also be keen to understand more about how any proposed expansion of non-instructed advocacy would be operationalised in practice, including links to the role of the Safeguarder, given children and families’ clear feedback about reducing the number of experts or professionals involved in their lives.

We **do not support amendment 200** (Ross Greer)

Group 18. Children’s Hearings: timescales

Amendments 171, 181, 182

We support	We do not support
181, 182	171

‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ described in detail the impact of drift and delay in establishing grounds (Pg 142-144) and across the Children’s Hearings System more broadly (Pg 247

for example). Recommendation 5.4.1 states that statutory timescales for establishing grounds should be considered to reduce drift and delay currently experienced in making decisions which impact on children and families lives significantly. The extraordinary lengths of time for children and families to be in limbo must be addressed to ensure children and families feel supported while they are waiting for their Hearing to take place and efforts must be made to address systemic delays.

We are therefore pleased to see the amendments in this group relating to timescales, in particular **amendment 181** relating to timescales for determination of application to the sheriff and **amendment 182** which introduces annual reports on timescales in the Children’s Hearings System. These will take important steps towards reducing and monitoring drift in the Children’s Hearings System, which significantly impacts the lives of children and their families. As work to implement these provisions progresses there must be alignment with the other recommendations in ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ which aim to eliminate drift and delay.

We appreciate the intention behind **amendment 171**, which introduces a slightly different approach but overlaps with **amendment 181**.

We **support amendments 181** (Bill Kidd) **and 182** (Roz McCall).

We **do not support amendment 171** (Martin Whitfield).

Group 19. Children’s Hearings: infants

Amendments 172, 173, 174, 183 and 184

We support	We do not support
172, 173, 174	183, 184

Amendments 172, 173 and 174 provide welcome clarification that children under the age of five cannot accept grounds. ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ was clear that “There must be no requirement for young children to agree with the grounds for referral. When all relevant persons agree the grounds and Statement of Facts, this must be sufficient to consider the grounds as agreed, with no need for additional proof proceedings” (Pg 147).

We **support amendments 172, 173 and 174** (Martin Whitfield).

Infant Safeguarders (Amendment 183) and representation for infants (amendment 184)

The Hearings System Working Group listened carefully to the evidence and information provided by a wide range of organisations and stakeholders relating child development and the importance of making decisions in line with baby and infant milestones. As a result, ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ states that measures must be in place to prioritise the developmental needs of infants and babies where systemic delays may impact on their

ability to form lasting and consistent relationships. It made a number of recommendations to address this that are either included within this Bill, the amendments proposed at Stage 2 or being considered and progressed by the Hearings Redesign Board, SCRA and Children’s Hearings Scotland.

These include (but are not limited to) recommendations around:

- Consistent decision makers (Pg 37 etc.)
- Skilled, paid Chairs with specific understanding of babies and infants milestones (Pg 259).
- Measures to eliminate drift and delay (Pg 142).
- Early and intensive help and support (Pg 73).
- Earlier referrals to the Children’s Hearings System and ensuring referrers take into account babies and infants developmental milestones (Pg 34/102).
- Considering a statutory timescale for establishing grounds (Pg 143).
- Removing the obligation for attendance for babies and infants/ establishing grounds when babies and infants are involved (Pg 40/ 146).
- Ways to capture the voices and experiences of babies and infants (Pg 42/ 124/ 194/ 208).
- Consistent caregivers/ long term planning for children (Pg 235).
- The role of the Reporter before a baby is born (Pg 109)
- Interim orders in place for a length of time in the best interests of the child (Pg 145).

The implementation of these recommendations will, in our view, seek to improve the quality of decision-making for babies and infants in the Children’s Hearings System. **The Hearings System Working Group did not recommend that there should be separate proceedings or processes for babies and infants.**

We understand the intent behind **amendments 183 and 184** relating to an infant safeguarder/ representation role. ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ made a number of recommendations relating to Safeguarders, including that their appointment must be routinely considered during the process to establish grounds (recommendation 5.3) and that there should be more ‘active management’ of the role (recommendation 10.2). These recommendations were made with babies and infants in mind- there was clear recognition from the Hearings System Working Group about the importance of the role of Safeguarders for very young children in particular.

