

Keeping the promise to our children, young people and families

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Keeping The Promise

to our children,
young people
and families

Scottish Government Implementation
Plan setting out what we will do to
Keep The Promise by 2030



**#Keep
The
Promise**

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Plan setting out what we will do to
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This plan complements **The Promise Scotland's Plan 21-24** and **Change Programme One**

The Scottish Government remains fully committed to delivering on our pledge to care experienced people in Scotland by accepting and responding to the conclusions of the Independent Care Review set out in **The Promise**.

Keeping The Promise means we need to take immediate action to improve experiences and outcomes for children, young people, adults and their families who are currently in or on the edge of care; and action over the longer term to improve the level of support for families from birth through to adulthood to significantly reduce the numbers of families coming into the care system.

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John Swinney
Deputy First Minister

Ministerial Foreword by the Deputy First Minister

To the many people who have contributed to the Independent Care Review or to the work to Keep The Promise since February 2020, especially people with care experience and the care workforce, thank you.

Your voices and actions are vital to the future of children and young people in Scotland and in shaping a future where more children will experience love and compassion and more families will stay together.

To the children and young people who are in the care system now, we promise that we will not delay in making changes as soon as possible. I understand frustrations when change may take longer than you feel is needed. The Scottish Government really cares about getting The Promise right and we will work as hard as we can to keep it.

To all of the children of Scotland:

- We want you to be safe with the people that you know and love
- We want you to be healthy
- We want to give you a good education
- We want you to know and feel that you are loved

To the carers, workforce, agencies and stakeholders who work hard to provide the best environment for our children and young people in care, thank you. We know that whilst there is a need for change, the work that you do on a daily basis and the love that you show helps improve many lives. This is both welcomed and much appreciated.

The last two years have been witness to unprecedented pressure and has required work that goes above and beyond the norm. Thank you for your hard work and for continuing to put your heart into supporting our people and communities.

This Implementation Plan sets out a route for change and your support, ideas and energy in helping us achieve this is highly valued.

In 2016 the First Minister instructed a root and branch independent review of the Care System in Scotland. Running from 2017 to 2020 the review listened to over 5,500 voices, over half of which, were our children and young people who have experience of the care system. The conclusion of this work was The Promise – a clear statement of what needs to change to support the lives and wellbeing of our children, young people, adults and families across Scotland.

In signing up to all of the conclusions set out through the Independent Care Review, the Scottish Government places Keeping The Promise as a central commitment that is fundamental to our ambition that Scotland will be the best place to grow up. A place where all children are loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential.

Meeting this commitment requires a cohesive and coordinated approach across all of our care services, our health services, our education services and our justice services. It requires our many partners to work together and hold The Promise at the heart of what they do. It means we must provide person centred, wrap around support for people, supporting them with what they need, when they need it and where they need it. And, it means that as a Government we must ensure that our policies, our funding and our legislation are aligned to serve the best interests of our children and young people, whether they are involved in the care system or not.

Over the last two years, all of our lives have been impacted by COVID-19 and the pandemic is not over yet. Our children and young people have missed regular interactions with friends and loved ones, and many of the opportunities that are all part of growing up have not been able to happen. The effect of this may be long lasting. We know that for many of our young people who are experiencing care it will have been particularly challenging. As we begin the long road to recovery, there is opportunity to ensure that The Promise and tackling child poverty are central to our focus and activity, and collectively they deliver the transformational change needed to make Scotland the best country in the world to grow up.

The Promise identifies a 10 year programme for change. This Implementation Plan sets out, in one place, the range of actions across the different parts of Government that contribute both collectively and in some part individually to Keep The Promise and it is the first stage of our route map to 2030

In presenting this Implementation Plan, I do so with thanks to the carers, workforce, agencies and stakeholders across Scotland who continue to work hard to provide support to our children, young people and families; and with a grateful thanks to The Promise Scotland and, in particular, to Fiona Duncan for her outstanding leadership to date and the work I know will follow.



Executive Summary

“For Scotland to truly be the best place in the world for children to grow up, a fundamental shift is required in how decisions are made about children and families”

The Promise

Our Intent

Just over two years ago the Independent Care Review published **The Promise** and in February 2020 the Scottish Government signed up to the actions set out within it.

Keeping The Promise requires us to join up across our Government policies and actions and to work with our partners to bring transformational change. Change that places love and relationships at the centre of the experiences and outcomes for every child. Having made this Promise to our children and young people, adults and families of Scotland, we intend to keep it.

In the two years since The Promise was published we have witnessed the unprecedented impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This has affected us all, and for many of our care experienced people, it has made already difficult situations more challenging. This is why we must move now to put our energy fully behind bringing the change required to improve lives.

This is a generational opportunity to make sure every child and family in Scotland has what they need to thrive. A fundamental shift rather than incremental change is needed. It is critical to the lives of our young people as well as our success as a nation that, as we emerge from a public health emergency, we make sure we build a system that prevents crisis in the lives of children, young people and families, and the care, support and love for our children is at the heart of this system.

In recognising this opportunity, this Implementation Plan shares its ambition and works in harmony with the Scottish Government’s Covid Recovery Strategy¹, our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26² and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation³. It is also aligned with our strategic approach to education, health, justice, transport and communities.

This is the start however, and as we present this Plan as a statement of action and commitment in 2022, we know we will need further engagement and collaboration in the months and years ahead to ensure that our actions bring the change we need to see; to continue to challenge us on where we need to go further; and to look to new actions that we need to take. We recognise that it is not just for Government to take action, but we know that for The Promise to be kept we must move first and move furthest to enable change for children, young people and families.

We also know there are things we must stop doing. This will require legislative, financial, administrative and public sector reform and it will require difficult conversations along the way – we are ready to Keep The Promise, but humble enough to know we don’t have all the answers, we need all of Scotland to come with us on the journey for change, and together we must all pull in the same direction.

1 Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

2 Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-26 – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

3 Supporting documents – Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The Promise Scotland

The Promise Scotland was established in March 2021 with a dual responsibility of oversight of progress towards Scotland's commitment to Keep The Promise and to provide support for its delivery by leading, collaborating, and driving change. The proposed and planned work is detailed in Plan 21-24, Change Programme ONE and on The Promise Scotland website.

The Promise Scotland provides secretariat to The Promise Oversight Board, which is tasked with monitoring the progress organisations, including the Scottish Government, make individually, and the progress Scotland makes collectively towards its commitment to Keep The Promise. The Promise Oversight Board will report to the care community and publicly on the progress made and will use its networks, relationships and governance structure to provide support and guidance wherever necessary.

Our Approach

It is clear that the Scottish Government is one of the organisations that is required to lead from the front. While operational change rightly must take place at a local level, the Scottish Government in partnership with the Scottish Parliament holds a number of the key levers to change. To reflect this approach, this Plan will provide a framework for the rest of Scotland to plan around as well as setting out the actions we are taking across Government.

At the core of our national approach is our commitment to Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)⁴. GIRFEC recognises that what surrounds us, shapes us: a child and young person's individual growth and development is experienced in the context of their networks of family and care, local communities, and the influences of wider society.

We know that early experiences, including pre-birth, lay the foundation for wellbeing throughout childhood and into adult life, with recognition of the importance of preventing adverse experiences, and availability of relationship-based and trauma-informed approaches. In adopting a holistic approach we must:

- Support our children, young people, adults and families who are care experienced, recognising that experience of care has an effect on people throughout their lives;
- Support our children, young people, adults and families who we know are at risk of being taken into care, recognising that the right support at the right times will help keep families together and avoid the need for care;
- Support all of our children, young people, adults and families, recognising that if we get the services that everyone uses right then the level of engagement with the care system will be reduced.

Fundamentally, we want to significantly reduce the number of children and young people who are living away from their families. To achieve this ambition, where children are safe and feel loved they must stay with their families; and families must be given support to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way. Our approach to this is reflective of 'the fundamentals' of change that The Promise Scotland set out in its Plan 21-24:

- To do what matters to children and families
- To listen and embed what we have heard from children and families
- To tackle poverty and the forces that push families into it
- To respect children's rights, and
- To improve our language

⁴ Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

This Implementation Plan is therefore presented as a partner document to The Promise, Plan 21-24 and Change Programme One. It is how and what we will do, within our power as the Scottish Government, to Keep The Promise. Whilst it does not track The Promise's structure directly it does identify key actions that we are and will undertake to help ensure a Good Childhood; to adopt a Whole Family approach and build capacity within the system to support this.

We are on a journey to change, and we are committed to ensuring that by working across boundaries with all of our stakeholders and with The Promise Scotland we can together listen to the voices and experiences of our children, young people and families with experience of care people and improve their lives.

Our Key Commitments

This Implementation Plan identifies commitments across multiple portfolios which both individually and collectively support change. Some are however key.

- **We will invest £500 million over the course of this Parliamentary session, beginning with £50 million in financial year 2022-23, in preventative spend through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.** This will deliver transformational change and service re-design in the delivery of whole family support. It will enable the building of universal, holistic support services, available in communities across Scotland, giving families access to the help they need, where and when they need it. It will help reduce the need for crisis intervention and contribute to improving people's lives across a wide range of different areas, including but not limited to, child and adolescent mental health, child poverty, alcohol and drugs use and educational attainment. Fundamentally, this is strategic investment to transform the delivery of family support and this change will contribute to tackling child poverty and significantly reduce the number of children and young people who are living away from their families.
- **We will support local areas to implement the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021.** This guidance supports practice that places children and young people's experience, needs, wishes and feelings at the centre of decision making, builds on strengths as well as addressing risk and focuses on working in partnership with families and communities. This will achieve a necessary shift that supports the least intrusive and most supportive levels of intervention at all stages.
- **We will invest £10 million per annum through our Care Experience Grant: a new £200 annual grant for 16-25 year olds with care experience.** This Grant will provide some additional financial security for young people with experience of care and will help reduce some of the financial barriers that young people face in transitions to adulthood and more independent living. The Grant will support families with care experience by contributing to the maximising of incomes, a key driver of child poverty reduction.
- **We will set a Recommended National Allowance for foster and kinship allowances.** This investment will mean that no matter which area of Scotland children are living in, their caregivers will receive at least the Scottish Recommended Allowance to care for them.
- **We will end the placement of 16 and 17 year olds in Young Offenders Institutions without delay. We will fund care based alternatives to custody and consult on new legislation in Spring 2022.** This will provide the support children need in very difficult circumstances, shifting the approach from one of punishment to one of love and support.

- **We will ensure that all care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation. In March 2022, we will consult on the need for further appropriate underpinning in legislation or guidance to ensure children's rights are protected in care settings.** This commitment to address the use of restraint in care settings will mean that only trained care staff will use restraint and only when there is a serious risk of harm to the child themselves or another person; and where there is no effective way of keeping them safe. The use of restraint must be an absolute last resort where it is necessary and proportionate and should always be pain free.
- **We will work with The Promise Scotland to build an evidence base to understand the best governance, financial arrangements and models of care to assess how we best Keep The Promise.** This will explore the options for the future of children's services from an evidence based position and enable us to assess the best way to Keep The Promise. Within this, we will take account of the improvement work already being undertaken across Scotland.
- **We will consider establishing a National Social Work Agency to support the workforce and ensure equality of service and support.** This is an opportunity to establish a single national lead that has oversight and leads social workers' professional development, education, terms and conditions, workforce planning and improvement.
- **We will take forward a redesign of the Children's Hearings System, building on the recommendations from the review led by Sheriff Mackie, with the aim to bring forward any required legislation by the end of the Parliamentary session.** This multi-agency review is a partnership between Children's Hearing Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and The Promise Scotland. It will facilitate a process that will have the needs of children and families with lived experience of the Children's Hearing System at its heart.
- **We will support The Promise Scotland to develop a blueprint for the creation and control of, and access to, information about care experienced people which will empower people to decide who and when key information about them is made available.** This approach to developing a blueprint, which will explore the compliance with applicable law, will empower people to decide when key information about them is made available, and who is able to access it. It will examine the protocols that will need to be established with key institutions to support provision of the right information at the right time to best support our children and young people who are care experienced. Initial report of findings will be presented by The Promise Scotland by June 2023.
- **We will support The Promise Scotland to scope a national lifelong advocacy service for care experienced people and their families.** This will recognise there may be a need for distinct offerings, independent of one another. It will also take account of the need for independent advocacy and be clear about the definition. The Promise Scotland will present recommendations to Scottish Ministers for consideration by the end of 2023.
- **We will, by April 2023, publish a long-term delivery plan for further work to embed and sustain trauma-informed workforces and services.** This will include a priority focus on trauma training and support for adoptive parents, kinship, foster and supported carers. It is vital that the workforce engaging with care experienced children is trauma informed. This will help children and young people who have experienced trauma feel safe and nurtured through healthy, supportive relationships with the adults around them.
- **We will introduce a Promise Bill to make any further legislative changes required to Keep The Promise by the end of this Parliamentary session.** This will include legislation in relation to the Children's Hearings Systems redesign, and where we bring forward guidance that requires to be put on a statutory footing to make sure that public authorities do what is necessary to Keep The Promise.

- **We will establish The Promise Collective co-chaired with The Promise Scotland to support alignment and cohesion of activities.** This group will be convened as a strategic forum to ensure alignment of all Scottish Government funded delivery and improvement initiatives that are working to Keep The Promise We expect this group to be in place by the end of the Parliamentary year. We are currently scoping a full remit of this group and we will hold the first meeting by the end of June 2022.
- **We will collaborate with The Promise Scotland to scope a new, holistic framework for governance and accountability.** This work will report by June 2024 and any recommendations requiring legislative underpinning will be considered for inclusion in The Promise Bill.

Our Plan

While our commitment to Keep The Promise extends to 2030 and this Implementation Plan provides commitments up to that point, the primary focus at this stage is delivery of The Promise Scotland's Plan 21-24. Our work will continue to evolve as we deliver the commitments and actions identified, and this Implementation Plan may be refreshed to meet Plan 25-27 in due course.

In setting out the actions we are and will take, this Implementation Plan is presented in two parts:

- **Our Route:** This sets out how we will act as Government; and maps the key milestones we have identified to date and that we will implement in order to Keep The Promise
- **Our Plan:** This is the collection of actions and commitments that we are undertaking and will undertake across Government to Keep The Promise. Many of these are interdependent, some are stand alone, but collectively they support our ambition to improve the lives of our children, young people, adults and families across Scotland.

Working together with The Promise Scotland, we will work with our children in the care community, to develop and present a child friendly version of this plan for publication later this year.

Taking a person centred approach means recognising that not everybody is the same, thinks the same or needs the same. Many of our care experienced children and young people have protected characteristics which may compound inequalities they experience through being care experienced. We must respect, reflect and embrace this in the services and support we provide. Alongside this Plan, we will publish an equalities position statement setting out our assessment of its overall impact. The Plan contains a wide range of policies and the position statement will not replace policy specific assessments which are undertaken at the appropriate stage of policy development.

The Promise Design School

The Scottish Government's Office of the Chief Designer is working in partnership with The Promise Scotland to develop a participatory opportunity for those collaborating on service redesign across the operating landscape of care in Scotland – The Promise Design School.

The Promise Design School works to embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design across the sector to equip and empower those tasked with redesigning future care services. This provides training opportunities, as well as support and community for care experienced people and those who have pledged to Keep The Promise, so they are equipped with service design skills and knowledge and can meaningfully participate in projects throughout the de-sign and delivery phases. The second iteration of The Promise Design School will launch in 2022 and includes rolling out an 'intensive support' model for multi-agency or complex service redesign programmes.

Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on every aspect of life in Scotland and the effects of the pandemic on the wellbeing of our children and young people has been profound. For many of our children, young people and families who are engaged with our care services, the impact of the pandemic has made their lives harder and reduced yet further the opportunities for them to build relationships and further their lives.

We know, for example, that school closures throughout the pandemic have had an impact, particularly for those children in low income families who faced barriers in accessing digital technology, resources and adequate space to learn at home. For our care experienced families, it meant more time at home not always with the support and love that they require; it meant a removal of structure and support that the school routine and engagement with teachers and peers can bring; and in too many cases it meant further exposure to poverty and challenges of access to regular services.

However, The Promise shows us that the challenges within our approach to care were there before the pandemic. The emphasis now must be on the need to transform Scotland's care system to focus on the importance of holistic whole family support, keeping families together where it is safe to do so, and ensuring those in a care environment are loved and nurtured throughout their life.

As we build our recovery as a nation we must ensure that transforming the way in which we look after our families who are facing daily challenges remains at the centre of our ambitions for change. Through delivery of our COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, we must work with our parents, carers, communities and our public and third sector partners to ensure tailored and holistic support is provided to those who need it, when they need it and how they need it.

The latest **Children's Social Work Statistics** that set out the number of children and young people engaged in the care system were published on the Scottish Government website on 29 March.



Scotland's Covid Recovery Strategy: For A Fairer Future

Our **Covid Recovery Strategy**, published in October 2021, sets out an ambitious vision and plan for Scotland's recovery from the pandemic that is focused on bringing about a fairer future, particularly for those most disproportionately affected during the pandemic. Actions within the strategy are focused on supporting three outcomes:

- Increasing financial security for low income households;
- Enhancing the wellbeing of Children and Young People; and
- Creating good, green jobs and fair work.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. Parents, carers, communities and our public and third sector partners have all worked hard to support our children and young people and many have benefited from this support and have coped navigating the challenges. However, for many others there have been significant negative impacts on their wellbeing.

Young people have reported poorer mental health and overall wellbeing concerns, with girls and young women, minority ethnic groups and disabled people amongst those most affected; Children in low income households have experienced particular challenges regarding access to digital technology, access to creative experiences and resources, and having adequate space to learn at home; and the experience of young people entering further education, training or employment has also been significantly affected.

As Scotland recovers from the pandemic, it has never been more important to get it right for every child, young person and family, particularly those who have experienced most disruption and disadvantage as a result of the unprecedented events of the last two years. Our ambition for Scotland's children, young people and families is to create the conditions that enable wellbeing to flourish. We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up and we want every child and young person to be loved, safe and respected, realising their full potential.

Our vision for recovery includes our ambition to rebuild public services so that they are designed and delivered in a person-centred way that meets the needs of individuals,

Incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law to the maximum extent possible is critical to ensuring children's rights are at the centre of all decision-making.

1. Our Route Map



How the Scottish Government will work to Keep The Promise

Our vision for Scotland is that all of our children grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential. To achieve this we must do all we can to ensure that all of our children grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.

Our communities too must be safe places where children are valued, nurtured, listened to and treated with kindness. We must include and involve our children in decisions about their lives and world, and protect their rights, dignity and wellbeing. Creating the conditions in which all of our children can be healthy and active.

The Promise, tells us why our children enter care and the impact that the present system is having on their lives. It tells us that:

- the human cost of failure is felt by the person who grows up in the system and it is lifelong;
- our children often move so many times they do not settle or thrive at school, leaving with few or no qualifications and little prospect of further education or employment;
- our children who are not appropriately supported struggle to develop social connections, struggle with their mental health, and too often grow up lonely;
- our children who are not appropriately supported to heal from their trauma, too often turn to drugs and alcohol to help them cope and this can lead to dependency;
- when our children leave the care system they are too often not ready for adulthood and become homeless;
- our care experienced children and young people too often get involved in the criminal justice system;
- our care experienced people too often die much younger than they should.

Our vision for our care experienced children and young people must be no different to our vision for all of our children and young people across Scotland. We know that being care experienced is not something that ends when someone becomes an adult and that's why we must also support the transition to the adult world, and we must recognise that our care experienced people are more likely to need support throughout their lives.

We made a Promise in 2020 to the care community, a promise of transformational change. This will require the Scottish Government to work differently. Our job is to lead the direction of travel, create the conditions for change and ensure that others have what they need to fundamentally shift focus, align resources and adapt structures.

We cannot deliver this change alone. We are committed to building genuine partnerships with Councils, The Promise Scotland, delivery partners, the third sector, and health boards. We may not be able to legislate for love but we can create the conditions in which love and relationships are at the centre of the support we provide and we must all work closely with children young people, adults and families, to ensure we are making the difference needed.

Our Implementation Plan is neither the end of the story, nor the whole of it. We are on a journey to change and only by working together with our partners and with our care community will we Keep The Promise.

What Will The Future Look Like

By 2030, we will have achieved our statutory child poverty targets and significantly reduced the number of children growing up in poverty and the negative outcomes associated with that. We will have a Scotland where families are supported to stay together through whole family support. We will have significantly reduced the number of children and young people engaged in the care system and our communities will be better supported by the services available to them.

Being care experienced will not be surrounded by stigma. The support available, if required, will be person centred and accessible at a time of need; all transitions will be managed smoothly and the service provided will not be determined by age or geography.

The focus of a child's care will always be based on the child's, rather than the systems, needs and it will be underpinned by love and loving relationships. Not every care experienced person is the same. Not every care experienced person thinks, acts, feels or believes the same. Not every care experienced person wants the same outcomes in their life and not every care experienced person needs the same support. However, every care experienced person should grow up feeling loved and supported to live a happy and healthy life.

How We Will Work To Achieve This

■ We will consistently embed The Promise across all of our policy, legislation and funding interventions

We acknowledge that in order to play our part to establish the right leadership, commitment and focus on children, young people and families we must be an enabler of change. To do this we will ensure that where barriers are identified we will look for alternative ways to introduce the change required and where we can, remove the barrier.

We recognise that the current system for children and families and the workforce in and around the care system can feel disjointed. We are committed to making the links at a national level of policy, guidance, legislation and funding so that for children, families and the care workforce any interaction with services and the system is and feels connected.

To do this we will continue to embed The Promise across our policies and align our resources to prioritise improving the experience of those in care and preventing our children and young people being taken into care in the first place. Driven by a central coordinating and enabling team and with regular reporting on progress at senior and Board level we will continue to build on this plan to ensure that Keeping The Promise is firmly in the sight of all that we do.



■ **We will build person centred services and continue to recognise that our care experienced children, young people and families are diverse and all have different needs**

The Promise tells us that our care experienced people can often feel stigmatised by their peers and communities. Being care experienced is an important part of an individual's life story and it should be the individual's story to tell. It should be understood by others and our response must be respectful and kind.

