



SUMMARY: Advice Note on Keeping the Promise: A Structural Framework for Lasting Public Service Reform

Advice on

How Scotland's wider programme of Public Service Reform can help keep the promise by 2030. The advice argues that many of the barriers that remain are structural rather than operational. They sit across policy, legislation, funding, governance, accountability, data and scrutiny and cannot be resolved by individual services or organisations acting alone.

Provided to

Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Reform

Provided on

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Why this matters

Scotland now has both a clear route to keeping the promise through Plan 24–30 and a Government committed to substantial reform of public services.

That shapes what happens next. Public service reform underway and planned create an opportunity to remove the structural barriers that prevent Scotland's public services working together around people's lives.

With Scottish Government having a distinct role in creating the conditions in which others can deliver. And keeping the promise providing a practical test of whether reform is working

My advice

Use keeping the promise as a practical test of Public Service Reform, by using the reforms already underway or planned to:

- align national strategy, policy and investment around shared outcomes;
- distinguish what can be resolved locally from what requires collective or national action;
- make prevention possible through funding, accountability and governance;
- simplify systems that are difficult for people and the workforce to navigate;
- bring national data, local evidence, practitioner knowledge and lived experience together; and
- create clear responsibility for structural barriers that cross portfolios or organisations.

Plan 24–30 provides the shared framework through which this can be done.

What needs to happen next

The reforms Scotland is embarking on have to add up. Reform of local government, of the National Health Service, of social care, of public bodies, the focus on prevention, assessing the role of scrutiny and accountability all must be considered together: where they reinforce one another, where gaps remain and whether they are removing or reproducing the structural barriers already identified.



With the focus of Public Service Reform asking and answering ‘what cross-portfolio governance and accountability is needed to ensure individual reforms work together around a shared purpose, with clear responsibility for resolving barriers that sit between them?’

In terms of keeping the promise, the ultimately test is what changes for children, families and care experienced adults: whether they experience greater stability, earlier support, less crisis and unnecessary disruption, greater participation and better long-term outcomes.

Status: advice provided / action underway / further action required

The advice has been formally provided with the intent to connect reforms in practice: who holds responsibility for ensuring they work together; where cross-system barriers will be identified and resolved; and how Government will know whether structural change is improving people's lives.