As we stated at Stage 2, we remain unclear whether the suggestion in **amendment 183 and 184 is** for this to be a new role or to be combined with the pre-existing role of a Safeguarder. We are also mindful of the feedback from children, young people and families about the number of people in the room at a Hearing and how confusing and overwhelming this can be. Creating a new and separate role (if that is what is intended) could cause additional confusion and complexity. Instead, we think it is important that the recommendations set out in ‘Hearings for Children’ are implemented and that further work is undertaken to ensure that members of the workforce, including

Safeguarders, are trained in the impact of trauma, childhood development, neurodiversity and children’s rights (recommendation 2.4/ 3.2).

We **do not support** amendments 183 and 184 (Roz McCall).

Group 20. Children’s Hearings: legal advice and representation and legal aid

Amendments 74, 75, 77, 189, 192, 195, 201

We support	We do not support
74, 75, 195, 201	77, 189, 192

Accreditation of solicitors and rights of audience

‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ stated that the conduct of lawyers representing children and relevant persons through the Children’s Hearings System must be in line with the ambition for Children’s Hearings to be inquisitorial rather than adversarial. The Hearings System Working Group recommended that:

- There must be a review of the pre-existing Code of Practice that lawyers are required to adhere to and of the processes with respect to the register of solicitors eligible to provide legal assistance to children, maintained by the Scottish Legal Aid Board (recommendation 10.1.2)
- There must be mechanisms to review practice and to ensure that lawyers are held to the standard expected of them at Children’s Hearings (recommendation 10.1.2)
- There must be consideration of the development of rights of audience so that lawyers should demonstrate certain skills and attributes before being able to appear on behalf of children and relevant people at a Hearing (recommendation 10.1.3).

These recommendations were all [accepted, or accepted with conditions](#) by the Scottish Government.

These amendments seek to address these recommendations. **Amendment 75** will allow for further consultation and consideration of the practical implementation of accreditation of solicitors representing children and relevant person and **amendment 74** will introduce ‘rights of audience’ in the Children’s Hearings System. Given the alignment with both the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ we are supportive of these amendments, noting that further work and discussion is required ahead of commencement to ensure that issues relating to workforce availability are addressed.

We **support** amendments 74 (Jeremy Balfour) **and 75** (Roz McCall).

Availability of children’s advocacy services and child-centred legal advice and representation

Amendments passed at Stage 2 amend the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 to place an additional duty on police, local authorities, health boards and the Principal Reporter to inform children about the availability of children’s advocacy services, and for local authorities to also inform children about the availability of child-centred legal advice and representation. We support **amendment 195**, which would place the same duty to inform children about the availability of child-centred legal advice and representation on the Principal Reporter. We note that this provision is already included in the Rules of Procedure aligned with the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, but see no harm in it being replicated here.

We have concerns about the same provision being extended to police constables and health boards. In particular, police constables and health boards may not have access to the required or relevant information and it is more appropriate for this to be done via the Principal Reporter.

Amendment 77 allows provision for the term ‘child-centred legal aid and representation’ to be defined by regulation. Although we appreciate the intent behind this amendment, we do not think that regulations are required in order to define this term, given that this is already established terminology and flexibility is required.

We **support amendment 195** (Jeremy Balfour).

We **do not support amendments 77, 189 and 192** (Jeremy Balfour).

Legal aid for children

The promise states that children and their families must have a right to legal advice and representation if required (Pg 116). ‘[Hearings for Children](#)’ is clear in recommendation 4.2 that children must be fully informed of their right to legal representation. There must be an exploration and understanding of how to ensure the mechanisms to access legal aid and their right to legal support are sufficient.