We are committed to ensuring all our care experienced people are treated equally and that their individual needs are understood. In taking a person centred and rights based approach, we will continue to deliver our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and seek opportunities to recognise and consider the impact on care experienced people throughout development of our policies.

■ **We will do more to hear the voices of our care experienced children, young people, adults and families, making sure they are at the heart of the work we do and the decisions we make, to Keep The Promise**

We recognise we must do more to directly engage with our care experienced children, young people, adults and families. The Independent Care Review listened to over 5,500 voices and the First Minister spoke to 1,000 care experienced children and young people over the 3 years of the Review. We are committed to ensuring these voices continue to be listened to and involved in the changes and decisions which affect them.

We are committed to ensuring lived experience and the voice of the care community is at the heart of our approach to policy development and the delivery of services. We are committed to creating a feedback loop as part of our Governance structures which will ensure that any policy, legislation or funding decision delivers the intended benefits and any unintended consequences are identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

We also acknowledge that any engagement should be meaningful and should be in a way and in a place that is comfortable and safe for the individuals we are engaging with. To achieve this we will fully consider each person's needs when planning any engagement and look to examples of how this has worked well previously, seeking advice from The Promise Scotland and other partners as appropriate.

We must do more to embed the voice and experience of our care experienced people in our governance structures, service design, policy development and funding decisions. To do this we will continue to work with The Promise Scotland, national and local partners and through The Promise Design School to identify and progress engagement at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

■ **We will work with everyone we need to in order to deliver change at national and local level**

Keeping The Promise requires a Scotland wide approach. There is cross party support from all political parties to the actions set out by the Independent Care Review and we will continue to build on this broad coalition of support to deliver the change required. We recognise our role and are committed to working at a national and local level with local Government and stakeholders in the public, private and third sector, to ensure processes and systems link up and to achieve this in a meaningful way that is centred around children and families.

We recognise it is not just for Government to take action, and we must continue to work collaboratively to introduce change and to take tough decisions. This will involve implementing new ways of working; capturing and continuing the things that work well; and recognising and acting to stop the things that do not. To do this we will continue to monitor impact and to challenge whether the work we are undertaking is going far enough to bring the change required.

- **As we emerge from the pandemic, we will progress a step change in how we deliver the transformational change demanded by The Promise, and is expected by our children, young people, adults and families.**

Over the two years since we made The Promise the challenges of the pandemic have required particular attention. At the same time, the need to improve support to our care experience children, young people, adults and families has not changed and in some cases has become more acute. We need to move forward at pace and in the right way to ensure that we act to improve lives in the way that we must. We are committed to doing this and the timeline set out below provides our initial route map to 2030.

With the change that is needed it is important that we are not afraid to test new and innovative ways of delivery. We will not always get it right the first time, but if we can work together to understand the evidence and use people's experiences to inform and encourage solutions we can deliver the right improvement for the people it is intended for. To do this we will consider, in consultation with The Promise Scotland, the right time, and the right way, to provide an update on our Implementation Plan and our journey to Keep The Promise.

How Will We Know We Have Done It

In recognising that improving outcomes for our children, young people and families requires transformational change we must monitor our impact at a national, local and person centred level. We must also work to understand the experiences and circumstances that lead to these outcomes to ensure that support can be targeted where it is needed, when it is needed.

GIRFEC is our national approach to improving outcomes for babies, children, young people and families. The shared model and language helps us to work across services so that support is well-planned, joined-up and streamlined, helping

to prevent or mitigate childhood adversity and trauma. At the more strategic level, Children's Services Planning Partnerships are the main statutory mechanism to plan and deliver local services and supports to improve the wellbeing of our children, young people and families.

We know there are many factors that affect the lives and wellbeing of families in Scotland and we are developing an Outcomes Framework for Children, Young People and Families which will provide a holistic understanding of what we mean by wellbeing, based on what children and families have told us matters, and rooted in GIRFEC and children's rights. Realising, respecting and protecting rights through the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law is the foundation for wellbeing and improving outcomes.

The Framework also provides a consistent approach to demonstrate progress in improving outcomes at local and national levels, helping to enhance our understanding of the collective impact from a wide range of policies, services and frontline practice, including the actions set out in this Implementation Plan and our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

At a local level we will work with our public, private and third sector partners to monitor the impact of our policies and interventions. Through the changes that are introduced including testing authorities for possible change, we will embed specific monitoring and evaluation indicators to track the improvements sought. This will be joined up with national monitoring to ensure that experiences of children and their families are reflected and their stories are told, rather than a focus on making their lives fit into existing frameworks.

This is why we must continue to work with and listen to our children and young people to hear if all that The Promise told us was not good has been changed. We must continue to capture the stories of our young care experienced people in the same way that The Promise told us about

Harris, Caitlin and Daniel, James and Olivia and we must not leave it eight years to then ask the same questions again before we know things are different.

However, we heard from the children and families who spoke to the Independent Care Review that they were repeatedly asked to share their most personal and painful experiences only to see that information discarded and their voice not represented in what came next. This will stop. Prior to undertaking any collection of stories, consideration will be given to understanding the existing data collection and experiences people have already shared to ensure that care experienced people are not burdened by our need to know. Where experiences or stories are asked for it will be because our processes have been followed and shown that information is not already available to us. Within this, we will always include ways to hear seldom heard voices, such as those of infants, babies, the disabled community and others.

In doing so, we recognise that the approaches to monitoring and evaluation must reflect what matters to children, young people, adults and families:

- The data we collect will reflect a blended approach: data, information and evidence that includes a strong understanding of experience.
- The monitoring we undertake must be clear as to its purpose: the provision of actionable insights to drive change, and
- The indicators we apply must be contextualised within the lives of children and families and reflect what really matters to them

The monitoring framework will track progress but it is equally important that it helps us to drive forward further improvement. Sometimes this will mean we have to listen to things that will be hard to hear and that tell us things are not working. This is critical to ensuring we act as quickly as possible to provide support where it is needed.

Children and their families have and continue to tell us about their experiences through a range of mechanisms. We will continue to listen and work to amplify these voices by joining up these mechanisms in a way that is meaningful, connecting them directly to national monitoring processes to ensure the stories they have to tell can fully inform our understanding of what is working, and what is not.

In establishing The Promise Collective co-chaired with The Promise Scotland we will look to align all Scottish Government funded delivery and improvement initiatives that are working to Keep The Promise. We expect this group to be in place by the end of the Parliamentary year. Further detail on this is set out in Chapter 18.

Key Actions We Will Take

▼ 2022
▼ 2023
▼ 2024
▼ 2025
▼ 2026
▼ 2027
▼ 2028
▼ 2029
▼ 2030

<p>We will invest £500 million over the course of this Parliamentary session, beginning with £50 million in financial year 2022-23, in preventative spend through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. ■ Chapter 1</p>	■	■	■	■	■				
<p>We have an ambition that at least 5% of all community based health and social care spend will be invested in preventative whole family support measures by 2030. At current levels of investment we estimate that this will mean that by 2030 around £500 million per year will be redirected into preventative activity that will support our families. ■ Chapter 1 ■ Chapter 17</p>									→
<p>We will set a Recommended National Allowance for foster and kinship allowances. ■ Chapter 1</p>	Date to be confirmed								
<p>We will support local areas to implement the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. ■ Chapter 2</p>	■	■							
<p>We will take a Whole Family Approach across our key policy areas including: ■ Chapter 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Whole Family Approach to drug and alcohol services including direct investment of £3.5 million over the next 5 years • a Whole Family Approach to children and young people’s mental health including £3 million of funding to Health Boards to support Infant Mental Health 	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will work to expand funded early learning and childcare for children aged 1 and 2, starting with low-income households within this Parliament. ■ Chapter 2</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will publish a 5 year delivery plan to set out how we will build a system of wraparound school age childcare, offering care before and after school and in the holidays, which will be free to families on the lowest incomes. ■ Chapter 2</p>	■								
<p>We will take a holistic approach to learning through the Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland, to be published in May 2022. ■ Chapter 3</p>	■								
<p>We will introduce a Bill by June 2022 to reform the law governing bail decisions and the mechanisms around prison release. ■ Chapter 6</p>	■								

Key Actions We Will Take

▼ 2022
▼ 2023
▼ 2024
▼ 2025
▼ 2026
▼ 2027
▼ 2028
▼ 2029
▼ 2030

<p>We will implement the Bairns' Hoose by 2025, bringing together services in a 'four rooms' approach with child protection, health, justice and recovery services all made available in one setting.</p> <p>■ Chapter 6</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will refresh national guidance materials to support consistent effective practice across all children's services including Publication of phase one of refreshed GIRFEC materials by August 2022.</p> <p>■ Chapter 7</p>	■								
<p>We will end the placement of 16 and 17 year olds in Young Offender's Institutions without delay. We will fund care based alternatives to custody and consult on new legislation in Spring 2022.</p> <p>■ Chapter 8</p>	■	■	■						
<p>We will support The Promise Scotland to scope a national lifelong advocacy service for care experienced people and their families.</p> <p>■ Chapter 9</p>	■	■	■						
<p>We will ensure that all care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation. In March 2022, we will consult on the need for further appropriate underpinning in legislation or guidance to ensure children's rights are protected in care settings.</p> <p>■ Chapter 9</p>	■								
<p>We will introduce legislation to raise the age at which someone can be referred to the Children's Reporter in this Parliamentary session.</p> <p>■ Chapter 9</p>	■	■	■	■	■				
<p>We will invest £10 million per annum through our Care Experience Grant: a new £200 annual grant for 16-25 year olds with care experience.</p> <p>■ Chapter 10</p>	Date to be confirmed								
<p>We will invest up to £45 million through the Young Person's Guarantee to support better outcomes for young people in financial year 22/23.</p> <p>■ Chapter 10</p>	■	■							
<p>We will continue to implement the 'Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways' report and the Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway by investing £50m in the next phase of work to end homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>■ Chapter 10</p>	■	■							
<p>We will work with The Promise Scotland to build an evidence base to understand the best governance, financial arrangements and models of care to assess how we can best Keep The Promise.</p> <p>■ Chapter 11</p>	Date to be confirmed								

Key Actions We Will Take

▼ 2022 ▼ 2023 ▼ 2024 ▼ 2025 ▼ 2026 ▼ 2027 ▼ 2028 ▼ 2029 ▼ 2030

<p>We will consider establishing a National Social Work Agency to support the workforce and ensure equality of service and support. ■ Chapter 11 ■ Chapter 14</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will collaborate with The Promise Scotland to scope a new, holistic framework for governance and accountability. ■ Chapter 11</p>	■	■	■						
<p>We will take forward a redesign of the Children’s Hearings System, building on the recommendations from the review led by Sheriff Mackie, with the aim to bring forward any required legislation by the end of the Parliamentary session. ■ Chapter 11</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will support The Promise Scotland to develop a blueprint for the creation and control of, and access to, information about care experienced people which will empower people to decide who and when key information about them is made available. ■ Chapter 13</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will implement a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework in place and adhered to by all organisations and professions involved in supporting children and their families. ■ Chapter 14</p>	Date to be confirmed								
<p>We will, by April 2023, publish a long-term delivery plan for further work to embed and sustain trauma-informed workforces and services. ■ Chapter 15</p>	■	■							
<p>We will, by the end of 2022, roll out a trauma skilled learning programme focused on the needs of workforce involved in the lives of babies, children and young people with care experience. ■ Chapter 15</p>	■								
<p>We will introduce a Promise Bill to make any further legislative changes required to Keep The Promise by the end of this Parliamentary session. ■ Chapter 16</p>	■	■	■	■					
<p>We will undertake a review of the legislative framework relating to the care system in Scotland. ■ Chapter 16</p>	Date to be confirmed								
<p>We will explore the opportunity to undertake a social outcomes funding approach over the coming months with an aim to introduce a social outcomes programme that will work in compliment to the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. ■ Chapter 17</p>	■								
<p>We will establish The Promise Collective co-chaired with The Promise Scotland to support alignment and cohesion of activities. ■ Chapter 18</p>	■								



Keeping Families Together Through Whole Family Support And Support for Our Care Experienced Children, Young People and Adults

Our overarching ambition is to keep families together where that is safe and to provide the support that is needed to enable this to happen. This approach is aligned with the ambitions of our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 as resilient family units with the right support are more likely to lead to the reduction in child poverty. It is also critical to our success as a nation that as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic we make sure that we build a system that prevents crisis in the lives of children and families and takes care of and loves those children who must be cared for by the state.

These actions are underpinned by our national approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). We recognise a child and young person's individual growth and development is experienced in the context of their networks of family and care, local communities, and the influences of wider society.

We know that early experiences, including pre-birth, are critical to determining wellbeing throughout childhood and into adult life, with recognition of the importance of preventing adverse experiences, and availability of relationship-based and trauma-informed approaches. We know that the improved outcomes we can achieve for those children who are diverted from the care system include better educational attainment, better health and reduced likelihood of homelessness, substance misuse, mental health and offending behaviour.

In this section we will set out our cross Government approach to how we will progress our ambition to keep families together. Cumulatively the aim of these actions is to dramatically reduce the number of children that require to be brought into the formal care system by providing the right support, including through our universal services for education, health and employment.

- Chapter 1:** Investing In Whole Family Support
- Chapter 2:** Supporting Families To Stay Together Where That Is Safe
- Chapter 3:** Delivering An Education System That Supports Our Care Experienced Children and Young People
- Chapter 4:** Employability And Creating Opportunity
- Chapter 5:** Tackling Inequality & Supporting Our Communities
- Chapter 6:** The Role Of The Criminal Justice System

Chapter 1

Investing In Whole Family Support

We must recognise the network around our children and young people. This includes recognising and accepting individual definitions of who is 'family' and the bond that may exist with extended family and close friends.

Providing quality holistic whole family support means tailored, multi-disciplinary support which builds on the strengths of the family, and is available as soon as it is needed, for as long as it is needed. We have worked with stakeholders to agree national principles for holistic family support and a vision and route map to support delivery. We now need to support whole system change across the country to make our vision a reality.

This vision for holistic family support recognises the importance of wrapping services around families to ensure that the support is tailored to their needs, relationship based, and builds on the strengths of the families. It also recognises that families should experience those services as seamless – so both adult and children's services come together to design and deliver support structures which are flexible and take into account the individual needs of each family.

The Promise⁵ tells us that every year, Scotland invests £942 million in the care system and the universal services which can be associated with care cost a further £198 million per annum. Improving how we provide a scaffolding of support to families will improve outcomes for those children and young people who need that support, across health, education and employment.

We know that families in which a child enters the care system in the first 12 months of life, are more likely to be already known to services prior to the child's birth. There is a significant opportunity for universal health services to break these cycles of poor outcomes and support families to stay together.

In addition our care experienced adults often require services to support them with the impacts of their negative life experiences and this is estimated to cost around £875 million per annum. Preventative spend is key to ensuring that children achieve positive outcomes which are beneficial to them, their families and the wider economy and reduce the negative impact later in life. Only through policy and financial alignment will we shift the balance of investment in families from crisis management towards prevention

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Realigning Spend

We recognise that to make a major shift in the way the care system operates we need to make a major investment in preventative action. We cannot simply transfer resources away from the current system as this system is supporting people now that have experienced the systemic problems that Keeping The Promise seeks to prevent.

To ensure that this fundamental shift in spending is sustained, we have set an ambition that at least 5% of all community based health and social care spend will be invested in preventative whole family support measures by 2030.

At current levels of investment we estimate that this will mean that by 2030 around £500 million per year will be redirected into preventative activity that will support our families.

5 **The-Money.pdf** (carereview.scot) and **Follow-the-money.pdf** (carereview.scot)

Investing in Whole Family Support

As we progress towards this preventative ambition, it is important to ensure that we are providing the right kind of support to families to enable them to thrive and stay together. To assist this, we are investing at least £500 million in the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding over the course of this Parliament, to help transform services that support families, ensuring families can access the support they need, where and when they need it.

The overarching aim of the Fund is not to fund business as usual activity, but to support the transition of local investment from crisis intervention to prevention. This significant investment will support the system change necessary at a local level to ensure that family support is seamless and wraps around the needs of the whole family.

In financial year 2022/23 we will invest the initial £50 million of this funding to:

- Help local areas to shape and scale up services and approaches which are already effectively wrapping around the needs of families using a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach.
- Deliver support to service planners, leaders and other staff to transform their existing systems, helping to bridge the shift from crisis intervention to preventive support.
- Provide support for national activity that is needed to drive and support these changes.

The first year of funding aims to build the capacity needed to make the most of the further £450 million investment which will be made over the remaining three years of this Parliament. This investment is an important part of changing how we deliver services. It will also support our commitment to tackle child poverty through providing support tailored to the needs of the family, including employability support where that is needed.

We are currently in detailed discussion with COSLA and other stakeholders about how this funding will be delivered and we will make an announcement in May 2022. We are also considering the best profile for the remaining £450 million of the fund and will announce this following the forthcoming Resource Spending Review.

Alongside the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, we will work in collaboration with Children's Service Planning Partnerships and other delivery partners to develop and deliver a programme of activity to improve holistic whole family support through universal and targeted approaches, including:

- Supporting the spread and scale up of good practice already underway in local areas
- Support for local areas to take a whole system approach to transforming the way that support is provided.
- Collective work to improve commissioning and procurement of family support services, including improving the involvement of children and families in service design and specifications.
- Developing a practical toolkit of support for local areas to ensure consistent standards and evaluation of support within a framework of core national principles.

The Promise Partnership Fund

The Scottish Government has committed £4 million per year for The Promise Partnership Fund which launched in 2021. This was established to help organisations with early intervention and to deliver changes to better support children, young people and families in or on the edges of care. Funding is confirmed until 2024-25 and to date, over 70 organisations have benefitted.

The Promise Partnership offers support to organisations and collaborations to help drive forward the change that matters. Care experienced young people are involved in the decisions on where the funding is allocated through their involvement in The Promise Partnership Advisory Group that oversees how the money is spent.

Circle

Circle is a Scottish charity working at the heart of deprived communities across central Scotland. Their aim is to support the most disadvantaged children and families to improve their lives, promote their healthy development and reach their potential. Circle offers a range of whole family support services that promote children's healthy development and potential. They engage with families who face exclusion due to social injustice, poverty and health inequalities.

- families affected by drug and alcohol
- families affected by imprisonment
- pregnancy and early years
- Fathers' support
- Children and young people

Circle have been funded through The Promise Partnership Fund to increase participation with children, young people and families on the edges of care and provides support to exploring the SHANARRI indicators with children affected by domestic abuse.

A specific example of this work was '*chats with the boys*' where a Caledonian worker supported a family of mum, dad and 2 boys using wellbeing indicators to understand if the boys understand being safe and inviting them to express their emotions and experiences through pictures. By using images and the wellbeing indicators the boys were able to explain some situations were like a 'rollercoaster' and talked about a cyber-security incident. The boys were able to explain what made them feel safe and that being at the park made them feel more calm.

Support For Caregivers

Carers of children and young people have clearly told us that they need equitable and consistent financial support to ensure that they can provide a stable, positive and happy experience for their family. In support of this, we are committed to work with our partners to introduce a Scottish Recommended National Allowance to those in kinship and fostering households. This investment will mean that no matter which area of Scotland children are living in, their caregivers will receive at least the Scottish Recommended Allowance to care for them.

The Kinship Care Collaborative has been established with key stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and young people and to better support kinship carers and the professionals who work with kinship families. The aim is to deliver both national and local improvement and the agreed priorities for the Collaborative are:

- Reviewing kinship care legislation and guidance;
- Identification of resources and gaps with a view to eliminate any gaps;
- Improving consistency of service provision across Scotland;
- Establishing clear and universal understanding of definitions within legislation;
- Identification of good practice;
- Ensuring kinship care is visible within communities and promoting this.

As well as building on our work through the Kinship Care Collaborative, we are developing our policy to support those in fostering, adoptive and residential families.

Supporting The Costs of Living

The Promise tells us that our care experienced adults are over one and a half times more likely to experience severe multiple disadvantage. Recognising the impact of poverty on the outcomes for our children, young people and families, we are making £225 million available in the year ahead to support the doubling of the Scottish Child Payment, to £20 per week per child from April, and then further increasing the payment to £25 per week per child by the end of 2022. This will immediately benefit 104,000 children under the age of six will benefit immediately from April, and ahead of the full roll out of the payment to all eligible children under the age of sixteen, we are also continuing to deliver Bridging Payments worth £520 this year for as many school age children as possible.

We have recently consulted on a draft plan on ending the need for food banks. This reaffirms a human rights approach to the issue of food insecurity, placing an emphasis on preventing poverty so that families have the means to access food that meets their needs and preferences without having to compromise on other essentials. A final plan will be published in Spring 2022 and will outline a package of further practical actions to strengthen the availability of cash-first support in order to make food aid the last port of call. The cash-first model will prioritise access to the Scottish Welfare Fund as well as other discretionary income supports, alongside money advice and wider wellbeing support to help prevent future need.

Healthy eating too is key to good health outcomes and early years funding is targeted at 'risk' families, aimed at encouraging and reinforcing good nutrition, healthy eating habits and physical activity for children aged 0-5 years continues to be provided to support projects including:

- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are piloting a whole system, community food nurturing programme with families of pre-school children combining action on food insecurity, healthy eating and physical activity in three Glasgow neighbourhoods.

- NHS Lothian are piloting an evidence based training package (HENRY) with family workers/ early learning childcare practitioners, across the 4 local authority areas. These settings were chosen by the working group, focused on areas within the 4 localities with highest deprivation.

We know that by addressing the generic and structural challenges associated with living somewhere, including in our rural and island communities where the costs of living are higher, will help to address and alleviate poverty. An example of tailored support that can assist with living costs includes Discretionary Housing Payments for which care experienced young people, or their families, finding it difficult to meet their housing costs, may apply to their Local Authority. These can be awarded to provide help with housing costs for those on Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

Access to Financial Advice

We know that access to the right advice can lead to income maximisation, lower bills, access to employment opportunities and housing support, in addition to often wider wellbeing support. We know also that being able to access the advice in settings where people are comfortable doing so will increase the number of people being able to benefit from the advice.

To support this we will invest £10 million over the term of this Parliament to increase access to advice services in accessible settings to maximise incomes, tackle the poverty penalty and improve wellbeing. We have already begun this work by expanding Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships, placing money advisors in up to 150 GP practices in some of Scotland's most deprived areas.

We plan to expand this to other health settings and community hubs and to expand on pilot local partnership approaches providing advice in education settings giving people the opportunity to access holistic advice in a place they are comfortable visiting. We will seek to ensure that this work is targeted to the priority families and where possible linked in to wider family support work expanding on pilot work, sharing and spreading good practice. Providing funding to support partnership working and transformation of delivery, ensuring the service is holistic and meets people's needs.

We will also simplify our financial advice services funding streams, including funding for Citizens Advice Scotland, to enable a focus on outcomes rather than inputs, delivering joined up advice and support combining income maximisation and reducing household costs. This builds on the success of the Money Talk Team service, an investment of £5.4 million so far that has resulted in putting almost £42 million into the pockets of more than 19,600 people, including nearly £12 million in financial gains for over 3,300 low income families.

Since 2016, the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention & Adult Learning & Empowering Communities Fund (CYPFEI & ALEC Fund) has provided up to £16 million of vital support each year to around 120 third sector organisations, helping thousands of children, families and communities across Scotland. From April 2023 we will be introducing a new third sector fund which will replace the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. This fund will also provide up to £16 million for each of the next two financial years (2022/23 and 2023/24) in funding for third sector organisations supporting organisations who work with children and families to ensure that sustained, high quality support is available. We have embedded The Promise as one of the main focuses and key policy priorities within this Fund by way of supporting organisations who are providing services to care experienced young people and their families.

Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan

The Second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 2022-2026 was published in March 2022. The plan outlines the transformational actions Scotland will take alongside our delivery partners to tackle child poverty.

The plan focusses on impacting the three drivers of tackling child poverty: supporting families to increase their income from employment; reduce their household costs; and increase their income from social security and benefits in kind.

Underpinning these actions is a focus on provision of wrap around holistic person centred support to families – providing the right support at the right time – with a focus on the 6 priority families types most at risk of child poverty. By using a pathfinder approach, working locally with all partners to identify and overcome barriers to delivering effective child poverty interventions, we will enable our partners across the public, private and third sector to align services to make them work for people who need it most.

Tackling child poverty and Keeping The Promise are two interconnected commitments – both require a system change, and a partnership approach to getting services to work better together to deliver outcomes for children and their families. The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026 sets out an approach to local integration that aims to improve outcomes for families, informs local Children's Services Planning and should be a central part of Keeping The Promise.

In implementing the Plan we will take a place based approach, we will work with a wide range of partners to identify barriers to tackling child poverty and test ways of overcoming these barriers.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We have an ambition that at least 5% of all community based health and social care spend will be invested in preventative whole family support measures by 2030.** At current levels of investment we estimate that this will mean that by 2030 around £500 million per year will be redirected into preventative activity that will support our families.
- **We will invest £500 million over the course of this Parliamentary session, beginning with £50 million in financial year 2022-23, in preventative spend through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.** This will deliver transformational change and service re-design in the delivery of whole family support. It will enable the building of universal, holistic support services, available in communities across Scotland, giving families access to the help they need, where and when they need it.
 - We will continue to support early intervention through investing in The Promise Partnership Fund until 2024-25 ensuring alignment with the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund
 - We will continue to ensure alignment to our Tackling Child Poverty goals and that this transformational change delivers the person centred family support needed to tackle child poverty
- **We will set a Recommended National Allowance for foster and kinship allowances.** This investment will mean that no matter which area of Scotland children are living in, their caregivers will receive at least the Scottish Recommended Allowance to care for them.
- **We will support family wellbeing by supporting the costs of living and ensuring access to advice for those who need it, including:**
 - We are making £197 million available in the year ahead to support the doubling of the Scottish Child Payment, to £20 per week per child from April and will further increase it to £25 by the end of 2022 when the roll out to 6-15 year olds takes place
 - We will publish our plan setting out how we will end the need for foodbanks, in Spring 2022
 - We will continue to provide help with housing costs for those most in need through the Discretionary Housing Payment and will put in place measures to mitigate the UK Governments benefit cap as fully as we can within the scope of devolved powers
 - We will invest £10 million over the Parliament to increase access to advice services in accessible settings through Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships, other health settings and community hubs and education settings giving people the opportunity to access holistic advice in a place they are comfortable visiting

Chapter 2

Supporting Families To Stay Together Where That Is Safe

In adopting a holistic approach to change we understand that we must adopt a person centred approach. In our commitment to support our families we must ensure that our intervention in people's lives respects the relationships and networks that matter to them. This may include families of origin, kinship, foster and adoptive families. Our systems of support must not be directed by the setting of care but the people and the connections that matter to the child.

In adopting a preventative approach, removing the risk of engagement with our care services must be at the heart of our actions. Where engagement with services is necessary it should be a positive experience. It should be focussed on the needs of those it is there to support and its fundamental aim must be to help families to stay together where it is safe for them to do so.

In this regard the services and support networks that we provide must:

- Support our children, young people, adults and families who are care experienced, recognising that experience of care has an effect on people throughout their lives;
- Support our children, young people, adults and families who we know are at risk of being taken into care, recognising that the right support at the right times will help keep families together and avoid the need for care;
- Support all of our children, young people, adults and families, recognising that if we get the services that everyone uses right then the level of engagement with the care system will be reduced.

The role of local Children's Services Planning Partnerships are key to collaborative and cross boundary approaches to improve outcomes for all children, young people and families, and for those with particular needs such as our care experienced people. These partnerships have a fundamental role in the delivery of whole family wellbeing support.

Providing wrap around person centred support means adopting a No Wrong Door approach. A non-stigmatising experience that is seamless and relationship based rather than families being referred on to different services. This will look different in each area of support, and is about how services join up behind the scenes and adopt a culture of taking a whole family approach to their interaction with every person. In some cases this will look and feel like a lead professional drawing in a multi-disciplinary team (for example, education, addiction, mental health, housing, social security or justice specialists) to work with a child and their family to respond to the particular needs of the family, whatever they are for as long as they need it.

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, underlines the importance of assessing the impact of all structural factors including poverty and poor housing as part of all care and protection planning, supporting more holistic approaches that reduce stressors in families and communities to help reduce the risk of harm to children. We will support local areas to implement the National Guidance and implement practice that places children and young people's experience, needs, wishes and feelings at the centre of decision making, builds on strengths as well as addressing risk and focuses on working in partnership with families and communities. This will achieve a necessary shift that supports the least intrusive and most supportive levels of intervention at all stages.

This is of course not just an urban issue and understanding the rural and island dimension of The Promise is very important. The needs of our care experienced people in these communities may not be as well understood as they are in more urban settings. This calls for a set of distinct actions to support the rural dimension and we will continue to work with NHS Boards, local authorities and Health and Social Care

Partnerships to ensure that there is fair, accessible health and social care for those on islands, as set out in our **National Islands Plan** (2019). We will also continue to identify and promote good practice to enable the improvement of services in rural Scotland and across Scotland's islands.

Understanding Trauma

As The Promise emphasises, babies, children and young people need loving, supportive, nurturing and safe relationships to thrive. Adverse and traumatic experiences in childhood can impact on children's healthy development and their learning, and this can have long lasting negative consequences into adulthood.

Over recent years there has been increasing awareness of the evidence about the impacts of trauma and adversity, including studies that have informed us more about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). There is also increasing understanding about the importance of relationships, positive childhood experiences, and trauma-informed approaches for supporting resilience and recovery. Negative long term impacts are not inevitable. Many children and young people who experience adversity and trauma will recover, drawing on their own resources and support from others.

The Promise highlights ways in which adverse and traumatic experiences also result from the way that systems and services operate. For example, it heard from children and young people about the trauma of being taken into and growing up in the care system, including experiences of being separated from siblings and moving homes several times. In addition, it detailed experiences of trauma being exacerbated by having to tell and retell experiences or punishment for challenging behaviour, rather than support for trauma.

Multiple factors play important roles in determining how children and young people react to adverse experiences, including the type and severity of the event(s), their existing attachment to trusted adults, and the wider systems and

support available. Economic and social conditions influence the level of trauma experienced and capacity for recovery.

Poverty is a significant contributor to stress and potential to develop harmful coping mechanisms, and can increase the risk of abuse and neglect. We know that a disproportionate number of our care experienced families live in our poorest and most disadvantaged areas and we also know that there is a clear trend in the rates of children subject to formal child welfare interventions (such as child protection registration, criminal or children's hearings proceedings, or becoming looked after) with children in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods being 20 times more likely to be subject to these interventions than those living in the least deprived. It is important therefore that the package of support that is in place to help ensure families stay together is holistic and recognises the health, financial, place and mental health challenges that face our care experienced people. Implementing our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan has a crucial part to play in this, supporting families to increase their incomes and exit poverty.

Our commitment to prevent and mitigate ACEs and childhood trauma is critically inter-related with the wide range of actions underway on children's rights, the national GIRFEC approach, delivery of holistic family support and children's health, wellbeing and learning. In turn a trauma-informed approach across all of these actions is crucial and we are working to embed knowledge and understanding of trauma across workforces, services, organisations and systems.

Taking a holistic approach to whole family support will play a key part in reducing the trauma experienced in the lives of our children and young people. Understanding the evidence about the impact that childhood trauma can have sets the context for a number of the initiatives and actions set out in this and the following chapters. Further detail on specific actions that we will take to further progress trauma informed care are set out in Chapter 15.

Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences

The terms ‘*trauma*’ or ‘*psychological trauma*’ refer to a wide-range of traumatic, abusive or neglectful events or series of events that are experienced as being emotionally or physically harmful or life threatening by children or adults and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing. Essentially, psychological trauma is understood in terms of the 3 **E**’s: the **e**vent, how it is **e**xperienced, and its **e**ffects.

The term ‘*adverse childhood experiences*’ (ACEs) was originally developed from a survey carried out in the US in the 1990s which found a relationship between adverse experiences in childhood and later health and wellbeing in adulthood. Not all ACEs cause *trauma*. Trauma occurs when a child experiences this adversity as extremely harmful or threatening.

Sometimes the term ‘ACEs’ is used to refer to a particular sub-set of experiences commonly measured in ACE surveys, however others use the term to refer to a broad range of adverse experiences. The Scottish Government use the term ‘ACEs’ broadly and interchangeably with ‘adversity’ to refer to the wide range of adverse experiences which can negatively impact on children’s healthy development; including the experiences commonly included in ACE population surveys, as well as many other experiences (e.g. bullying, bereavement, coercive control, homelessness and community violence).

It is important to emphasise that while ACEs and childhood trauma can increase risks of poorer health and wellbeing, this is not inevitable. Support and trusted relationships are crucial for enabling children and young people to feel connected and to recover.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Whole Family Approach to Drug and Alcohol Support

There is significant research that demonstrates the pervasive impact and relationship between substance use, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse and likelihood of children being removed from the care of their parents. Families experiencing these issues must be supported with flexible, creative services and relationships. This is emphasised further by The Promise which tells us that our care experienced children and young people are almost twice as likely to moderately use dependency at age 16.

Protecting children and young people from the negative effects of dependency will help create better conditions for them to realise their full potential. Alcohol or drug dependency impacts on the individual, their family and friends. Actions to ensure access to the best treatment and support for problem substance use will prevent some of the harm it subsequently causes to our children and the relationships within our families.

Through our whole family approach to drug and alcohol services we will take an inclusive approach to support anyone who has been harmed by a loved one’s drug or alcohol use (including children, young people and adults). We will ensure better health and positive employment outcomes for parents, carers and guardians and by reducing consumption and alcohol dependency in Scotland we will help to create more resilient, cohesive and successful communities.

Our framework *Improving Holistic Family Support: Towards a Whole Family Approach and Family Inclusive Practice in Drug and Alcohol Services* published in December 2021, provides a definition of the Whole Family Approach and Family Inclusive Practice in order to help shape, develop and/or redesign services at the local and national level. Focusing on the issues specifically faced by families affected by drug or alcohol use, this Framework directly recognises the importance of keeping families together and the role this can play in Keeping The Promise.

National Family Residential Rehabilitation Service

Last year the Minister for Drugs Policy announced that Phoenix Futures had been successful in their application to the National Drugs Mission Recovery Fund for funding of almost £9 million over five years.

This funding will support the establishment of a new national specialist family service for women to access residential rehabilitation for their drug or alcohol problem alongside their children. This is based on an existing facility run by the organisation in Sheffield, and will offer a family focused programme of intervention for up to 20 families at any one time.

Phoenix Futures aim to open the National Family Service in Summer 2022 and this unique programme of interventions will benefit each member of the family and the family unit as a whole.

Our whole family approach to drug and alcohol services is supported by Scottish Government annual investment of £3.5 million over the next 5 years. Additional funding such as the £3 million **Children and Families Fund** administered through the Corra Foundation, is in place to improve support for children, young people and families impacted by drug use, and ensure all children, young people and families have access to services.

Whole Family Approach to Children & Young People's Mental Health

The mental health of our children, young people and their families is at the fore of our thinking as we transition and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights is crucial, both in terms of how we support good mental wellbeing, and how we provide the right help and support.

The Promise heard directly from young people who were detained for lengthy periods under the age of 18 in hospital settings through mental health legislation. In some cases, that detention went on for many years. The Promise is clear that Scotland must ensure that there is timely access to mental health support before crisis point, and this principle is key to our programme of work to improve child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing services.

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Joint Delivery Board is our mechanism for overseeing the cohesive and equitable approach to mental health for all children across Scotland that is required. The Board is overseeing a set of reforms designed to ensure children and young people receive the support they need when they need it, including:

- an additional £15 million to local authorities to fund over 230 new and enhanced supports and services for children and young people aged 5-24 in the communities; and an additional £15 million will be provided in 2022/23 to fund the continuation of these services.
- ensuring crisis support is available 24/7 to children and young people, filling any gaps that exist in telephone and text crisis services for 5-24 year olds their families and carers.
- supporting mental health pathways and services for vulnerable children and young people. Aligned to the work of The Promise, these pathways will ensure that support is available and accessible to those who need it, at the right time. This will also work to ensure there are no gaps in provision of mental health support.
- a further £120 million of funding through the Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund to transform services, with a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention, including £40 million to ensure Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are available, responsive, effective and equitable,
- work with Children's Services Planning Partnerships in support of their key role in leading whole systems delivery of local services and supports aimed at improving mental health and mental wellbeing outcomes for children, young people and families.

- joint work to support mental health in schools digital resource, school and further and higher education counselling services and whole school approaches to mental health, to continue to address the spectrum of mental health and wellbeing needs set out in the Mental Health COVID Transition and Recovery Plan.

Infant Mental Health

Infant mental health refers to the social and emotional development of a child from birth to age three years. This includes their capacity to express and regulate their emotions, begin to form relationships, and explore their environment.

We know that looking after the health and wellbeing of new parents is vitally important both for them and their children and can contribute to breaking the cycle of poor outcomes from early mental health adversity. The importance of a trusting, secure and reliable relationship with parents or main caregivers is very important in development.

Infants can recognise these qualities from an early age through the way they are held, talked to, touched, and cared for. These early interactions during the first weeks, months and years of life are very important and prepare the way for strong, healthy social and emotional health and wellbeing throughout a person's life.

Our **Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board 2020-2021**, has set out its commitment to Keep The Promise by ensuring its work is:

- informed by lived experience at a strategic and operational level with family members being meaningfully involved in decision-making
- supports positive relationships within families and creating opportunities for positive relationships where it is not possible for children to stay with their families

- actively supports the development of relationships within families and with the community and professional systems involved, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision making and care
- is accompanied by responsive help, support and accountability to enable support to be accessed and utilised to its fullest potential

We are also working through our Infant Mental Health Implementation and Advisory Group to develop a model of infant mental health provision across Scotland to meet the needs of families experiencing significant adversity, including infant developmental difficulties, perinatal mental illness, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and trauma. The rights of all infants are at the heart of this work, but it is rooted within the context of The Promise and seeks to ensure that infants' mental health and relationship needs are recognised and respected across all the different circumstances experienced by families.

Infant Mental Health services

We are currently rolling out Infant Mental Health services across Scotland and each Health Board now has an Executive Lead responsible for the delivery of Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services. We have committed £3 million of funding per annum to continue the roll out of existing and developing infant mental health provision, and to embed infant mental health focused work in Health Boards.

The vision for the roll out of services in Scotland is for parents and carers to feel supported to build positive relationships with their babies. Service development is ongoing with the aim of building provision where concerns may be identified, offering early intervention, with universal service providers being able to access specialist services via clear care pathways so that babies and their families receive the right care at the right time from universal, and if necessary, specialist services.

We have developed a suite of Infant Mental Health focused content on the **Parent Club** website on a set of pages called **Wellbeing for Wee Ones**. This resource recognises the pressure that having a baby or toddler brings and provides support and advice on dealing with a number of things including sleepless nights, feeding and keeping them warm and comfortable. In addition, the resource informs parents and carers that it's never too early to start supporting their baby's emotional wellbeing, and that even little things that they can do as part of their normal routine can make a big impact.

The need for this focus to continue as children grow is of course important. We will continue to work with partners to consider what support is currently available and to set out recommendations for what is required in the future to support the mental health and wellbeing of 3 to 5 year olds across Scotland.

From a whole population perspective, we have made the **Solihull Online** programmes accessible to every parent across Scotland, providing evidence based information on relationships and child development all the way through to 18 years. This provides parents, carers and practitioners with insights on attachment, relationships and emotional wellbeing

Supporting Disabled Children and Young People

Bringing up, and caring for, a disabled child can and should be a positive and rewarding experience. It is critical that disabled children are provided with the right support to achieve their full potential, and that their families are supported at an early stage to enable them to cope with the stresses and demands of their caring role, and to look after their own health and wellbeing.

Self-directed support describes the mainstream approach by which all social care must be delivered in Scotland. It aims to give families more choice and control over the support they receive, and is grounded in the human rights principles of autonomy, self-determination, dignity and respect.

By giving families greater choice and control over their support, the self-directed approach is designed to ensure that what matters to the child is central to every decision made.

In March 2021 we published a **framework of standards** to ensure consistency of outcomes and approaches in self-directed support practice across Scotland. We are also currently reviewing the statutory guidance which accompanies the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 in order to reflect learning and developments since the legislation was introduced and to ensure services are delivered flexibly in a way that reflects the specific situations of everyone who receives SDS.

Keeping Our Children Safe

As part of our focus on keeping families together and keeping our children within the network that they know and love, it is of vital importance that we continue to place the needs of our children first. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requires a clear unified approach to protecting children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and supporting parents, families and carers.

Scotland's approach to supporting and protecting children is consistent with this principle: being increasingly rooted in accessible and responsive universal services and a holistic, proportionate approach to statutory intervention which acknowledges that the creative expertise of the third sector will often be key to reducing risk without stigmatising families.

We recently updated the **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland**. The Guidance outlines the continuum of support for all children, from universal support through to protection from significant harm, underlining that the wellbeing and safety of children are indivisibly connected. There is a clear articulation of the importance of GIRFEC to protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time.

Whilst the Guidance is aligned with the current context in which practitioners are working, it is also consistent with the ambitions of The Promise and anticipates and prepares for the changes in the years ahead. This includes a greater emphasis on ensuring that a child's views are taken into account in all decision-making that affects them and supporting practice that recognises and builds on strengths as well as addressing risk by working in partnership with families and communities. This is a necessary shift in practice that supports the least intrusive and most supportive levels of intervention at all stages.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

Preventing and responding early to adversity and trauma is central to our long-standing, national approach of Getting it right for every child. GIRFEC provides a consistent and shared way for everyone who works with children, young people and their parents to identify and meet wellbeing and developmental needs.

The GIRFEC approach ensures that if and when additional help or support is needed, this will be provided quickly through a clear and trusted point of contact who can provide initial support, a holistic consideration of needs and referral for wider coordination of support if needed.

It means working with the child, young person or the family at the centre, and in the context of the child or young person's whole wellbeing, their family and world. Effective planning includes the child, young person and family to ensure a shared understanding of the planned supports.

The shared model and language enables children, young people, parents and practitioners to work across services so that support is joined up and streamlined.

The Scottish Government is strongly committed to GIRFEC and is updating Policy and Practice Guidance to provide organisations and practitioners with confidence and clarity to continue to deliver this approach.

Growing Up

In recognising that providing holistic support must extend from pre-birth and across all stages of parenthood, our preventative health services play a key role in minimising the risk of babies and children becoming care experienced. This includes breaking intergenerational cycles of poor outcomes and harm, alongside the wider role of supporting all families to improve their health and wellbeing and that of their child. This is particularly true in the earliest years of life where universal health services are key to identifying potential harm and taking steps to intervene, due to their unique relationship with all families and the window for change that life stage presents, particularly for first time parents.

- Every family in Scotland has access to preventative health services, which offer universal prevention, health promotion, and early intervention to families with young children. Available from pregnancy through to 5 years (school entry), with a scale of intensity proportionate to need,
- The Best Start programme for maternal and neonatal services in Scotland which provides a continuity of carer for women with the most complex needs, developing trusting relationships throughout their pregnancy and birth.
- Through the Family Nurse Partnership programme, young, first time mothers aged 19 and under (and 20-24 in some areas, based on additional need) are entitled to support. We know that younger mothers are more likely to be care experienced or transitioning through care and the targeted home visiting programme building strong relationships with families, starting before the baby is born, provides intensive, relational based support to young mothers across Scotland.
- Ensuring that all care experienced children receive a health assessment, within 28 days of the Health Board being notified. Any ongoing care and treatment which is identified is an

important first step in the support relationship and we are working with stakeholders to improve the consistency and quality of this initial assessment. We continue to work across the health service to identify who is best placed to carry out these assessments, and to refresh the guidance to support any gaps in implementation.