Children referred to the Children’s Hearing System on offence grounds must have legal representation due to the complexities of the grounds being raised and the potential long-term consequences of accepting offence grounds without full understanding of them by the child. **Amendment 201** provides the opportunity to ensure automatic access to solicitors within the Children’s Hearings System for a child that has been referred to the hearing for conduct or offence grounds to be realised. We are strongly supportive of this provision and are pleased to see it included within the Bill at Stage 3.

We **support amendment 201** (Jeremy Balfour).

Places of safety for arrested children: Amendments 202, 211

We support	We do not support
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202, 211	
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The promise states that for a variety of reasons care experienced children are disproportionately criminalised and overrepresented in the youth criminal justice system (Pg 89). Scotland must do more to avoid that criminalisation and support the workforce to respond to children in a way that is relational rather than procedural and process driven (Pg 91).

Legislative change is needed to make this a reality. **Amendments 202/ 211** seek to amend the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 to allow for children who have been arrested to be taken to a place of safety instead of police custody unless an appropriate constable certifies that no appropriate alternative location is available. This small change to existing legislation would enable, through regulations, a significant change that would ensure a more rights-respecting and trauma-informed response to children in conflict with the law in line with Scotland’s commitment to keep the promise. The use of an alternative location would not be a requirement - a police station could still be used - but would enable alternatives to be considered where appropriate. This change would then enable any piloting of an alternative to police custody to be carried out, without any legislative challenge for police officers.

We were supportive of this amendment at Stage 2 and welcome it at Stage 3, noting that further work will be required to make the changes through regulations.

We **support amendment 202 and 211** (Willie Rennie).

Group 22, Outcomes of children’s services planning

Amendment 204

We support	We do not support
204	

Amendment 204 would amend the aims of children’s services plans to include supporting the delivery of the recommendations of the Independent Care Review. The conclusions of the Independent Care Review must be delivered by 2030 and these duties will extend far beyond that period. Children’s services plans must therefore report on how the plans will deliver against the conclusions until 2030 and thereafter on how they are continuing to ensure the promise is kept to all children, families and care experienced adults.

We **support amendment 204** (Willie Rennie).

Group 23. Reviews and reporting in relation to the Act and the promise Amendments 205, 206, 207, 208

We support	We do not support
205, 206	

We support **amendments 205 and 206**, which will strengthen review, scrutiny, and accountability for delivery of the Act (if passed) and progress towards keeping the promise.

The promise states that Scotland must remain accountable for delivering sustained change in the lives of children, families, and care experienced adults. Responsibility for delivering the promise sits across Scotland’s institutions and systems, and they must understand what is expected of them, by when, and be resourced to effectively discharge their responsibility. Progress must be transparent, measurable, and focused on improving experiences and outcomes.

Given the complexity of delivery and accountability, strengthening mechanisms that support oversight of progress is therefore consistent with the expectation set out in the promise that all organisations with a role to play must understand and fulfil their responsibilities to care experienced people (Pg 112).

It is important that any review mechanisms introduced are comprehensible and coherent and align with existing work underway to monitor progress towards keeping the promise, including national planning, reporting, and improvement activity. Duplication of reporting or review requirements risks increasing bureaucracy and diverting resource from delivery of change and improving experiences for care experienced people.

Amendments 207 and 208 are technical amendments as a result of these changes.

We **support amendments 205 and 206** (Willie Rennie).

About The Promise Scotland

[The Promise Scotland](#) was established in 2021 and exists to support Scotland as it works to keep [the promise](#) to Scotland’s children, families and care experienced adults following the conclusions of the [Independent Care Review](#). Since the organisation was established, it has supported and delivered a wide range of projects and programmes, which you can read more about in our [organisational review](#) and our [strategic work programme](#).

Keeping the promise involves transforming the entirety of Scotland’s ‘care system’, so that children, young people, families and care experienced adults are at its centre. The Promise Scotland directly supports the work of multiple organisations and agencies, across many sectors working to make that happen by 2030 at the very latest, with a commitment to its own obsolescence by that date.

If you want to get in touch to discuss any of the areas raised in our briefing please do not hesitate to contact our Policy Lead, Chloe Riddell on chloe@thepromise.scot.