- To help support young mothers, and recognising that around 50% of mothers who have repeat child removal have had their first child at a very young age, we have published guidance for schools on how to support young pregnant women/young parents to stay in school; and guidance on Key Messages for Young People on Healthy Relationships and Consent. We are currently working with experts to develop guidance for children under 12, to help them have happy, consensual relationships and to help keep them safe from and to be able to identify abuse.
- Our ongoing support to every family across Scotland is continued through our national and universal programmes designed to give children the best possible start, including Baby Box; Bookbug; and our targeted PlayTalkRead programme, supporting parents and carers to develop positive relationships, form attachment and bond with their child from day one.
- Ensuring the Universal Health Visitor Pathway is embedded and delivered in all Health Boards for children under 5 to deliver person centred care proportionate to need; and supporting the role of school nurses in improving health outcomes for school aged children and young people up to 18 years of age as they transition through school.
- Play and the developmental benefits that come from social interaction and the importance of access to community facilities is recognised by The Promise. In this regard, delivering on children's right to play and building on our play strategy, we will deliver on our commitment to invest £60 million in renewing play parks across Scotland to ensure that all children have access to quality play in their own community.

Access to Early Learning & Childcare

High quality Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) promotes longer term benefits for children and young people, offering them the best possible start in life. Our programme of support is designed to improve children's development and narrow the poverty-related attainment gap; support more parents to have the opportunity to take up work, training or study; and ensure that family wellbeing improves through enhanced nurture and support.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ensures our children in care are able to access funded early learning and childcare from age two. From August 2021, eligibility for the provision of funded early learning and childcare was expanded to include children of care experienced parents and importantly, once a child qualifies for early learning and childcare, they stay qualified.

Building on what we have learned from the 1140 programme for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds, our work to develop our funded offers of early learning and childcare for children aged 1 and 2 (starting with low-income households within this Parliamentary session) will be strongly aligned to whole family wellbeing and holistic family support.

We continue to work to maximise uptake of the existing offer of funded ELC for eligible 2 year olds through work with partners, including considering where we can adapt the offer and who can access it. We are also working to embed learning from the roll out of the **Equity and Excellence Leads** roles and from our investment in the **Family Learning Scotland Programme** to maximise opportunities to create time and space to develop trusted relationships with families.

Mentoring For Children At Home

We continue to fund the intandem mentoring programme £750,000 each year to provide mentoring support to care experienced children and young people living at home aged 8-14. intandem provide children with a crucial long term relationship with a positive adult role model, particularly in relation to improving their mental and emotional wellbeing. The programme enables children to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem, improve their social relationships, reduce isolation and engage with the local community

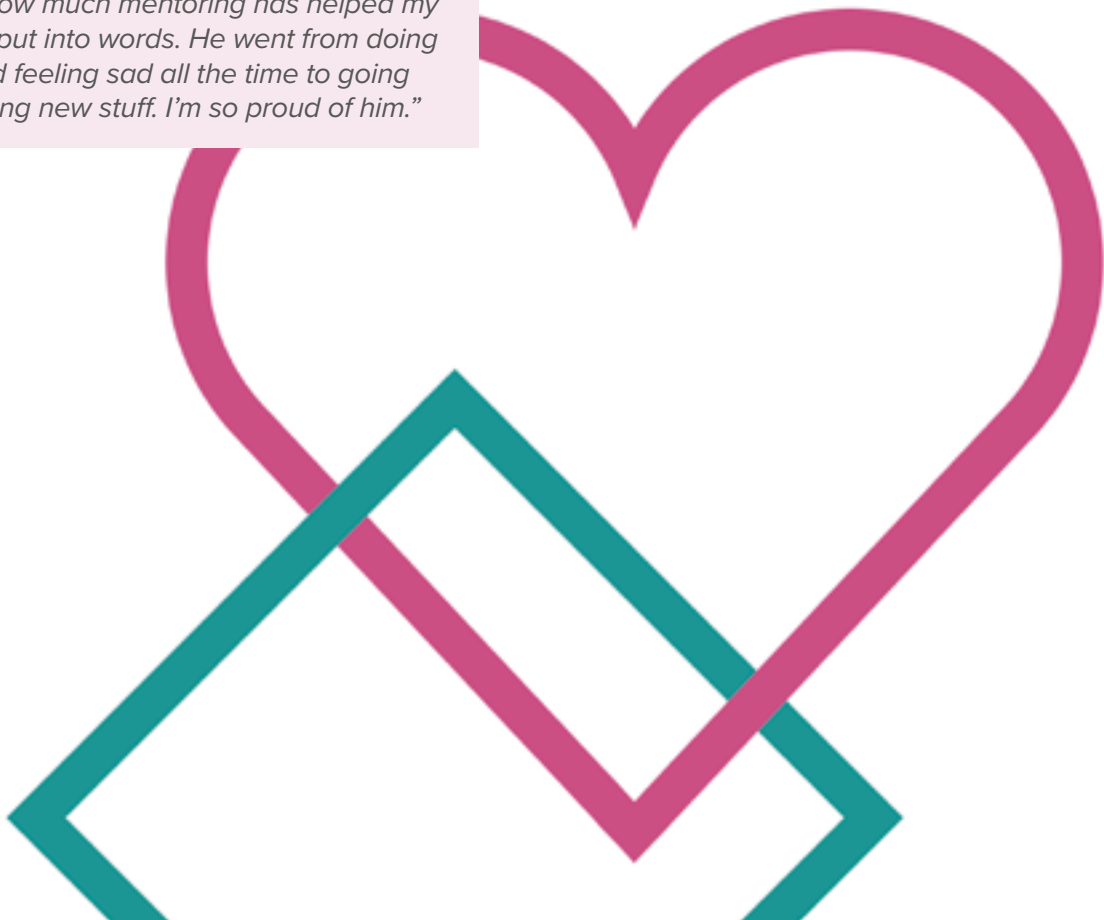
We are currently exploring how we could work with intandem to extend this offer to children and young people with care experience who are living away from home. Of the support provided a 12 year old mentee said *"My confidence has increased; I'm not shy anymore and I can stand up for myself"*

Another mentee's mum said: *"I want to tell everyone how much mentoring has helped my boy. I can't put into words. He went from doing nothing and feeling sad all the time to going out and trying new stuff. I'm so proud of him."*

Wrap Around Support

As well as pre-school support, we know that school age childcare services play a vital role in enabling parents and carers to access work, addressing economic and social exclusion, and providing improved outcomes for children. That is why we will build a system of wraparound childcare by the end of this Parliament, providing care before and after school, all year round, and supporting parents to have secure and stable employment.

This wrap around support will be free to families on the lowest incomes and in designing what this looks like we will engage with care experienced young people to ensure that the new system meets their needs, as well as those of the six priority groups set out in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.





Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will take a Whole Family Approach across our key policy areas including:**
 - a Whole Family Approach to drug and alcohol services including direct investment of £3.5 million over the next 5 years
 - a Whole Family Approach to children and young people's mental health including £3 million of funding to Health Boards to support Infant Mental Health

- **We will continue our work with Children's Services Planning Partnerships and the Kinship Care Collaborative to improve delivery of holistic whole family support including through our work to:**
 - support pregnancy and maternal health and development through implementation of the guidance for schools on how to support young pregnant women/young parents to stay in school; and guidance on Healthy Relationships and consent
 - continue to support families through preventative health and care programmes, including maternity service, Family Nurse Partnership and health visiting, and initiatives designed for families and early years including: Baby Box and Play, Talk, Read
 - support families to access employment or education through provision of early years childcare; and increase financial assistance through doubling of the Scottish Child Payment and further increasing it to £25 by end 2022 when roll out to 6 – 15 year olds takes place
 - support programmes like Intandem that provide direct support to children and families who are looked after at home

- **We will work to expand funded early learning and childcare for children aged 1 and 2, starting with low-income households within this Parliament.** We will ensure that the needs of care experienced children are at the heart of how we design that offer, and we will continue to work closely with local authorities to ensure that the 1140 hours of high quality child care that is already available to two, three and four year olds meets their needs.

- **We will build a system of wraparound school age childcare, offering care before and after school and in the holidays, which will be free to families on the lowest incomes.** In the coming year we will engage people and communities – including children and young people – in designing options for this, and publish a 5 year delivery plan. As part of this we will engage with care experienced young people to ensure that the new system meets their needs, as well as those of the six priority groups set out in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

Chapter 3

Delivering An Education System That Supports Our Care Experienced Children And Young People

Our educational settings play a key role in supporting our families and communities, providing places, opportunities and relationships that can enrich the lives of children. However, we know that children and young people who are care experienced are likely to have lower attendance, are more likely to experience exclusion and are less likely to achieve qualifications than other children. We must work together to change this.

Although education outcomes for looked after children have improved over the last ten years, only 38% of looked after children left school with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 5 compared to 86% of all pupils in 2019/20⁶. In addition to this, young people are more likely to have challenges in building sustained relationships with peers and the adults that work with them. It is important therefore that relationship based approaches, which have been established to be beneficial to children and young people, are used to maximum effect.

In line with Scotland's commitment to **Getting it right for every child** and the UNCRC, all children have a right to play, to learn and to access experiences that meet their physical, social, emotional and cultural needs. We have the benefit of curriculum guidance which spans both the early learning and childcare sector and the early stages of primary school.

Adopting a holistic approach to education, in May 2022 we will publish The Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland. This strategy is being developed to help tackle the wider structural and social inequalities that impact families' abilities to stay together and thrive. It will increase the availability of, access to and support for family learning, encouraging families to learn together and helping adults learn how to support their children's learning.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Creating The Conditions For Change

Raising awareness about our shared commitment to Keep The Promise across the education system is important in creating the conditions and implementing our actions for change. Working with Education Scotland we are undertaking a Programme of Awareness raising through the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, Regional Improvement Collaborative Leadership Teams, the Family Learning Network, the Virtual Schools and Head Teachers Network, and local authority Head Teacher Development Days. This is to ensure the messages and actions for change set out in The Promise are understood and engagement on implementation can be progressed across all levels

Improving educational outcomes involves collaboration across a wider range of statutory, third sector and private sector services and organisations. Each area's Children's Services Plan⁷ sets out how local partners work together to design and deliver learning experiences which positively impact on wellbeing, and lead to improved outcomes for children, young people and families.

To help achieve better outcomes there is a need to declutter the confusing landscape of action plans and legislative changes to ensure that there is impact in every learning environment. Education Scotland are working across the wider education system to identify the actions required for practitioners, settings and local authorities to implement The Promise, the Additional Support

⁶ Scottish Government, **Supporting documents – Education Outcomes for Looked After Children – 2019/20** – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

⁷ Children's services planning: guidance – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

for Learning Implementation Review⁸, and incorporation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, within the framework of the getting it right for every child.

In addition, we have initiated an ambitious programme of education reform to build trust and transform and accelerate educational improvement and delivery at national, regional and local level. Professor Ken Muir has submitted his report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on reform to national education bodies⁹ and the Scottish Government has set out its response¹⁰. The needs of care experienced pupils will be considered as part of the significant programme of education reform.

Removing Barriers

Relationship building is key to understanding needs and providing the correct support for each of our care experienced children and young people. The Promise identifies that to be able to do this our health, education and early years settings require an improved understanding of who the care experienced children and young people are that they are working with.

In practice this requires working with relationship-based and nurture approaches, with an understanding of the ways that trauma can impact on children and young people's development and wellbeing. This involves working in consultation with the child or young person and taking all reasonable steps to understand what is going on in that child's life and how current and past life experiences may influence relationships.

In exploring this further it is essential that a balance between privacy and utility is struck to ensure any changes to information sharing

are done in the correct way and the wants of the children and young people concerned are respected. Planned work to improve information sharing is discussed further in Chapter 13.

Education Scotland are developing two resources to support Relationship based approaches across the educational workforce.

- Promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings and
- Restorative approaches to support positive relationships and behaviour.

These resources are designed to support an informed level of practice and will be accessible to a wide range of practitioners. Work has begun to share with other services, such as, Children's Hearings Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Police, and Community Learning and development to promote shared values and language across all services supporting children and young people.

Alongside this, Education Scotland, working in partnership, have developed a National Improvement Hub of resources to increase awareness for practitioners on how to support children and young people on the edges of care, in care and those at risk of being criminalised.

Education Scotland has also supported Scottish Government in reviewing reports from local authorities on the use of the Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund. From these reviews information about interventions and approaches used, measures and planned impact, and thinking about data mapping and collection has been fed back annually into the wider education system. A series of engagement events are underway through the Regional Improvement Collaboratives¹¹ to explore and promote further ways to improve service integration and multi-agency working and the impact of this funding.

8 Additional support for learning – Schools – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

9 Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

10 Putting learners at the centre: response to the independent advisor on education reform's report – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

11 Regional Improvement Collaboratives are six regional collective groupings of education authorities to enable consideration and plans for improvement of education services within regional areas.

Supporting School Attendance and Addressing Exclusion

The Promise tell us that our care experienced children and young people are two and a half times more likely to be excluded from school up to age 16; and one and a half times more likely to have unauthorised absences at school at 16.

Regular and sustained attendance at school can be challenging especially where there may be difficulties at home, there may be pressures with peers or where regular changes in school make relationship building and familiarity difficult. The Promise tells us that in being ambitious for achievement and opportunity we must recognise that schools provide an important place for our care experienced children and young people to enjoy stable, nurturing relationships that prepare them for life beyond school.

Our national guidance, *Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2*¹², is already clear that exclusion should be used as a measure of last resort and that there are particular considerations before the exclusion of care experienced young people. In working towards the commitment to reduce inappropriate and unlawful exclusion, we will maintain and further embed our approach to relational approaches and promoting positive relationships and behaviour in order to ensure that the use of exclusion of care experienced pupils only takes place, when all other approaches have been exhausted.

We have engaged with the Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS), to discuss exclusion in the context of promoting positive relationships and behaviour in schools. We have sought examples of positive practice in reducing exclusion through inclusive and relational approaches in order to establish further effective practices. Nurture, relational approaches and consistent approaches to exclusion decisions have been identified as key features in authorities where these changes have been effective.

This work has identified patterns in reasons for exclusion and a programme of engagement with key establishments is to be undertaken over the course of this year to understand the underlying causes of exclusion in particular settings.

This national guidance, *Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2* also provides direction to education authorities in relation to physical intervention. Any incident where a decision is made to physically intervene within a school must be recorded and monitored. The guidance asks that each education authority include details of how this should be undertaken in their policy on de-escalation, physical intervention.

In response to the Children and Young People Commissioner's 2018 No Safe Place report, around the use of restraint in schools, the Scottish Government established the physical intervention working group. Since 2019, its aim has been to develop new human rights-based guidance to minimise the use of physical intervention, physical restraint and seclusion in schools. The scope of the new guidance includes all schools (education authority, independent, and grant-aided). New definitions and a standard dataset for recording and monitoring their use will be included in the guidance, which is currently being prepared for public consultation. This work aligns to ongoing work on use of restraint in residential and secure care settings discussed further in Chapter 9.

¹² *Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions* – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Supporting Attainment

Curriculum for Excellence 'early level' is intended to support the implementation of a responsive, continuous play-based curriculum for children aged three to six. The national practice guidance for this, **Realising the Ambition**, makes clear our focus must be on supporting children to form a secure and emotionally resilient attachment base which will stand them in good stead as they grow and develop. Nurturing and attached relationships are essential to creating the conditions for children to flourish.

With Kids Play Therapy Programme

Edinburgh City Council used some of their Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund in 20/21 on a *With Kids Play Therapy Programme*. Skilled play therapists worked in primary schools and provided therapeutic play interventions to individuals and in a small group setting.

With Kids also worked with families to support them to understand the impact of trauma, their relationship with their child and how they can use therapeutic strategies to support their child's development.

Whilst educational outcomes for our care experienced children and young people have improved over the last ten years, we know that large gaps remain compared with all learners. The percentage of care experienced school leavers achieving all SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) qualification levels is consistently lower than all school leavers. We also know that differences exist between the different types of care settings, with young people in foster and kinship care having better outcomes, relative to those living in other placements.

The Scottish Mentoring & Leadership Programme

The Scottish Mentoring & Leadership programme will reach up to 15,000 care experienced and disadvantaged young people across 300 schools over the next five years. As a core offering, the programme will see the MCR Pathways mentoring programme rolled out to schools that want it.

Evidence suggests the MCR mentoring model has demonstrable positive impact on young people's attendance, attainment and positive destinations. Columba 1400's values-based leadership programme will be offered to 2,400 of the young people who participate to put their voices at the heart of the change. The programme is about putting trusting relationships at the heart of the young people's journey to support them towards better outcomes and life chances. The programme is currently being rolled out across Scotland, initially targeting a number of priority local authority areas.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge Programme has a vital role to play in building upon the progress being made to tackle the poverty related attainment gap and support the children who need it most, especially our care experienced young people. Over the period to 2025/26 we will see around £11.5 million distributed each year to local authorities to further support attainment.

Through this commitment we aim to ensure every child has the same opportunity to succeed. To date, funding has supported a wide range of innovative interventions which have helped young people with their learning and wellbeing including mentoring programmes, outdoor learning and play activities and virtual head teacher.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. It is underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. It will also support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

Over the Parliamentary session to 2025/26 we will invest £1 billion through the Attainment Scotland Fund to support recovery from the pandemic and provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through funding to local authorities, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and a number of national programmes.

The next phase of the SAC has been developed in partnership with and agreed by COSLA and builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland **5 year report** on progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, the **Equity Audit**, the **Audit Scotland report** on educational outcomes, and the **OECD review**.

It will continue to provide support for children and young people impacted by poverty through funding to local authorities, Pupil Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People funding and a number of national programmes.

The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme, from 2022/23, will include:

- an investment of up to £200 million in 2022/2023 to support children and young people impacted by poverty
- continued empowerment of head teachers through Pupil Equity Funding as the primary model for distributing funding to the education system, with funding of approximately £130 million to be allocated to 97% of schools.
- a clearer and funded strategic role for all local authorities. Recognising the impact of poverty and the pandemic across every local authority area in Scotland, funding of over £43 million will be distributed to every local authority based on Children in Low Income Families Data.
- funding for Pupil Equity Funding and local authorities confirmed over 4 years to enable long term local planning
- continued support for care experienced children and young people, contributing to efforts across all services to Keep The Promise. This will see approximately £11.5 million to be distributed to local authorities, with allocations confirmed in May/June as usual.
- investment in national programmes to enhance supports across the system, supporting a range of national initiatives such as youth work and mentoring
- a clear framework to support recovery and accelerate progress, led by Education Scotland
- a broader recognition of children and young people's achievements and attainment through a refreshed mission: *to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.*

This will enable authorities and schools – working with their communities, a range of services and the third sector – to support education recovery, reduce variation and accelerate progress in tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

Virtual Head Teacher

Many local authorities have established a Virtual School Head Teacher or Care Experienced Team. These teams and roles have a specific focus within their local authority to bring about improvements in the education of care experienced children and young people and to promote their educational achievement as if they were in a single school. The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building but is an organisational tool which has been created for the effective co-ordination of support for this group at a strategic and operational level.

The implementation of a Virtual Head Teacher role in 17 local authorities in Scotland has ensured a strong continued focus on meeting the particular needs of care experienced children and young people and this will be extended to a further two local authorities as of April 2022

Supporting Access to Further & Higher Education

In delivering the Young Person's Guarantee via further and higher education we work closely with colleges, universities and their representative organisations to provide additional opportunities for learning, targeted at some of the most disadvantaged young people in our communities including care experienced young people. In addition, Skills Development Scotland offer enhanced contribution rates for Modern Apprentices up to the age of 29 for our care experienced young people.

To support learning and address potential unfairness in the system, our care experience people who meet the access threshold are now guaranteed offer of an undergraduate place at a Scottish University (excluding The Open University in Scotland as it has a different admissions system). From 2020-21, Higher Education Institutions have offered places (or, where necessary, invitations

to interview/audition) to all care experienced applicants if they meet the minimum entry requirements. This offer is based on an agreed definition of care experienced learner agreed with Universities Scotland and key partners in 2019.

In supporting access to education, we remain committed to the principle that access should be based on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay. As Corporate Parents we recognise that it is our duty to ensure our care experienced students are given equal opportunities to access and thrive in Further and Higher Education.

Based on evidence that those with care experience were less likely to enter Higher Education, in part, due to the prospect of incurring financial debt through taking out a student loan, the Care Experienced Bursary was introduced in 2017/18. This is a non-income assessed, non-repayable grant of £8,100 per year for eligible Scottish domiciled students in full-time Further or Higher Education at college or university and is available to students who have been in care by a Local Authority in the UK, before turning 18.

This group of learners may feel less able to rely on family for future financial support. The bursary is in recognition of these particular circumstances, which can present a barrier to further study for those with care experience. The policy intention is not only to remove the prospect of debt and provide living cost support, adding value to the existing support provided by local authorities, but also to act as an incentive for people with experience of care to enter Further or Higher Education.

We are committed to an ambitious programme of reform to our student support package over this Parliament session. We are committed that the total student support package reaches the equivalent of the Living Wage over the next three years, including for estranged students; we will also introduce a special support payment so that students on benefits do not lose out because they are in receipt of, or entitled to, student support; and we will undertake a review of postgraduate funding and take measures to halt student loan interest during maternity leave.

In line with our commitment to review the support provided to students during summer, the Student Awards Agency Scotland has developed their systems to enable Higher Education students, in receipt of the Care Experienced Students Bursary and any Student Awards Agency Scotland living cost grants (which are available to certain categories of students such as lone parents and those with dependants) the option of choosing between the existing term time payment cycle (generally 9 months) or a 12 monthly payment

cycle. This will spread payment of the £8,100 per year care experienced bursary over the summer vacation period. Applications open in April 2022.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme aims to provide financial support to 16 to 19 year-olds from low-income households. Within EMA, there are specific provisions, providing universal access to EMA for young people who are care experienced or care leavers.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will take a holistic approach to learning through The Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland, to be published in May 2022.**
- **We will create the conditions for change in our approach to education by raising awareness through**
 - engagement to raise the profile and understanding of The Promise within education settings
 - provision of resources to support relationship based approaches across the educational workforce including through the National Improvement Hub and support for working with Realising the Ambition
 - the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Review and incorporation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- **We will value and recognise the needs of care experienced pupils through**
 - review of the Care Experienced Children and Young People's Fund to understand the interventions and approaches to promote further ways to improve service integration and multi-agency working.
 - Provide access for every school aged child in Scotland to an appropriate digital device and connectivity by the end of this Parliamentary session
- **We will support attendance and reduce exclusion of care experienced children from education.**
- **We will support access to further and higher education for care experienced learners who may feel less able to rely on family support, including**
 - funding through programmes including the Care Experienced Bursary; the Education Maintenance Allowance;
 - delivering the Young Person's Guarantee;
 - commitment to offer a place at a Scottish University who meet the agreed minimum entry requirements
 - developing a pathway approach to allow those with a care experience to be identified from early years to post-school and on to employment to enable additional support, for example, a marker or a flag.

Chapter 4

Employability And Creating Opportunity

In creating a Scotland that is a fair and equal society, we must continue to create greater equity and opportunity for our care experienced young people and adults. We must continue to increase access to employment, training and support, all of which will, in turn, contribute to our ambitions on productivity growth and wellbeing.

The Promise tells us that our care experienced people are over three times as likely to have not had a full time job by age 26; and over one and a half times more likely to have financial difficulties. Care experienced school leavers are less likely to go on to positive destinations than school leavers in general, especially higher education, with 75% of looked after leavers going on to a positive follow-up destination in 2019/20, compared with 92% of all leavers.

As set out in Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, our vision for 2032 is to create a wellbeing economy: a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions. Our aim is to achieve a fairer and more equal society by reorienting our economy towards wellbeing and fair work, to deliver higher rates of employment and wage growth, to significantly reduce structural poverty, particularly child poverty, and improve health, cultural and social outcomes for disadvantaged families and communities.

Fair and sustainable employment can offer a route out of poverty for many families and we are committed to ensuring that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including young people, disabled people and those with care experience can access any additional support they need.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Fair Employment

In August 2021, the Living Hours Accreditation Scheme was launched in Scotland. It recognises that in addition to payment of the real Living Wage, the number and frequency of work hours are critical to tackling in-work poverty. Businesses looking for certification must meet nationally agreed standards and the new scheme will help to alleviate in work poverty and create more secure, sustainable and satisfying jobs.

On average care experienced adults earn three quarters of the salaries of their peers. In supporting the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Scheme we want everybody in Scotland to have an income that allows acceptable living standards and to this end we promote payment of the real Living Wage Rate of £9.90 per hour, to all employees aged 18 and above. This measure will target support to low income groups like our care experienced.

We are committed to commencing work to deliver a Minimum Income Guarantee in Scotland. This is an assurance that no one will fall below a set income level that would allow them to live a dignified life. We recognise that it will not be possible to deliver change overnight, but it is important to make step changes, using existing powers, within the shorter term. We have established a Steering Group to explore how this can be delivered within existing powers. Comprised of an independent expert group and a cross party strategy group this work will look at how a Minimum Income Guarantee should work for different priority households, including care experienced people and families. The Steering Group is due to present its initial report before the end of 2022.

Access and Support In Employment

The actions set out within this Implementation Plan are interconnected with those in our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022-2026). We know that a disproportionate number of our care experienced families live in our poorest and most disadvantaged areas, and are more likely to experience child poverty. We have therefore set out a number of key commitments in our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, to both meet our statutory targets and improve outcomes for the families that need it most. These commitments will aim to both reduce out of work poverty by supporting unemployed and inactive parents or carers into work; and reduce in-work poverty by supporting working parents to increase their wages or hours.

Employability support has a pivotal role in ensuring people who want to find and stay in fair and sustainable work and can achieve their potential. No One Left Behind is our approach to placing people of all ages at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services in Scotland. This holistic person centred approach is targeted at individuals including those who have experience of care and parents experiencing poverty, and for whom without additional support may struggle to access or sustain employment.

We will significantly increase investment in our No One Left Behind approach to support parents to access and progress in work through a new offer for parents experiencing poverty; which brings together a range of services and support – including employability, childcare, health, transport and family wellbeing, with the aim of reducing poverty by increasing household income through employment. The menu of support would be the same for every parent, but applied based on the need and circumstances of the individual parent/family.

We will also work to ensure that employability and skills support is matched with fair work opportunities, and will work in partnership with public, private and third sector employers to identify and overcome barriers to parental employment. This includes progressing fair work actions in low paid sectors.

In line with the Scottish Approach to Service Design, No One Left Behind puts the person at the heart of the process in a system that is more flexible and responsive to the changing labour market to deliver more holistic and localised services to those most disadvantaged in the labour market. This includes care experienced people as well as people with disability, people with convictions, single parents, minority ethnic people, and people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

A Lived Experience Panel was established in October 2020, which brought together users from groups likely to experience barriers to employment, including care experienced people. Through Lived Experience Panels, we have embedded user voice in the development of our National Products for No One Left Behind, providing consistency and local flexibility in the delivery of employment support services.

We are investing almost £24 million in 2022/23 in Fair Start Scotland (FSS), our first iteration of devolved employability provision. The person-centred approach to all Scottish Government funded employability delivery including Fair Start Scotland ensures people are treated with dignity and respect by providing flexible support, taking into account personal circumstances and removing barriers to accessing work.

Young Person's Guarantee

The Scottish Government and partners have developed the Young Person's Guarantee, which aims to connect every 16 to 24 year old to the opportunity of a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training programme or volunteering placement. We are providing up to £130 million, with the aim of supporting at least 24,000 new and enhanced opportunities for young people; this is further backed by up to £45 million in 2022/23. Over 500 employers have signed up to the Guarantee, offering in excess of 9,000 opportunities, many of which focus on care experienced young people, including those provided by Scottish Enterprise, Burness Paull LLP and Johnsons of Elgin.

Care experienced young people have been identified as a priority group, with support starting for many, whilst they are in school via Developing the Young Workforce and career information, advice and guidance services. The recent report from the **Career Review** and subsequent Scottish Government response, highlighted that *"in line with the Independent Care Review and The Promise, love and nurture should be at the heart of all career services delivered to care experienced young people with a focus on supporting them, as a parent would, to realise their full potential"*.

- The *Developing the Young Workforce* programme enhances provision for care experienced young people in schools. This includes via School Coordinators supporting every mainstream secondary school in Scotland and via our partnership with MCR Pathways and Career Ready, to provide mentors for young people across Scotland.
- Many *Local Employability Partnerships* are prioritising supported employment, education and training programmes for care experienced young people, which also includes strengthening the voice of care leavers in local service design. Employer Recruitment Incentives are available to support those furthest away from the labour market, including those who have been in the care system.
- The *Discovering Your Potential* employability programme provides flexible and intensive support for care leavers, who face multiple barriers to accessing positive destinations. Additional funding is provided to Inspiring Scotland to deliver *Our Future Now*, an employability programme aimed at vulnerable young people who are facing significant barriers, including those with care experience.

Since its launch in April 2018, there have been over 41,000 starts on the service, with over 14,000 people moving into work by 31 December 2021. The latest evaluation shows that 4% of participants in the third year of delivery (Apr 2020 – March 2021) were care experienced, and that by 31 March 2021, a total of 1,600 care experienced participants^{13[1]} had been supported.

We believe that access to high quality youth work opportunities helps young people to build positive, supportive relationships. Youth work helps to do this by providing the right level of support to young people, at the right time, by reliable, committed professionals and volunteers. In recognition of this, we are developing a Scottish Youth Work Strategy, where youth work outcomes are based on a foundation of trust, respect and values that puts each young person at the centre of their learning journey. The Youth Work Strategy is due to be published by November 2022.

13 ^[1] See: **Fair Start Scotland year three evaluation and annual reports: accompanying statistics – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)** for further details. These figures are updated annually.

Supporting Those Not In Work

Social Security Scotland recognises that every community includes people who experience communication difficulties. We know people who have experienced care are more likely than other people to have challenges with reading and writing related to adverse childhood experiences which have impacted on their school learning.

This is why we are working to implement communication inclusive approaches in everything we do within our social security system. For example, we make sure our written information uses everyday words in simple, straightforward sentences. This supports people who find reading a lot of text hard. Social Security Scotland continue to develop a set of quality standards and indicators against which we can judge our progress, and identify the practical actions we must take to become an inclusive service. In practice, this means finding out what helps a person to understand the information put to them, and how to then express their needs. For example, if a person with care experience tells us they prefer to talk to us about their needs we enable them to do this rather than requiring them to write things down.

Scotland's social security system has been designed and developed with people who have lived experience. A key mechanism through which this has been achieved is through Experience Panels that involved care experienced people, Kinship and foster carers to find out their experiences and needs of social security in Scotland. This work and the findings continues to feed into policy decisions and service design.

We are committed to continuing to consider the needs of care experienced children, young people and their families in the design and access to financial support. To achieve this, we continue to work collaboratively to ensure that kinship carers are able to access Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment, explicitly recognising their role in the legislation as well as ensuring the application process and evidence requirements are accessible and easy to understand.

Social Security Scotland Care Leavers Programme

Social Security Scotland is committed to offering career opportunities to care experienced young people. Three Care Leavers' Internships are now in their first year of working with Social Security Scotland and the second intake of placements are due to begin working this year. Training for managers to support care internship has also been delivered, in addition to a short-term mentoring programme introduced via Who Cares Scotland.

In 2019, Social Security Scotland published its first Corporate Parenting Plan. Updated in July 2021, the document sets out the approach the organisation will take to support care experienced people. This has been developed with support from three leading groups – Who Cares Scotland, the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare forum and the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection. The Plan focuses on access to and understanding of the benefits provided by Social Security Scotland, and provides continued mentoring, work experience and employment opportunities.

We are committed to increasing benefit take-up by ensuring people are aware of, and enabled to access, the financial support that they are eligible for and entitled to. Care experienced people are identified within our second Benefit Take-up Strategy, published in October 2021, as one of our Seldom Heard groups. Seldom Heard groups are likely to experience reduced access to, or take-up of, the Scottish benefits they are entitled to.

We will listen and act upon the views of those with lived experience of accessing the benefits system and equally of those that have not yet accessed the benefit system. To do this, we are currently expanding the membership of our Stakeholder Take-up Reference Group and going forward, we will engage with Who Cares? Scotland to make sure the voices of our Care Experienced population are represented in all future policy work.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will work to tackle child poverty by supporting parents as outlined in the Tackling Child Poverty Action Delivery Plan (2022-2026)**

 - We recognise that tackling child poverty and Keeping The Promise are two interconnected commitments which both require a system change and a partnership approach.
 - We are investing over £80 million in 2022/23 to support delivery of an offer to parents from the priority family groups; providing support tailored to their needs through a dedicated keyworker, including support to access childcare and transport and access to skills and training.
 - We will launch a £2 million Challenge Fund to test out new approaches to supporting parents into work.
 - It is also vital that people experiencing in-work poverty are able to access the training support they need in order to progress in work; and we are committed to delivering an ambitious lifetime upskilling and retraining offer that is easy, accessible and targeted at those who need it most.

- **We will improve access to employment for our care experienced people, treating people with dignity and respect by providing flexible support, taking into account personal circumstances and removing barriers to accessing employment by**

 - continuing to promote the Real Living Wage rate for all employees aged 18 or over through the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Scheme and the Scottish Living Hours Accreditation Scheme.
 - promoting fair work practices through public procurement policy and practice. By summer 2022, we will introduce a requirement on public sector grant recipients to pay at least the real living Wage to all employees.
 - we will invest £6 million through the Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), providing dedicated support for low income families; and also
 - continuing to work with the steering group to explore how to deliver a Minimum Income Guarantee

- **We will continue to adopt a Scottish Approach to employability through our No One Left Behind approach and**

 - continue to support care experienced young people through the Young Person's Guarantee, ensuring their voices are heard in the development of services
 - continue to support care leavers to access support through the Discovering Your Potential employability programme and wider initiatives delivered through the 3rd sector such as Our Future Now
 - support our disabled population to enter and progress within the labour market through implementation of *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan*
 - through our Corporate Parenting approach provide employability and apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people

- **We will support access to and understanding of the benefits provided by Social Security Scotland, and**

 - continue to support Kinship Care through the Best Start Grant Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment
 - provide continued mentoring, work experience and employment opportunities through the Social Security Corporate Parenting Plan
 - continue to work with our care experienced people to design our services and support access to and understanding of the benefits provided by Social Security Scotland; provide mentoring, work experience and employment opportunities

Chapter 5

Tackling Inequality & Supporting Our Communities

We know that the places we live, the communities we live within and the environment that surrounds us can have a profound impact on our lives. We know also that our most disadvantaged communities have higher levels of crime, poorer health outcomes and increased levels of alcohol and drug use. To make real changes that really make a difference we need to really understand the circumstances of people's lives. That means taking a person centred, place based approach which starts and ends with individual stories in real places.

Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. It is at the heart of addressing the needs and realising the full potential of communities. Places are shaped by the way resources, services and assets are directed and used by the people who live in and invest in them. In Keeping The Promise we must ensure we adopt a more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enables better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

The Place Principle

The Place Principle is the overarching context for place-based working in Scotland.

The Scottish Government and COSLA adopted the Place Principle to help overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, to encourage better collaboration and community involvement, and improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment.

Developed by partners in the public and private sectors, the third sector and communities, the Place Principle helps establish a clear vision for collaboration around place.

It promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to a place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities. The principle encourages and enables local flexibility to respond to issues and circumstances in different places. It helps partners and local communities unlock the National Performance Framework and make it applicable to where and how they live and work.



What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Improving Human Rights

A new Human Rights Bill will be introduced to Parliament during this parliamentary session. This Bill, which follows on from the work of the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership report, will incorporate four UN human rights treaties into Scots law, as far as possible within devolved competence, and provide for further rights.

As part of our lived experience work, we are developing an approach to ensure children and young people and the voices of our care experienced people are heard. Consideration of children's rights will be an important part of the development of the Human Rights Bill. Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, including children as well as adults.

The Bill will strengthen human rights protections and provide full and equal access to a range of internationally recognised human rights as far as possible to improve the lives of people in Scotland. A human-rights based approach to our public engagement continues to be a key aim in the development of the Bill. As part of that approach, we recognise that barriers to accessing human rights fall disproportionately on specific rights groups, including care experienced, so these groups will have a role at the heart of developing this Bill. Work is ongoing to launch a formal consultation that will be undertaken during 2022, with other forms of public participation running in parallel involving key stakeholder forums with a number of diverse groups, including care experienced.

Later in 2022, we will consult on a draft strategy for consultation to better mainstream equality, inclusion and human rights across Government and the wider public sector, which will look at how we improve leadership and accountability in this space, build greater policy coherence, strengthen capability and skills, and improve how

we centre evidence and lived experience in policy making. As part of this work, we are reviewing the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland, which guides public bodies on their legal obligations under the Equality Act to promote equality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without it. A consultation on this closes in April and we will undertake further engagement to inform updated regulations. Many of our care experienced young people have protected characteristics which will compound the inequalities they experience through being care experienced. So for both of these areas of work we will actively encourage input from care experienced young people's organisations to ensure their needs are reflected.

Supporting Social Inclusion

The Social Innovation Partnership (SIP) is a partnership with The Hunter Foundation and a number of social entrepreneurs set up in 2016 to test and scale innovative approaches to tackling poverty and inequality and to influence wider system reform. Through extracting learning from a range of SIP investments the SIP has developed a distinctive overarching wellbeing and capabilities approach that is about supporting people, including care experienced young people, to live flourishing lives based on what matters to them.

This approach recognises the importance of relational and flexible support rooted in personal wellbeing, human connections, a sense of belonging, and tailored access support that promotes positive destinations, including employability. Our learning partner, I-Sphere, has said the SIP 'represents an approach to public service delivery that is distinctive to Scotland and could have important lessons for policy and practice. By combining a focus on individual capabilities with a recognition of the importance of social connection, it has the potential to effect profound change in how public services respond to the impact of poverty on both individuals and their communities'. We will publish the initial findings from our learning partner by June 2022.

Going forward we will scale the SIP's wellbeing and capabilities approach at two key levels:

- Firstly by continuing to work with social entrepreneurs to test, scale and bring together innovative and person-centred approaches that support flourishing lives.
- Secondly, by working to remove systemic barriers that get in the way of delivering person-centred and relational approaches. The SIP already supports a small number of local authority partnership (Tayside Collaborative and the Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership) to help facilitate this. We plan to establish a further three such partnerships over the next four years.

Taking A Place Based Approach

The Place Principle and The Promise share common principles, particularly around listening to the voices of communities and responding holistically. This offers the opportunity to frame a more integrated approach to local transformation. Ensuring that all local decisions are made collaboratively, are relevant to the communities in that place, and are for the benefit of all the people who live there

We are committed, with COSLA, to delivering the Place Principle. This is an active 5 year programme to accelerate our policy ambitions through 20 minute neighbourhoods, community-led regeneration and town centre revitalisation. The scaffolding to deliver this includes:

- a £325 million Place Based Investment Programme designed to take a whole system approach to the use of resources for shared outcome;

- the Place Framework which sets out common questions to consider when determining local change; and
- the setting up of a Place Action Group which is addressing coordination across portfolios and localities.

Each area of Scotland has a Children's Services Plan, with the aim of safeguarding, supporting and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and families to improve outcomes. Delivery of the Place Principle is a key component of this work.

Improving The Places Where We Live

National Planning Framework 4, when adopted, will set out the Scottish Governments priorities and policies for the planning system up to 2045 and how our approach to planning and development will help to achieve a net zero, sustainable Scotland by 2045. This has been informed by mapped data showing the spatial distribution of children living in poverty and the spatial strategy aims to respond to this by creating better places and addressing concentrations of economic deprivation.

The Promise asks for a consistent, national approach to ensure there are places in every community for parents of young children to meet other local parents, to stay and play with their children, and get support and advice. In December 2021, we launched consultations on Open Space Strategies, Play Sufficiency Assessments and Local Development Plan Regulations which will benefit physical and cognitive development, and uphold children's right to engage in play and recreational activities as well as ensuring access to greenspace to ensure the best possible play experience.

The Place Standard Tool

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows you to think about the physical elements of a place (for example its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing communities to consider all the elements of a place in a methodical way. The tool pinpoints the assets of a place as well as areas where a place could improve.

The Place Standard tool empowers communities including children and young people in shaping the future of their places, helping to address issues such as child poverty, social isolation and wellbeing. A Children & Young People's Version is currently being piloted and will be launched in spring 2022. The Place Standard will support children and young people to collaborate and co-create person-centred communities with the wrap-around support that suits each unique local context. This approach will be pivotal in providing the support that people need, when they need it and will be of critical importance to our rural and island communities.

Health & Wellbeing

Place is important to health and wellbeing. Our Place and Wellbeing Programme includes a range of work focussed on supporting local level action. Bringing together public, private and third sectors, to jointly drive changes to reduce health inequalities within communities.

Through a focus on supporting local level actions and aligning national policy and legislation we are working with health and social care services to co-create wellbeing locally. We are focusing on two key areas for which we believe there is already momentum for change.

- **Anchors:** we will support our health and social care providers to become active 'anchor institutions' that help to prevent some causes of health inequalities by building wealth in their community.
- **Communities:** we will cultivate community-led health improvement activity and look to embed this into local public services, for example through social prescribing.

We recognise the unique role sport can play in young people's wellbeing and outcomes. However, we know that our care experienced young people do not enjoy the same positive advantages, experiences and outcomes as other children. We want Scotland's care experienced young people, to feel welcome and involved in sport and we are working to ensure **Sportscotland** and the sports sector have a better understanding of the needs of our care experienced young people. This includes improved access to sports coaching, sports leadership opportunities and improved access to career and development with **Sportscotland**.

SportScotland

A commitment to inclusion underpins everything that SportScotland do and this is set out with their corporate strategy, **Sport For Life**. As a Corporate Parent, SportScotland have a responsibility to understand and respond to the needs of care experienced young people as any parent should and the **draft Corporate Parenting commitments**, demonstrate how they intend to make a difference to the lives of our young people. Some examples of where SportScotland programmes have improved opportunities for our care experienced young people include:

- During summer 2020, 149 childcare hubs – set up for vulnerable children and the children of key workers – were supported by 268 Active Schools staff and 22 Community Sport Hub Officers, providing at least 25,319 hours of support. The Active Schools network undertook a wide range of roles, including hub management, direct delivery of activity, and social media promotion. Working closely with care experienced and vulnerable children allowed Active Schools to gain a better understanding of individual children's challenges, in turn leading to ideas for improved provision moving forward.
- The Get into Summer programme was a great initiative to create opportunities for children and young people to socialise, play and reconnect during the summer holiday period. SportScotland received £1.4m, which was distributed to local partners across all 32 local authorities to ensure that sport and physical activity opportunities were included within the local Get into Summer programme. The funding drove collaboration and innovation at the grassroots level, targeted at those who most needed access to activity. This included offering care experienced young people the opportunity to try sports and activities they would not normally have had the opportunity to do so.

Building Safer Communities

Ensuring that we have a society in which all people feel and are safer in their communities is one of the five main aims of our Vision for Justice. We know that feeling safe is not felt equally for everyone across our communities. People who have experience of the justice system feel less safe than the general public. We know that those with care experience are over represented in the criminal justice system in Scotland. Although those who have been in care only make up an estimated 0.5% of the general population, almost half of young people in prison reported that they had experienced care

We must work across public services to prevent crime and harm and ensure the right services can support early intervention in harmful behaviour. We know that to address the causes of crime Scotland's public services together must tackle societal inequalities such as child poverty, mental ill health, addiction and adverse childhood experiences. We must not criminalise those who are most vulnerable in our society. To support people to live in communities that are inclusive,

empowered, resilient and safe, we will publish the first ever national Violence Prevention Framework in 2022. The Framework will consider all the available evidence and identify policy priorities for all partners to work to as we seek to prevent violence and make Scotland's communities safer.

The Framework will take account of the evidence, including that our care experienced people are over represented in the criminal justice system and will highlight the work to tackle the links between Adverse Childhood Experiences and future victimisation or offending behavior. This will include work delivered through the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers and Medics Against Violence's Hospital Navigators programme to prevent and reduce the harm caused by violence. By supporting people with multiple complex social issues, including those who are and have been from a care experienced background, to be able to access the support and help they need to turn their lives around and reach their potential, many of whom are also parents which will ultimately help reduce the number of young people ending up in care.

The Cashback For Communities Programme

Cashback for Communities uses assets seized from criminals under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people across Scotland. The current Phase 5 runs from April 2020 to March 2023 with committed funds of up to £19 million to support a mix of national and local projects, delivered by third sector and community organisations.

The aim is to provide diversionary activities to support those most at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour and crime, with a focus on areas of deprivation. Whilst all projects within the CashBack portfolio are designed to support vulnerable young people, Phase 5 also offers specific integrational support for parents, families and children impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences as well as specialist trauma counselling services. For example,

- Cyrenians works specifically with young people in Scotland's five secure units to support them and their families to rebuild their relationships. The aim, where possible, is to enable young people to return to their family home.
- Celtic FC Foundation are delivering specialist trauma counselling sessions to provide intensive one-to-one support for young people
- Includem works closely with Social Services and other community based partners to provide an early intervention one-to-one support service for young people, their parents and carers.

Through the CashBack for Communities Programme we have taken steps to directly support Keeping The Promise:

- We have promoted our commitment to The Promise amongst CashBack partner organisations who were all invited to take part in a trauma-informed workforce session in November 2021. Further signposting to training and information resources has been provided.
- We have embedded Children's Rights and UNCRC principles into the CashBack programme in the conditions of grant letters. CashBack funded organisations are also being supported to complete Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments.
- We have adjusted the scope of the independent evaluation for Phase 5 to include analysis of the effectiveness of the programme in delivering support for care experienced children, children on the edge of care and their families. The evaluation will be undertaken after Phase 5 concludes in March 2023.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

Our Equally Safe strategy, published in 2018 aims for a strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it. We are working collaboratively with key partners in the public and third sectors to implement this strategy, and achieve our key objectives of preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Working together with COSLA we will publish a new short-life (2 year) Equally Safe Delivery Plan by the end of June 2022 that will run until Autumn 2023. This plan will build on the many achievements of its predecessor, consolidate existing priorities and commitments, and consider what needs to be achieved for the Violence Against Women and Girls sector to fully recover from the pandemic. Longer term, we will be conducting a wider refresh of Equally Safe for commencement in Autumn 2023.

We are also maintaining our Delivering Equally Safe Fund, which is providing support to a number of organisations working with children and young people affected by gender-based violence. Over the 2 year life-span of the fund, we are providing over £3.4 million to 12 organisations solely working with children and young people. We are providing a further £15 million to groups providing support to women and children.

Missing People

Young People make up more than half of all missing persons episodes in Scotland each year (around 60%) with half of those related to care experienced children. So far in 2021-22 there have been 3,840 missing person investigations for children who are in care (to March 2022) compared to 7,243 in 2016-17. To help address this, we continue to implement the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland with the aim of preventing people from going missing and limiting the harm when they do.

Children who go missing are especially vulnerable and of those who go missing, many will often do so repeatedly. It is therefore important that we understand why they went missing and provide the support to prevent future episodes.

A 'return discussion' with an appropriate professional can offer insight into the reasons for the missing episode and provide the opportunity for appropriate support to be put in place to enhance wellbeing, provide protections and avoid multiple missing episodes that will reduce the risk of harm to the individual. Every child who goes missing will be offered a return discussion, these are often completed by police officers. Through our implementation project, Missing People UK are providing return discussion training for professionals across Scotland to enhance understanding of discussions and provide a missing person with wider alternatives to police officers, such as social workers, care staff, child protection officers and third sector organisations.

We are funding a National Missing People coordinator through our partnership with the Missing People charity to develop local multi-agency partnerships across Scotland and provide Return Discussion training for individuals and organisations to limit the likelihood of people going missing again.

The implementation of the Framework links with wider work such as the roll out of the *Looked After And Accommodated Children Who go Missing From Residential And Foster Care protocol*. The protocol has been piloted in local authorities since 2016 and established nationally from June 2021 by Police Scotland. The protocol is aimed at reducing the amount of instances when care experienced children are reported missing to the police using the knowledge and expertise of care staff and increasing personal responsibility and understanding of each young person. As understanding and use of the protocol has increased numbers of care experienced children reported missing has been reducing.

Further work is also taking place by Police Scotland to finalise the Philomena Protocol. This will enable a carer to store important, relevant information about a young person that can be shared and used to help Police Scotland locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they have gone missing. When finalised later this year we will work with Police Scotland, local authorities, care providers and the Care Commission to implement the protocol.

We are continuing to engage with partners such as Barnardo's Scotland, Missing People UK and other third sector partners to explore experience of delivery, increase understanding of the return journey and build best practice to deliver more meaningful return home discussions after a missing episode. Our ambition is to establish multi agency partnerships for missing people in every local area in Scotland by 2025 that can focus on the specific missing issues in their locality.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will introduce a new Human Rights Bill during this parliamentary session including a continued commitment to a human-rights based approach to our public engagement**
 - Later in 2022, we will consult on a strategy to better mainstream equality, inclusion and human rights across Government and the wider public sector;
 - Our consultation on the review of the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland ends in April, following which we will consider responses closely and engage with stakeholders further before introducing revised regulations to improve the regime.

- **We will listen to the voices of our communities and respond holistically and offer the opportunity to frame a more integrated approach to local transformation that is relevant to communities and is for the benefit of all the people who live there**
 - We will work with COSLA to implement the Place Principle including investing £325 million through the Place Based Investment Programme; the Place Framework and the work of the Place Action Group
 - We will progress work focussed on supporting local level action to improve health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities, with a long-term preventative focus through our Place and Wellbeing Programme
 - We will scale the Social Innovation Partnership to promote and embed wellbeing and capability approaches across different service settings to create most holistic and person-centred practices
 - We will continue to invest in community based capacity programmes and work with our partners to reduce crime and Build Safer Communities through initiatives like the Violence Reduction and Cashback for Communities programmes
 - We will continue to involve our communities in planning of our neighbourhoods through Planning including Open Space Strategies, Play Sufficiency Assessments and Local Development Plan Regulations and the use of the Place Standard Tool

- **We will continue to reduce the number of care experienced young people who go missing through implementation of our Missing Persons Framework and our link up across Justice partners, Health services and Missing People UK**

Link Up

The Link Up programme is Inspiring Scotland's community development and wellbeing programme operating in eight of Scotland's most deprived communities. Supported by Scottish Government since 2011, it seeks to tackle poverty and disadvantage by empowering local people to help themselves, each other, and their community.

Link Up is open to all irrespective of need, characteristic and where they are at in life. The programme's unique way of working engages the most vulnerable and least heard including families that have care experience or are at risk of their children being taken into care. The nature of the support Link Up provides varies from project to project and the particular circumstances of each family. The community based approach supports families who may be care experienced but also presents a proactive model that may provide support for families to help them to stay out of the care system.

Link Up workers take time to understand the lives of those they work with. However, they are also trained to identify and help people struggling with trauma, bereavement, suicide and violence; factors that so often result in engagement with the care system. Their understanding, assistance and encouragement to engage in social activities can be critical in supporting improved mental and physical health, familial relationships and increasing self-efficacy.

Example: Between 2018-21, Link Up workers in the Gorbals provided support to a young mum. She had a chaotic upbringing and experienced early trauma. She had two children in her teens by different men, both of which were convicted of violent offences. The Link Up team provided a range of parenting and personal support that helped the woman to establish a weekly routine and stability (including creche and childcare); build relationships with a circle of local women who gave her peer support; provided practical help accessing clothing, food, birthdays & Christmas time support; and, organised support with benefit claims. The support culminated in one Link Up worker advocating for her at the Child Protection Committee, petitioning for a residential place at The Lillias Graham Parenting Capacity Assessment Centre which eventually saw the children staying with their mum and in 2021, seeing them removed from the child protection register.

Link Up local workers will often collaborate with other specialist support services to create a holistic response to the challenges faced by families. For example, in Whitfield (Dundee) Link Up partner with 'Kith n Kin' who run a weekly kinship care support group for the parents of several local families. Link Up regularly support 12-19 of the families with food provision through the community larder and Mission Christmas.

Link Up are seeking to implement a new model of support for vulnerable families (many care experienced or at risk) in the Gallatown, Kirkcaldy. Their aim is to embed a new worker in the Link Up team to serve as a bridge to connect vulnerable families already involved in Link Up activities with the specialist assistance offered through the local Health Visitor, Community Social Work and Criminal Justice Teams. This will provide families with the confidence to access specialist support. Equally, the project will offer an opportunity for these agencies to refer families past the point of crisis, to engage in Link Up activities. By helping them to participate in community life, Link Up's aspiration is to provide a sustainable path to recovery and prevent families falling back into crisis.

Chapter 6

The Role Of The Criminal Justice System

We know that there is disproportionate representation of our care experienced people within our prison population. Around a quarter of the prison population in Scotland report being in care as a child, rising to just under half when looking specifically at young people in custody.

The **Hard Edges Scotland** report published in 2019, told us how many people in contact with the criminal justice system have already experienced severe and multiple disadvantage, including homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill health and domestic violence or abuse. Individuals from the 10% most deprived areas are over-represented in prison arrivals by a factor of three, a finding consistent across the last decade. By correlation, The Promise tells us that children living in the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland are 20 times more likely to become care experienced than those in the 10% least deprived areas.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Custody

Around 40% of young people in custody identify as being care experienced. As set out in **The Vision for Justice in Scotland**, we will shift the balance to ensure the role of custody will be reserved only when no alternative is appropriate and begin a debate on who and what prison is for, including how to better accommodate individuals in the system from a trauma-informed perspective. We published a consultation in November 2021 setting out how custody in the criminal justice system should be used in the future, with a focus on how remand is used and how release from prison mechanisms operate. A loss of liberty through custody should only be used as a last resort especially for young people and only where there is clear justification, for example, a risk of serious harm. The responses to this consultation will inform a Bill which will be introduced before the summer Parliamentary recess this year.

The independent Scottish Sentencing Council has developed a sentencing of young people guidelines. Approved by the High Court, it came into force on 26 January 2022 and provides that the court should consider rehabilitation as the primary consideration when sentencing young people up to the age of 25. The development of this guideline reflects scientific research that shows the brain is not fully developed below that age. In finalising the guideline, the Council indicated independent research showed the public want rehabilitation to be a primary consideration when sentencing young people.

A Trauma Informed Approach

Through the work of the Victims Taskforce, informed directly by the voices and experiences of victims and survivors, we recognise the impacts of trauma on those coming into contact with the justice system. We are committed to developing a trauma informed and trauma responsive workforce. We will introduce a new framework, specific to the justice system, to give staff the knowledge and skills they need to understand and adopt a trauma informed approach, helping them to support all victims more compassionately. This work is currently being taken forward as part of the work for the Victims and Witnesses Taskforce by NHS Education for Scotland, in conjunction with the National Trauma Training Programme.

Where care experienced young people are in prison, we will take a trauma informed approach to support them. The Scottish Prison Service refreshed the Vision for Young People in Custody¹⁴ in March 2021, recognising the need to adopt an approach to delivery for increasingly complex needs and risk. The intention of the Vision is *'to use the time a young person spends in custody to enable them to prepare for a positive future'* and work to achieve this is being aligned with The Promise. Further information on the trauma based approach to supporting the workforce is set out in Chapter 15.

14 **Vision for Young People in Custody** (sps.gov.uk)

The Vision emphasises the centrality of relationships and relationship based approaches as a key factor to a young person's life chances; access to a range of specialist supports to address needs (e.g. support for trauma, bereavement and loss, speech, language and communication needs); provision of a very wide range of activities, including youth work, that will enable them to build their skills and where possible qualifications; individual support for young people, who have frequently been the most excluded in society, to engage in these activities. The Scottish Prison Service is currently working towards one overarching Mental Health Strategy with a series of outcomes that will reflect the needs of the whole population with the specific needs of young people weaved throughout the framework.

Children and the Justice System

The implementation of a national Bairns' Hoose model brings services together via a coordinated 'four rooms' approach designed to reduce the number of times children have to recount their experiences to different professionals and places the needs of the child at the centre across services. A key element of Barnahus is the child friendly setting and the whole team around the child with child protection, health, justice and recovery services all made available in a safe and welcoming environment.

All children in Scotland who have been victims or witnesses to abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, will have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice.

We aim to prevent children being re-traumatised and to improve the quality of experience of child victims and witnesses in the justice system. To achieve this, we are committed to funding the National Joint Investigative Interviewing Programme to support a three year national roll out of the new Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs), which commenced on 1 April 2021.

This new approach to joint investigative interviewing is aimed at providing a higher quality of forensic interview that ensures best evidence for court, allowing more scope for this to be used as the whole or part of the evidence in chief of a child in court, and for civil proceedings such as children's hearings and local child protection services. The ultimate outcome is to keep children safe and ensure that they have the right to justice. The principles of trauma-informed practice are woven through the new model and the underpinning training programme for interviewers with the needs and rights of children at the centre of their interview experience.

The key principles of the new Scottish Child Interview Model remain tangible to many other Scottish Government initiatives, including the commitment towards the Bairns' Hoose model. Successful national rollout of the new Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) is considered a precondition for national Bairns' Hoose implementation.

Supporting Families

Recognising our commitment to keeping families together where it is safe to do so we aim to reduce the impact of family imprisonment through a range of ongoing work, including support for families of prisoners led through the Scottish Prison Service's family strategy. Where there is no alternative to custody, we know that imprisonment has a wider impact than just on the individual in custody. There are an estimated 20,000 children who are affected by parental imprisonment each year in Scotland and many of them may be in care or care experienced.

Having a parent in prison is a recognised Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and is known to significantly impact long-term health and wellbeing and negatively affect both attainment in school and later life experiences. To support the mitigation of the impact of this:

- **Support Mothers and Babies in custody:** The Scottish Prison Service Mother & baby policy takes a multi-agency approach to the decision-making process of actively promoting the wellbeing and positive life outcomes for babies whose mothers are held in their care. The prison service is actively updating this policy as part of transformative plans for the new female estate which will see a new national and two community custody units in Dundee and Glasgow by late 2022. A new model of support for women in custody will support this transformative new infrastructure. This new model will take into consideration the specific needs of women, including multi agency support for mothers and babies in custody and visit arrangements.
- **Support family contact and needs with a revised Scottish Prison Service Family Strategy by end of 2022:** The current Family Strategy sets out a clear direction for the improved delivery and alignment of family engagement and activities for people in custody and a focus on how the Scottish Prison Service can play its part in avoiding the intergenerational impact of parental imprisonment. A revision of this strategy in collaboration with key stakeholders will commence this year and will include direct feedback from families, children and young people about what they view as key areas of improvement and need.
- **New ways of delivering family support and contact for those in custody:** Underpinning the family strategy is recognition that parents in prison must be supported to maintain contact with children and wider family. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the intermittent suspension of in-person visits, virtual visits and mobile phones were introduced into prisons in June 2020 and the use of these new methods of contact will continue to provide support to prisoners throughout the pandemic and are vital to ensure contact – enabling children of prison's to be read bedtime stories and feel the love of their parent even though they are in prison. A range of options are being explored

by the prison service including how use of digital services can be used in the future to ensure family contact is maintained and how other areas of support and services for those in custody is provided.

- **Maintaining Prison Visitor Centres:** We have allocated £800,000 for Prison Visitor Centres in 2022/23 Prison Visitor Centres work with the families of those in custody providing them with practical and emotional help with issues like prison visiting, food poverty and child-focussed support. Visitor Centres run a range of activities aimed at things like health promotion, maintaining family contact and raising awareness of avenues of supports that exist for families, and can make referrals for specialist support where it is needed for example with accessing benefits and housing support.

Community Justice

Ineffective short term prison sentences can lead to the unnecessary accommodation of children in the care system. While we are clear that use of custody is necessary for those who pose a risk of serious harm in order to protect the public and keep victims safe, we also recognise that imprisonment damages the connections that prevent people from offending or reoffending, such as family relationships, accommodation and employment. Short-term imprisonment, including remand, is not effective in addressing the underlying causes of offending and without proper support people can cycle back into the criminal justice system and prison.

In recognition of the disproportionate representation of care experienced within the prison population, we maintain a long term aim for imprisonment to only be used for those who pose a risk of serious harm and for community-based interventions to be the default for those who don't. This is a long-term objective with a number of steps on this journey. We are taking a number of short to medium actions to help refocus the use of custody within the criminal justice system. These actions include:

- We will introduce a Bill by June 2022 to reform the law governing bail decisions and the mechanisms around prison release.
- We provide around £119 million every year for community justice services. To support pandemic recovery work and contribute to the expansion and transformation of these services we have invested an additional £11.8 million in 2021-22, and we will increase this to £15 million in 2022-23. This includes specific additional investment in alternatives to remand services.
- We continue to invest £3.7 million per annum in third sector voluntary through care services which support short term prisoners leaving prison by providing flexible, practical support to help them reintegrate successfully into their communities.
- We will develop and launch a new National Community Justice Strategy in 2022, building on progress to date and setting out clear aims with an emphasis on early intervention and encouraging a further shift away from the use of custody.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We will reduce the impact of family imprisonment through a range of ongoing work including:**
 - multi agency support for mothers and babies in prison
 - transforming the female prison estate actively promoting the wellbeing and positive life outcomes for babies whose mothers are held in Scottish Prison Service care.
 - address specific needs of young people in custody
 - revision of the Scottish Prison Service Family Strategy
 - exploring new ways of delivering family support to those in custody
 - maintaining prison visitor centres
- **We will progress Legal Aid reform including more targeted provision to improve access to legally aided services in certain geographical areas or for groups with specific legal needs, such as care experienced children**
- **We will implement the Bairns' Hoose by 2025, bringing together services in a 'four rooms' approach with child protection, health, justice and recovery services all made available in one setting.**
- **We will take a trauma-informed approach to support people in prison and to reduce further trauma for our children and young people when they tell their story** by providing resource and training to support a trauma-informed and trauma responsive workforce within the justice system and undertaking a national roll out of the Scottish Child Interview Model for Joint Investigative Interviews
- **We will introduce a Bill by June 2022 to reform the law governing bail decisions and the mechanisms around prison release and**
 - increase investment in community based interventions and community sentences
 - invest in third sector voluntary throughcare services
 - develop and launch a new National Community Justice Strategy.

A Good Childhood For Our Children And Young People

In the previous section we set out how we will progress our overarching ambition to keep families together and to prevent children and young people becoming engaged in the care system. Unfortunately we know, however, that some children and young people are not safe at home and that intervention is required to prevent even more negative outcomes happening in the future.

The Promise tells us that our care experienced children and young people are almost one and a half times more likely to have anxiety at age 16; and almost twice as likely to moderately use drugs at the same age. It

also tells us that our care experienced adults are over one and a half times more likely to experience severe multiple disadvantage; and more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness.

In this section of our Implementation Plan we will set out our vision for how we will ensure that when and where our children enter care they have the support, love and stability they need. As they progress through childhood and have to build a more independent life they have the options, the support and the opportunity to thrive.

Chapter 7: The Scottish Approach To Care

Chapter 8: Minimising Intervention

Chapter 9: Approach To Interventions To Safeguard Children's Welfare When It Is Necessary

Chapter 10: Moving On From Care



Chapter 7

The Scottish Approach To Care

All of our children should have a happy, healthy and safe childhood and everyone in the care system must ensure that our processes, systems and structures do everything possible to make this a reality. There is clear evidence that the overwhelming number of children who are taken into care are from the poorest families. This could be a result of parental drug and alcohol use; mental health and/or engagement with the justice system often leading to imprisonment. The correlation between families trapped in poverty and our young people who are in care is stark.

As set out earlier in this Plan, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the wellbeing of children and young people who are care experienced. Our parents, carers, communities and our public and third sector have all worked hard to provide the support required, however, we know that for many of our children and young people there have been significant negative impacts on their wellbeing. We also know that the issues that get in the way of many of our care experienced children and young people existed long before the pandemic. In Keeping The Promise, we must adopt a Scottish approach to support those who are in care and ensure the environment they live in is safe, and they are loved and nurtured throughout their life.

We will develop and publish a National Carers Strategy with a focus on COVID-19 recovery and improving carer support in a meaningful and sustainable way. The strategy will focus on carers and their needs, setting out how policies across the Scottish Government can work together with other public bodies to support carers as we recover from the pandemic and beyond. We will publish the strategy by the end of June 2022 to provide a clear vision for how we will respond to the challenges faced by so many carers.

Getting it right for every child is central to all of our policies which support children, young people and their families, including our incorporation, to the maximum extent possible of the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child. We recognise too that our care experienced children and

young people are subject to stigma and, in some circumstances, feel blamed for their separation from their families and the trauma they have experienced.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

How Do We Define ‘Care Experience’

There are a number of rights and entitlements in existence for young adults who have care experience. There is not a cohesive, cross sector definition that encapsulates the totality of the experience. The Promise adopted a broad and diverse understanding of care experience, to ensure a collective recognition that care represents a part of all Scotland’s communities. It heard that, as a definition, care experience has meaning for many people, it has supported movement building and is helpful as an understanding of personal identity.

Throughout this document, we have taken our lead from The Promise and used the term care experience to refer to *anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after*. Care may have been provided in one of many different settings, such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care or through being looked after at home with a supervision requirement.

People with care experience must no longer be stigmatised for being different because care should be considered a normal part of society. We will work with partners across Scotland, including The Promise Scotland, to develop a universal and inclusive definition of care experience, we will explore further how this definition can best be reflected in relevant legislation to ensure a consistent and respectful use of language. We must work together to change this.

Consider Our Language

The Promise heard from our children, young people and adults with care experience that the language needs to change to normalise their lives and shift away from professional terminology. Words used by the workforce to describe children's lives, like 'unit' and 'placement' and 'contact' and 'respite' and 'LAC' (looked after child), are not the same as those used by their peers without care experience. The Promise heard that this language compounds a sense of being different, can exacerbate low self-esteem and is stigmatising. We must work together to change this.

We know that the language people hear impacts our understanding and behaviours – often in ways we don't even realise. We must not be stigmatising in our language for children and young people or their families. There will be times where the statutory framework requires certain terms to be used, but this should be done sparingly, with the aim of the reduction of stigmatising language at every opportunity. We must work together to change the story and ensure that our care experienced population are not looked on differently, are not made to feel like they are different and are in no way treated differently. We will prioritise our continued support to change this narrative within our own organisation, with our corporate parenting peers and more widely in our communities to ensure our collective understanding develops and stigma reduces.

We will use destigmatising language at every opportunity and will use certain terminology only where the use of an alternative may create confusion. We will continue to work with The Promise Scotland to identify and use language, across all of our policies and engagement, which respects the views of our care experienced people.

To support this, we must shift public attitudes and understanding, and challenge the stigma that is felt by our care experienced children, young people, adults and families. We will build on the Each and Every Child Initiative and will develop further work to address stigma over the course of 2022/23, with input from local partners and our care experienced young people.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

Our Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach aims to provide consistent and holistic, rights-based, child, young person and family centred co-ordinated support. In 2021, we refreshed the aspirational values and principles that underpin GIRFEC as a strengths-based approach. Consultation on the refreshed materials included care experienced children and young people as well as local authorities, health boards, third sector organisations, umbrella groups and national organisations.

Children's rights and wellbeing are intrinsically linked and are mutually reinforcing. Where a child's rights have been respected, protected and fulfilled, their wellbeing should improve. Where a child's wellbeing is flourishing, they are better able to enjoy their rights, and defend their rights and the rights of others. The updated values and principles take account of The Promise and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and signifies that the three areas are aligned and connected. In so doing they provide the workforce with a clear framework to support implementation and to make life better for all children in Scotland.

We reaffirmed our commitment to GIRFEC policy in September 2019 and we continue to work with practitioners and other stakeholders to refresh national guidance materials to support consistent effective practice across all children's services. Publication of phase one of refreshed GIRFEC materials is planned by August 2022. Phase two includes work on refreshed guidance for the child's plan and single planning process, alongside supporting GIRFEC implementation and linking across relevant Scottish Government policy teams.

Some children and young people who cannot live safely at home, come to live in Scotland from other areas of the UK. We are working to deliver solutions to ensure that they are able to experience the same high level of care that we expect for children who start their journey within Scotland, and that their rights are equally upheld. Such a move away from home communities should occur only in exceptional circumstances and if this is in the best interests of the child.

Delivering a Good Childhood: Scotland's approach to care

As set out in chapters 2 to 4, we have taken key early actions to Keep The Promise, such as ensuring that where living with their family is not possible, children can stay together with their brothers and sisters if it is safe to do so.

There is no doubt, however, that to fully meet the ambition and ethos set out in The Promise's priority area of *A Good Childhood*, we need to fundamentally transform the way that care looks and feels for children, families and caregivers in Scotland. The Scottish Government needs to lead from the front and strengthen its focus on collective leadership, delivery and outcomes if we are to give every child and young person with care experience a childhood that sets them up to thrive.

To this end, and with input from partners, we have developed a vision and key principles. These articulate what the Scottish Government wants to achieve and the values that will guide our policy, resourcing, business planning and strategy decisions to deliver the positive progress needed. They are explicit about our ambitions for children with care experience and set a strategic direction of travel that we hope will help galvanise the sector and generate momentum, building on the good work already underway, as we embark on a work programme to re-imagine care in Scotland that will span a number of years.

The vision and principles focus specifically on children with, or on the edges of, care experience, building on the GIRFEC principles and values, and principles of holistic family support. This work will contribute to the shared aims and wellbeing outcomes of the Children, Young People and Families Outcome Framework, described further in Chapter 18.

The vision and principles also draw on a wide range of existing policy, legislation and key publications, including the seminal Independent Care Review and subsequent Promise reports, the National Performance Framework, and standards such as the secure care pathways and standards. They are not intended to replace the way local partners plan, commission, or deliver services.

Our Vision

Our vision is that 'Every child lives in a safe and loving home where families are given support to overcome difficulties and stay together. Where this is not possible, the focus of a child's care must be based, first and foremost, on what a child wants and needs, underpinned by nurturing relationships, to enable them to have happy childhood experiences and live their life to the full'

Scotland's approach to care is supported by **six key principles** which will guide our policy and delivery decisions. They are thematic in nature, applying equally wherever a child lives, and should engender transformational change in the way Scotland cares for its children, reducing poverty, inequality and giving children with care experience the best chance of the life they rightly deserve. Taking action to tackle child poverty is a key factor to achieving this and, as indicated earlier, this work is closely interlinked with the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26.

The principles are specific to children, young people and families on the edges of care and those with care experience, who may have experienced adversity and trauma, and will have additional needs. They must, however, be seen in the context of the important role of preventative health services in our communities, which are universal, and minimise or remove the risk of babies and children becoming care experienced, particularly in the earliest years of life, and also have a role to play if a child is care experienced.

The principles focus on meaningful relationships, family support, health and wellbeing, support for caregivers, smooth transitions and reducing the stigma that can isolate children, young people and families who have experience of care.

Principle 1: Loving, safe and stable relationships are – above all else – the most important aspect of care for every child: The development of nurturing, compassionate and respectful relationships within families, by caregivers, people in the workforce and the wider community will enable children to feel loved and safe wherever they live. Children must be actively supported

to develop and strengthen healthy and positive connections and friendships that are important to them, including lifelong links, and this must be the bedrock of everyday practice of the workforce and carers.

Principle 2: Strengthening and supporting families to stay together where children are safe and feel loved: Universal holistic family support, at the right time, is key to strengthening families and overcoming difficulties that get in the way. Some families face a range of challenges unique to them – poverty, mental health issues, job loss – and they need bespoke, relationship based timely support to manage these as a family unit. Universal family support – and more intensive targeted help, if it is needed – must be both a safe harbour and a lifeline to all families to avoid relationships breaking down and crisis interventions, so that people can continue to care for their children where it is safe to do so.

Principle 3: Support to fully meet wellbeing needs, including health and education: Children, no matter where they live, should enjoy good emotional, physical and mental health. Children have the right to play, as well as learn and achieve through education. Children with experience of care must have the same opportunities to flourish as their peers, and must not be held back by poverty or inequality. Every child in our community should have the same level of support to fully meet health, educational and wellbeing needs. And this means additional support for children without a family support network, or if they have experienced adversity in childhood. Caregivers and the wider workforce have a crucial role in ensuring that all needs are met, in particular, supporting children with developmental trauma to heal and develop as young adults.

Principle 4: Comprehensive and ongoing support for caregivers: Investing in a comprehensive, continuing programme of training and support to embed learning for Scotland's caregivers – kinship, adoption, foster and residential and secure care staff, including recruitment where appropriate – is crucial. This investment will give caregivers the skills, knowledge and confidence,

particularly in trauma informed practice, to nurture the children in their care, and build loving, stable relationships.

Principle 5: Stability and smooth transitions: A stable and secure home helps a child flourish: to make friends, build relationships and settle at school and in a local community. Multiple moves make this harder. Likewise, significant transitions must be limited, planned and relational to prevent further trauma for a child. As young adults transition into independent, self-reliant individuals they must receive support across a range of areas such as housing, finance, employment and education. This support must be inclusive, accessible and bespoke to a person's individual circumstances, especially where they have additional support needs. Support from the people who matter to the young person is also critical, and all support must be available for as long as necessary to help transition to adulthood and a positive future. Aftercare, and wider universal services, must also recognise that the impact of being care experienced can continue throughout a person's life.

Principle 6: The rights, dignity and voice of children is at the heart of everything we do: All children must be treated with compassion, care and kindness and their rights must be upheld and championed by their families, carers and the workforce, with access to independent individual advocacy and legal support. Children and their families wishes must be listened to and they must be empowered to be meaningfully involved in decisions about their care and how best their needs can be met. Children should not have to 'tell their story' multiple times to different people. The experience of care must also be normalised and free from stigma, blame and shame. Media stereotypes of children with care experience can affect attitudes and behaviours in ways people do not realise. There is, therefore, a key role for the workforce, organisations, national and local government and the media to change the narrative by using positive, easily understood, well framed and respectful language.

The Role Of The Workforce, Partners And Stakeholders

In addition to the important role of caregivers described above, children will be supported by a wider workforce (for example education, health, housing, social security, social work and social care, justice) who implement the GIRFEC multi-agency approach. The support of senior corporate leaders is critical to ensure the workforce continues to be skilled, trained, trauma informed and compassionate in their decision making and care. They must also feel valued and supported to respond to the individual needs and wishes of a child or young person and their family.

Within this, there is a key role for social workers who are often at the centre of these multi-disciplinary relationships that support children and families getting the help they need when they need it, and for as long as they need it. Social workers must feel empowered and confident so they can, in turn, instil that feeling in the children and families they work with.

Our vision and principles will inform the development of a comprehensive, evidence based work programme, with key delivery milestones, to ensure that the Scottish Government leads and plays its part in delivering the recommendations, ambition and ethos reflected in The Promise's *A Good Childhood*. We will establish a stakeholder advisory group, and seek input from people with care experience, to develop and implement this work programme between now and 2030. This will ensure that the sequencing of the work aligns with partners' abilities to deliver, given the varying demands and pressures upon them.

We will also work with local and national partners to develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy to ensure we can measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the plan and, in particular, how it feels for, and the experience of, children and young people affected.

Key Actions We Will Take



- We will work with partners across Scotland, including The Promise Scotland, to develop a universal and inclusive definition of care experience so as more people can understand and relate to it.
- We will build on the Each and Every Child Initiative and will develop further work to address stigma over the course of 2022/23, with input from local partners and care experienced young people.
- We will refresh national guidance materials to support consistent effective practice across all children's services including Publication of phase one of refreshed GIRFEC materials is planned by August 2022.
- We will implement our vision and key principles for Scotland's approach to care. Articulating what the Scottish Government wants to achieve and guiding our policy, resourcing, business planning and strategy decisions to deliver the positive progress needed.

Chapter 8

Minimising Intervention

As we have established through this plan, keeping families together is our key priority, however there will be situations when this is not safe because of the physical, mental and/or emotional trauma that is likely to be suffered by a child or young person in their home. Unfortunately there will be times when, for different reasons, it is necessary for our care services to intervene.

Relationships are key to all of our lives. Through The Promise, our care experienced people told us that the relationships that mattered to them are not appropriately recognised and respected by the services and systems that are in place to support them. We must commit to changing this and ensuring that we support our children and young people to maintain the relationships that are important to them.

It is vitally important that we recognise and understand the network that is important to each individual person. As a first step, in July 2021 we introduced a requirement for services responsible for the care and welfare of looked after children and young people to promote their relationships with their sisters and brothers placing a legal duty on local authorities, supported by practice guidance.

Preventing harm is of course paramount, and through the work of our national implementation group, local Child Protection Committees, leaders, managers and practitioners across services, we are working to ensure that robust child protection procedures are in place wherever there is a likelihood or risk of a child coming to harm and that appropriate actions can be taken. In identifying this action we must ensure that the voice of the child or young person and what matters to that child or young person is heard, understood and respected.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Support Relationships

In Scotland, there is now a legal duty on local authorities to take steps to promote contact between care experienced infants, children and young people and their brothers and sisters. This includes a duty to establish the views of the child's brothers and sisters before making any decisions about their care, and to ensure that where it is safe for them to do so, brothers and/or sisters are able to live together or as near to each other as possible.

In July 2021, we published new National Practice Guidance, 'Staying Together and Connected: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers'¹⁵ to support implementation of legislative changes introduced under the Children (Scotland) Act 2020. This legislation protects the rights and promotes the wellbeing of children and young people where their relationships with their brothers and sisters could become disrupted.

The National Practice Guidance was developed in collaboration with people representing all those who will be affected and involving the voices and view of infants, children and young people with experience of care, their parents and families, adoptive parents, kinship and foster carers, and the multi-agency practitioners responsible for the care, protection and wellbeing of our children and young people. The guidance sets out what to consider and what to do, and provides practical advice based on research, evidence and listening to experience about what all children need to grow and thrive through sustained, positive relationships with their sisters and brothers.

¹⁵ Staying together and connected: getting it right for sisters and brothers: national practice guidance – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

We continue to support implementation of the guidance, engaging with our stakeholders and those with care experience, in addressing practical challenges. This work is supported by a National Implementation Group that we have convened to champion best practice and work with families and practitioners to find solutions to any barriers. The Group will also continue to raise awareness of their work to ensure that collectively Scotland ensures that sisters' and brothers' relationships are cherished and supported.

One area of work being progressed by the Group and supported by children, young people and families in the co-design of solutions, is to design definitions of data proposed for use across the represented agencies to understand whether sisters and brothers remain together. This data must reflect the complexity of family situations, including why decisions were made and whether any siblings remained together and help us to measure progress in reducing separation of brothers and sisters.

The Secure Care Pathway and Standards¹⁶ were published in October 2020. When fully implemented standards 25 – 27 will ensure that young people are encouraged and supported to maintain and develop relationships with family, friends and people who are important to them.

Supporting Parents

Whilst keeping families together is our key priority, there will unfortunately be situations when this is not safe because of the physical, mental and/or emotional trauma that is likely to be suffered by a child or young person in their home. To support families for whom their children are taken into care, we have opened a new fund to improve support for birth parents who no longer have care of their children.

The Supporting Birth Parents Whose Child(ren) Have Been Permanently Removed From Their Care fund has been established to fund relational, trauma responsive services.

Key Actions We Will Take

- We will continue to monitor and evaluate the Brothers and Sisters Practice Guidance and put in place mechanisms by 2023 to measure progress in keeping brothers and sisters together.
- We will support families whose children have required to go into care through the Birth Parents Whose Child(ren) Have Been Permanently Removed From Their Care fund



Chapter 9

Our Approach To Interventions To Safeguard Children’s Welfare When It Is Necessary

The Promise tells us that a new approach to youth justice in Scotland is required. An approach which continues to align with United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), that proceeds from a rights-respecting approach, supports all children under the age of 18 and young people up to age 26 to participate in decisions about them, directs positive support to families, and offers that support through safe and caring relationships.

This approach must be centred on avoiding and stopping the criminalisation of care experienced children. Realising this requires a fundamental shift in focus, time, commitment, resourcing and underlying structures.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Delivering The Priorities Within The Youth Justice Strategy

The **Justice for children and young people – a rights-respecting approach: vision and priorities** and accompanying action plan were published in June 2021. The vision builds on the Youth Justice Strategy which concluded in 2020 and represents a shared foundation between the Scottish Government and partners to continue to support the agenda to keep children out of the criminal justice system and promote the continued use of the whole system approach to preventing offending by young people and possible expansion of that approach beyond the age of 18.

We will continue to work with partners to ensure delivery of the priorities until 2024. Specific actions will be taken forward through implementation groups including; children’s rights and advancing whole system approach; and working groups on community alternatives, participation and speech, language and communication needs.

Reshaping Our Approach to Secure Care

Secure care – provided by a secure accommodation service, as defined in statute¹⁷ – is among the most intensive and restrictive form of child care available in Scotland, whereby children up to age 18 are placed in a locked care setting. This can occur through involvement of the children’s hearings system or the criminal justice system and arises due to the level of concern about the risks, or actual significant harm, which parts of a child’s behaviour pose to them and/or others.

We are clear that where a child’s liberty requires to be restricted or deprived, this should be in a setting which is child friendly and rights respecting, with trauma-informed staff. As a Government we are committed to safeguarding young people within the Youth Justice system, supporting a presumption against under 18s in the Criminal Justice System, keeping them out of young offenders’ institutions where possible and appropriate, while ensuring victims receive the support and information they need.

¹⁷ See paragraph 6 of schedule 12 of the **Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)**. A “secure accommodation service” is a service which— (a) provides accommodation for the purpose of restricting the liberty of children in residential premises where care services are provided; and (b) is approved by the Scottish Ministers for that purpose.

There are presently a total of 84 secure care placements across Scotland¹⁸. It is clear that we need to consider the nature and scale of secure care that will be required in Scotland for future years. This especially applies where a Scottish secure estate with more vacancies may have an important part to play in decarcerating more young people from young offenders' institutions. The future offer will be designed in the best interests of each child and will include specialist services and bespoke packages in order to meet the often complex needs of children and young people. It will consider the wider care and justice systems rather than secure care in isolation.

We are committed to ending the placement of 16 and 17 year olds in Young Offenders Institutions without delay. This will provide the support children need in very difficult circumstances, shifting the approach from one of punishment to one of love and support. To achieve this we will fund care based alternatives to custody and a consultation on a Children's Care and Justice Bill was launched on 30 March 2022.

We will continue to explore options around changes to secure care, including working with secure care providers, local authorities and Social Work Scotland to find a sustainable funding model to be implemented over the next 2-4 years. We acknowledge that in considering the funding basis of Secure Care, and in seeking to significantly reduce the numbers of cross-border placements from elsewhere in the UK that providers accommodate, some Secure Care centres will have to stop operating as they currently are. We will support them to transition to a new operating model and ensure the skills, expertise and staff are retained to ensure that expertise can be repurposed to support care experienced children and young people.

Key drivers for these conversations include how we will reduce the number of cross-border placements; how we promote better post-secure placement transition planning and service provision; how we support secure care provider

diversification into non-secure residential and community provision; how we provide support to some young people to stay in secure care beyond their 18th birthday rather than transferring them to Young Offenders' Institutions for short periods; and potential legislative change to moderate and allocate placements on a national Scottish basis and to minimise – with a view to eventually eradicating – reliance on cross-border placements. There may still be cross-border placements, but these will be for those exceptional circumstances where they may be in the best interests of the child only and not based on financial reasons.

Safeguarding Children's Rights

In 2020 we consulted on raising the age at which someone can be referred to the Children's Reporter. Currently only under 16s or 16/17 year olds on a Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO) or being considered for a CSO are able to be referred.

To enable this, and to promote and advance children's and victims' rights, safeguarding and supporting Scotland's children through age-appropriate systems and services in-line with The Promise, we will introduce a Children's Care and Justice Bill this Parliamentary session. A consultation was launched on 30 March 2022 on policy proposals including:

- To ensure children receive the right help and support they require, at the right time, as far as possible and appropriate without statutory intervention.
- Where any child requires the support and intervention of formal systems, to ensure this is available through the age-appropriate Children's Hearings System, exploring what is needed to support raising the maximum age of referral to the Principal Reporter.
- To ensure children are treated in a way that is trauma-informed and recognises their age and stage of development, recognising that this might not be possible within the current structures and systems.

¹⁸ Children's social work statistics: 2019 to 2020 – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

- To maximise the use of measures to support children in the community, and with their family wherever possible. Where a child requires to be deprived of their liberty, to ensure that this is in age-appropriate care facilities where possible and appropriate by enabling more children to access secure care or other alternative residential or community-based alternatives.
- To introduce additional safeguards and regulation for children placed in cross-border placements which should only occur in exceptional circumstances where the placement is in the best interests of an individual child.
- To enhance the rights to support and information for victims to ensure appropriate protection, information and support irrespective of the age of the person who has caused the harm or the system through which the child's case is dealt.

As well as a future Children's Care and Justice Bill to address legislative transformation, there are practice and cultural changes which need to take place to further reduce under 18s in young offenders' institutes and ensure readiness and confidence in alternatives. A range of actions are already underway to address this including:

- Ongoing discussions with key partners including COSLA, Scotland Excel, Secure care providers and Social Work Scotland to consider funding of secure care placements from July 2022 onwards, to allow priority capacity for under 18s living in Scotland.
- A workshop will take place before June 2022 with key partners such as secure care providers, Scottish Prison Service, COSLA, the Care Inspectorate and Social Work Scotland to consider alternative options to young offenders' institutes.
- The Youth Justice Improvement Board and implementation groups are continuing to deliver on the priorities within the Youth Justice Vision published in June 2021, ensuring that children's rights are respected and that there is reinvigoration of the whole system approach to preventing offending by young people. This includes specific work on community

alternatives available across Scotland and the publication of a framework for practitioners on community alternatives to remand by September 2022.

- A Children's Hearings Working Group has been set up to report on current practice by December 2022, with future work to enact the recommendations due in 2023.
- A short life working group was set up in December 2021 under the Scottish Government Collective Leadership Group. The group has met 3 times between December and March. Four recommendations were agreed including undertaking a trauma informed review of an under 18s pathway to young offenders institutes; recognising the needs and rights of the young person and supporting their understanding of court processes to ensure meaningful participation; assessing and reviewing key policies through the lens of the UNCRC; and identifying and removing legal impediments to alternatives to remand and taking immediate actions where possible to remove under 18s from custody.

The Use of Restraint

The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in care settings is always paramount. For this reason, we will continue to ensure the use of restraint in residential or secure care is not used unless it is the only practicable means of securing the welfare and safety of that or any other service user and there are exceptional circumstances.

Holding safely guidance published in 2005 and updated in 2013 specifies that any approach to restraint must be approved by the employers and will only be used by trained care staff with appropriate monitoring and recording after each physical restraint. On 30 March 2022 we launched a consultation on a Children's Care and Justice Bill which asks whether further change is needed to existing law and guidance on the use of restraint in residential and secure care settings. To support the continued safe use of restraint we will:

- Continue to support the workforce to ensure a caring, relational and trauma-informed response to any challenging behaviour.
- Work closely with the Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group which is exploring definitions of restraint, the data that is held and the training and support available for residential care staff.

These actions align with ongoing work to develop new human rights-based guidance in the use of physical restraint and seclusion in schools set out on Chapter 3.

Advocacy

An advocate is someone who provides support to individuals and families accessing information and advice. An advocate can help individuals to access rights and benefits that they are entitled to and guide them to legal advice and through legal processes if that is what is required.

The Promise says that Scotland must aim to ensure that care experienced children, young people, adults and families can navigate the system of care without such extra support. The workforce should become the primary trusted adults who children and young people turn to for support, advice and care. However, advocates will be required for as long as the care system remains complex.

In November 2020, we launched a national advocacy service to support all children and young people who may need independent, expert advocacy support to reinforce the rights of children involved in the Children's Hearings System. The children's hearing advocacy scheme is a demand led service that offers support to children and young people to express their needs and views on decisions that affect their lives. From July 2021, this provision was expanded to also support the right of siblings to participate in Children's Hearings, where they are invited to give their views on contact with their brothers or sisters. This national scheme was backed by an initial £1.5 million and increasing

to £2 million in 2022-23. A **Children's Hearings Advocacy Expert Reference group** supports the design, delivery and implementation of the service, which is offered Scotland wide by ten third sector providers.

The Children's Hearings advocacy service does not however, fully meet The Promise's view that independent advocacy organisations must be commissioned to ensure that advocacy is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from statutory organisations and service providers. There are still service providers delivering advocacy in areas, while also delivering services. We will undertake an external evaluation of the implementation of children's advocacy in children's hearings by 2024 and consider the findings to inform any changes or potential expansion of the children's hearings advocacy scheme.

Advocacy for care experienced people and their families can help them navigate the system better and ensure their voice is heard. The need for such advocacy for children and young people will reduce as fewer engage with the care system following the delivery of The Promise. As a next step, we will work with The Promise Scotland to scope national lifelong advocacy service for care experienced people, and advocacy for families coming into contact with the care system. It will recognise there may be a need for distinct offerings, independent of one another. It will also take account of the need for independent advocacy and be clear about the definition. The Promise Scotland will present recommendations to Scottish Ministers for consideration by the end of 2023.

Legal Representation

Children and their families must have a right to legal advice and representation if required. As The Promise identifies, the provision of advocacy does not replace rights to legal representation but the two roles (advocacy and legal representation) have a separate, distinct purpose. It is recognised that advocating the rights of children on the edge of and within Scotland's system of care requires

a unique skill set. There must be ready access to legal advice and representation when aspects of the care system go wrong and there must be clarity about where care experienced children and young people can turn for legal redress.

We are currently grant funding a project of legal advice service delivered by Clan Childlaw, for advocacy workers to ensure their practice in hearings is legally informed and where necessary can support a child to access legal representation when needed.

In recognising the importance of facilitating access to advice and representation, in 2019 we consulted on proposals for the reform of Legal Aid in Scotland. The consultation sought views on developing a user centred, public service and examined how user need could be addressed by providing the Scottish Legal Aid Board with enhanced statutory powers to target the provision of legally aided services, whilst embedding accountability and quality assurance in service delivery. It was agreed that more targeted provision could improve access to legally aided services in certain geographical areas or for groups with specific legal needs, such as care experienced children. This will be taken forward in the development of legislation to support reform

We continue to progress work to assist all children in accessing justice. This includes work with the Scottish Legal Aid Board who are managing funding in 2022-23 of approximately £2.4 million for projects under the Early Resolution and Advice Programme; the Making Advice Work Programme; and for the Scottish Women's Rights Centre.

The Age Of Criminal Responsibility

The age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is 12. This means that children under 12 can no longer be arrested or charged, or referred to a children's hearing on an offence ground. Pre-12 behaviour can no longer automatically be disclosed by the State, and so follow a person through to later life. The Promise requires Scotland to aim for the age of criminal responsibility to be brought in line with the most progressive global Governments, alongside efforts to prevent criminalisation of all children. In this regard, Scottish Ministers have a duty to consider a future age of criminal responsibility, and to report to the Scottish Parliament by December 2025. The Advisory Group, established to support Ministers with the review, will provide recommendations for a future age of criminal responsibility by December 2024.





Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will end the placement of 16 and 17 year olds in Young Offenders Institutions without delay. We will fund care based alternatives to custody and consult on new legislation in Spring 2022.** This will provide the support children need in very difficult circumstances, shifting the approach from one of punishment to one of love and support.
- **We will ensure that all care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation. In March 2022, we will consult on the need for further appropriate underpinning in legislation or guidance to ensure children's rights are protected in care settings.** This commitment to address the use of restraint in care settings will mean that only trained care staff will use restraint and only when there is a serious risk of harm to the child themselves or another person; and where there is no effective way of keeping them safe. The use of restraint must be an absolute last resort where it is necessary and proportionate and should always be pain free.
- **We will support The Promise Scotland to scope the need for a national lifelong advocacy service for care experienced people and their families.** This approach to advocacy for care experienced people will help navigate the system better and ensure their voice is heard. The need for such an advocacy service will reduce as fewer children engage with the care system following the delivery of The Promise.
- **We will introduce legislation to raise the age at which someone can be referred to the Children's Reporter in this Parliamentary session to promote and advance children's and victims' rights, safeguarding and supporting Scotland's children through age appropriate systems and services.**



Chapter 10

Moving On From Care

We recognise the challenges for our care experienced children and young people who are moving on to young adulthood. At any age and for any young person, moving on from home is a challenging time but when there is limited family and/or financial support behind you the challenge can be exacerbated.

Research consistently highlights that care leavers are more likely than other young people to become homeless or experience housing instability (**CELCIS, 2019**). Despite difficult early life experiences, and often multiple placements during childhood, care experienced young people continue to leave care at an earlier age, with less preparation, with less support and often before they are ready

We are committed to ensuring that the policies which aim to maintain stability and security as our care experienced young people grow up, appropriately support transition from childhood to independent living.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Transitions

We took a first step to reducing the financial burden on care experienced young people in 2018 when we made people under 26 years old who have previously been in the care of a local authority exempt from Council Tax. The next step, is in delivering the Care Experience Grant. This is a new £200 annual grant for 16-25 year olds with care experience and will provide some additional financial security and help reduce some of the financial barriers that young people face in transition to adulthood and more independent living.

The Grant will support families with care experience by contributing to the maximising of incomes, which is a key driver of child poverty reduction, and reflects a further investment of £10 million per year in supporting our care experienced young adults. It will operate alongside other measures in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 in reducing the number of children experiencing the effects of poverty by 2030. We are currently working at pace with stakeholders and potential partners to identify the best delivery mechanism for the Grant.

As part of our commitment to improving transitions for young people, we will also introduce Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy in this Parliamentary session to support disabled young people as they make the transition to adult life. We will also provide them and those who look after them with joined up guidance and support to unlock better educational and employment opportunities and health outcomes.

In partnership with ARC (Association for Real Change) Scotland we are delivering the '**Principles into Practice**' Trial Programme in 10 Local Authority Areas. The purpose of the trial is to:

- improve the lived experiences of young people who need additional support to make the transition to young adult life, and to ensure young people are at the centre of all transition planning for their future.
- identify, design and test changes that transform how young people with additional support needs are supported in their transition to young adult life.
- test and bring Principles into Practice and its associated resources to completion to support its implementation more widely across Scotland.

This is a 2-year improvement programme which aims to help embed the seven '**Principles of Good Transitions**' into policy, planning and practice, and to measure the difference they are making.

Young Person's Guarantee

As set out in Chapter 3, our care experienced school leavers are less likely to go on to positive destinations than school leavers in general. Our commitment to young people across Scotland through the **Young Persons Guarantee** will connect our care experienced 16-24 year olds to an opportunity. By bringing together employers, partners and young people we will support access to a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training programme or volunteering. To enable this, in 2022/23 we will invest up to £45 million to support better outcomes for young people, this will include:

- a specific focus on supporting those furthest from the labour market including those who are care experienced;
- a specific focus on improving outcomes for care experienced young people through funding to Local Employability Partnerships;
- funding for DYW School Coordinators and mentors focussing support on these young people
- the positive role of our partners as funders, delivery partners and employers of in adopting a corporate parent approach

As part of our COVID Recovery strategy, to make up for the opportunities lost to young people during the pandemic, we have provided up to £70 million this financial year. This will include targeted measures to support those with experience of the care system, from low socio-economic groups, and for young disabled people.

Housing

Our Ending Homelessness Together action plan was updated in October 2020 and sets out our renewed ambition to end homelessness in Scotland. National Homelessness **Statistics** published in June 2021, show that 6% (1,076 out of 17,627) of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness were formerly 'looked after' by the local authority.

We are investing an additional £50 million over this parliamentary session to implement the next phase of our work to end homelessness and rough sleeping. This new investment will allow us to accelerate rapid rehousing approaches and scale up Housing First; end the use of communal night shelters; advance legislative protections for people experiencing domestic abuse; and explore alternative routes to reduce migrant homelessness.

In December 2021, we published our consultation on proposals to prevent homelessness, including new duties for public bodies. The proposals build on three overarching principles; responsibility to prevent homelessness should be a shared public responsibility; intervention to prevent homelessness should start as early as possible; and people facing homelessness should have choice in terms of housing outcomes available.

The '**Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways**' report and the **Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway** were developed by members of 'A Way Home Scotland', the national coalition to end youth homelessness, and were published in November 2019 and March 2021 respectively. Both pathways recognise that younger people are more likely to make a homeless application than other groups of the population and are much more likely to have support needs relating to basic housing management and independent living.

The care leavers pathway sets out sensible, evidence based next steps to ensure corporate parents act on their legal and moral duties to prevent care leavers experiencing homelessness, at the point of leaving care and later, by fully implementing existing policy and legislative frameworks. This includes ensuring consistent implementation of Continuing Care as a positive preventative measure, reviewing fostering registration relating to Continuing Care, and exploring the role of the Care Inspectorate and inspection around care leaver support.

Improving implementation and making it more consistent across Scotland is increasingly important given the increased number of young people who have remained in care placements throughout COVID-19 and who may be seeking

to transition to independent living as protective measures have been eased. We will continue to employ a multiagency approach to ensure that all care leavers are supported through Continuing Care or transition support to independent living.

Consultation on our draft Rented Sector Strategy 'A New Deal for Tenants' was published on 20 December 2021. This seeks to improve accessibility, affordability choices and standards across the whole rented sector in Scotland. The consultation highlights work already underway by education colleagues to develop a Guarantorship scheme and seeks views on key features of an effective guarantor scheme and how we can support their development. We will publish the Rented Sector Strategy by the end of 2023.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We will invest £10 million per annum through our Care Experience Grant: a new £200 annual grant for 16-25 year olds with care experience.** This Grant will provide some additional financial security for young people with experience of care and will help reduce some of the financial barriers that young people face in transitions to adulthood and more independent living. The Grant will support families with care experience by contributing to the maximising of incomes, a key driver of child poverty reduction
- **We will support care leavers into positive destinations through implementing the Young Person's Guarantee, which includes Discovering Your Potential, as well as Scotland's Mentoring & Leadership Programmes**
- **We will continue to implement the 'Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways' report and the Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway**
 - We will implement the next phase of work to end homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland and invest a further £50m to continue this work
 - We will continue to ensure people under 26 years old who have previously been in the care of a local authority are exempt from Council Tax
 - We will seek to improve accessibility, affordability choices and standards across the whole rented sector in Scotland through A New Deal for Tenants – our rented housing strategy to be published by 2023
 - We will continue to employ a multiagency approach to ensure that all care leavers are supported through Continuing Care or transition support to independent living, which will require corporate parents to work to improve the level and consistency of provision of Continuing Care and aftercare support.

Creating The Right Scaffolding

In the previous section we set out our vision for how we will ensure that when and where our children enter care they have the support and love and stability they should have. In achieving this and our ambition to keep families together where it is safe to do so it is imperative that we have the correct structures and services available to help. The Promise refers to this as ‘the Scaffolding’ and tells us

that our children, families and the workforce must be supported by a workforce that is there when it is needed.

The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required and this section sets out the actions we will take to achieve this.

Chapter 11: Taking A Strategic Approach To Change

Chapter 12: Building An Evidence Base for Delivery Of Children’s Services

Chapter 13: Improving Information Sharing

Chapter 14: Supporting The Workforce

Chapter 15: Developing Trauma-Informed Care



Chapter 11

Taking A Strategic Approach To Change

As we have stated throughout this Plan, improving outcomes for children and families requires transformational change across Scottish Government policy areas, national and local public authorities, communities, and Third Sector delivery partners. We have a clear understanding of the action needed (the ‘*what*’) and the values, principles, and approaches which make a positive difference (the ‘*how*’). While presented slightly differently in different contexts, our key principles remain based on the Christie Commission findings (2011) on the reform of public service delivery:

- Wellbeing as holistic, interconnected, and contingent on rights being upheld;
- Shifting resources towards prevention and early intervention;
- Service design and delivery which families experience as joined-up;
- Child and family centred practice which builds on strengths, and is rights based trauma-informed, inclusive and collaborative.

As The Promise has told us, the current care system does not operate consistently across the whole of Scotland. It is experienced differently across the country and, at its worst, it can perpetuate the trauma many children have already experienced. The Promise is clear that 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 must be ready and responsive when it is required.

For the required changes to be made, the standards of care must be consistent across providers and these must continue to be subject to independent scrutiny and accreditation that values what children and families value.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

National Social Work Agency

Social workers have a key role in ensuring that we keep The Promise. A skilled, stable and valued social work workforce that holds human rights, advocacy and empowerment at its heart and is able to provide holistic support for children, young people and their families is crucial. Currently, there is no single national body tasked with having oversight and leading social workers’ professional development, education and improvement. In this regard, the Independent Review of Adult Social Care 2021 recommended the establishment of a National Social Work Agency.

*‘Establishing a national organisation for training, development, recruitment and retention for adult social care support, **including a specific Social Work Agency for oversight of professional development.** The current role, functions and powers of the Scottish Social Services Council should be reviewed and appropriate read-across embedded for shared and reciprocal learning with the NHS workforce.’*

This was explored further in 2021 as part of our public consultation on the National Care Service. Analysis of the consultation responses showed strong support for the establishment of a National Social Work Agency that would invest in the social work profession. The consultation proposals included:

- scaling up good practice and improvement by establishing a Centre of Excellence to inform and direct social work improvement and development;
- improving pre- and post-social work qualifying education, training and development. Establishing a national framework for social work learning and professional development and advanced practice;

- considering a national approach to terms and conditions to reward the attainment of knowledge, qualifications and skills.
- shaping a new culture which puts people at the heart of the way social work is practiced in Scotland, so that their care and support is holistic and enables them to have the lives they want to lead;
- creating a national lead on workforce planning and data to allow the National Care Service to respond dynamically to emerging needs and to inform longer-term planning across the sector.

We will consider establishing a National Social Work Agency and a profession based approach to strengthen work on transitions (children-adult) and promote consistency of support. If progressed it will be important that this would be developed by working with stakeholders across the sector and with engagement with those with lived experience in order to ensure from initial design stage through to implementation and evaluation that the voice of lived experience is at the heart of any changes we make.

Children's Hearing System Redesign

We are committed to ensuring that the Children's Hearing System and the courts can facilitate child friendly justice that upholds children's rights and enables their effective participation. To support this, the Hearings System Working Group has been set up to consider the redesign process for the children's hearings system and Sheriff David Mackie has been appointed to chair this work.

This multi-agency working group is a partnership between Children's Hearing Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and The Promise Scotland. It will facilitate a process that will have the needs of children and families with lived experience of the children's hearing system at its heart. We will consider the group's findings carefully when it is expected to report in 2023. Should legislation be required to deliver the re-design process, we are committed to introducing legislation in this parliamentary session.

The Children's Hearing System

Following the recommendation of the Kilbrandon report in 1964, The Children's Hearings System began operating on 15 April 1971. It exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland and takes an integrated and holistic approach to care and justice, in which the child's best interests are the paramount consideration. The main principle being that children and young people who offend, as well as those who require care and protection, should equally be considered as 'children in need'.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 set out significant reforms designed to modernise and streamline the children's hearings system through a number of structural reforms. However, The Promise is clear that there must now be a more active consideration of underlying structures so that the children's hearings system is best placed to truly listen and uphold the legal rights of children and their families.

Accountability and Governance

The Promise is clear that if Scotland is to shift its practice to support, prioritise and nurture relationships, then we must shift our accountability structures. Part of this relates to inspection. We are committed to ensuring regulation and scrutiny centres on listening to children about how they are cared for, their ability to thrive and measures the things that matter to children, young people and their families.

A new, holistic framework for inspection and regulation that values what children, young people and families value, will be scoped and developed by 2024, coordinated with the main regulators, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Social Services Council.

We will also ask the Strategic Scrutiny Group to look at how coordinated scrutiny can support changes to Keep The Promise.

The accountability systems that hold the system to account for the decision it makes about children and their families have become too complex. The Promise makes clear that the governance landscape around the various boards, networks and groups that sit around the care system must be rationalised to enable effective and accountable shared working around the lives of children and families.

To tackle this, we will collaborate with The Promise Scotland to scope a new, holistic framework for governance and accountability. We recognise that this work will intersect with recent and forthcoming reviews and commissions, so we have

asked The Promise Scotland to take a leadership role in what will, of necessity, be collaborative work. Once completed, any recommendations requiring legislative underpinning will be considered for inclusion in The Promise Bill for introduction later in this Parliamentary session.

Public Appointments

The Promise Scotland in their Plan 21-24, identify that all public appointments to any of Scotland's Boards and Public Bodies which have an impact on the care system must ensure that the values of The Promise are embedded in recruitment frameworks. We will explore how we ensure that appointments to public bodies that are within the gift of the Scottish Government can reflect this commitment.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We will consider establishing a National Social Work Agency to support the workforce and ensure equality of service and support.** This is an opportunity to establish a single national lead that has oversight and leads social workers' professional development, education, terms and conditions, workforce planning and improvement.
- **We will take forward a redesign of the Children's Hearings System, building on the recommendations from the review led by Sheriff Mackie, with the aim to bring forward any required legislation by the end of the Parliamentary session.** This multi-agency review is a partnership between Children's Hearing Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and The Promise Scotland. It will facilitate a process that will have the needs of children and families with lived experience of the Children's Hearing System at its heart.
- **We will collaborate with The Promise Scotland to scope a new, holistic framework for governance and accountability.** This work will report by June 2024 and any recommendations requiring legislative underpinning will be considered for inclusion in The Promise Bill.

Chapter 12

Building An Evidence Base For Delivery Of Children's Services

The Promise is clear that Scotland must fundamentally shift the primary purpose of the whole of our care system from protecting against harm to protecting all safe, loving respectful relationships. There must be consistent and holistic support available to children and young people and their families whenever they need it.

On 3 February 2021, the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland led by Derek Feeley reported its findings. In recommending the establishment of a National Care Service, the report called for *“a new narrative for adult social care support that replaces crisis with prevention and wellbeing, burden with investment, competition with collaboration and variation with fairness and equity. We need a culture shift that values human rights, lived experience, co-production, mutuality and the common good.”*

In 2021, we undertook a national consultation on a National Care Service for Scotland. The Consultation Paper set out questions which went further than the recommendations made in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, and proposed that social work and social care services for children and young people should be considered as potentially beneficial for inclusion within the scope of the National Care Service. While the majority of respondents to the consultation agreed that Children's Services should be included (75% of individuals and 78% of organisations), key voices, including The Promise Scotland, expressed concern about this proposal.

In order to Keep The Promise, all 80+ conclusions of the Independent Care Review must be implemented, in sequence, at pace and in full. The National Care Service presents a significant opportunity to drive forward the fundamental shift required to do this, but it is clear there are also risks. The key potential benefits include the ability to address regional and local variation in children's services, improve access to services, improve transitions between services and reduce variation in eligibility criteria thresholds. The key risk is slowing the pace of delivery while structural change is undertaken.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

Exploring the options for the future of children's services will enable us to assess the best way to Keep The Promise and we will take account of the improvement work already being undertaken across Scotland. We will work with The Promise Scotland, COSLA and partners to explore and understand the impact of children's services within the range of delivery models currently in place. In early 2023, the evidence base will be used to explore application of the best governance, financial arrangements and models of care to assess how Scotland can best Keep The Promise. We will update Parliament on this issue by the end of this Parliamentary year.

Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will work with The Promise Scotland to build an evidence base to understand the best governance, financial arrangements and models of care to assess how we can best Keep The Promise.** This will explore the options for the future of children's services from an evidence based position and enable us to assess the best way to Keep The Promise. Within this, we will take account of the improvement work already being undertaken across Scotland



Chapter 13

Improving Information Sharing

The Promise told us the challenge faced by many of our care experienced children and young people who need to tell their story again every time they meet someone new who is there to support them. Often within the same service, or the same establishment. But imagine also feeling that you have to tell your story when really you just want to be recognised as the same as everybody else around you. This is a challenge that we know our young care experienced people will go through on a daily basis.

It is crucial that information sharing should not be a barrier to supporting children and families. The ability of the system to Keep The Promise will depend on the appropriate understanding of the needs of and the personal situation faced by each of our children and young people. Organisations with responsibilities towards children and families should be confident about when, where, why and how to share information with partners, in a way which complies with applicable legal requirements.

While it is important for services to have the right information, it is also crucial that our care

experienced children and young people have appropriate control over their information, recognising that decisions about the creation and use of information will require to be taken on behalf of very young children.

Guaranteeing that our children and young people have the rights of their personal story and data is a separate issue from how Scotland shares information about children at risk. Within many Significant Case reviews where the worst has happened to children, it was recognised that key information was not shared with the right people or when it was, it was either overlooked or not received quickly enough for the appropriate action to be taken.

The complexities of striking a balance between privacy and utility will require expert advice to ensure any changes to information sharing are done in a correct and lawfully compliant way. We will work with The Promise Scotland to develop a blueprint for the creation and control of, and access to, information about care experienced people and an initial report of findings will be presented by The Promise Scotland by June 2023.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We will support The Promise Scotland to develop a blueprint for the creation and control of, and access to, information about care experienced people which will empower people to decide who and when key information about them is made available.** This approach to developing a blueprint in compliance with applicable law, will empower people to decide who and when key information about them is made available. It will examine protocols to be established with key institutions to support provision of the right information at the right time to best support our children and young people who are care experienced. Initial report of findings will be presented by The Promise Scotland by June 2023

Chapter 14

Supporting The Workforce

To ensure that we create a Scotland where all children feel loved, respected, listened to and heard in decisions that affect them we must develop and invest in the workforce.

Central to this is the requirement for a national strategic planning process to bring greater consistency in the standards of care and support to strengthen the role of universal services, and the third sector; and to embed intensive family support, targeted therapeutic services, improved transitions to adult care services and whole system approaches to care and support.

The interface with universal services such as health visiting, Allied Health Professional's and public health services is critical. Equally the interface and transition into services for adults is an important consideration in relation to the provision of children's services. Practitioners in adult services often play a key role in GIRFEC practice through early identification of need, contributing to assessment of wellbeing, and as part of the *'team around the child'* by providing support to parents/carers. This will be reflected in the emerging work around Getting it Right for everyone adult care operational delivery model.

What the Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

We will establish an Advanced Social Work Practice Framework which will set out the structures which support social workers to progress through different career phases and describe a cohesive and supportive series of academic, learning and developmental, and work based opportunities to support the workforce, both now and in the future.

Whilst focusing on social work practice, the development and implementation of the framework and practice standards will be cognisant of the diversity of social work practice alongside the multiagency and interdisciplinary landscape which exists in all practice areas. The framework will support the workforce across a range of practice models to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

In addition, we will establish a practice framework which will ensure a national approach to the learning and development opportunities for paraprofessionals within the social work workforce including establishing access routes into further education, including Graduate Apprenticeships. The social work framework will be mindful of the existing professional frameworks and career pathways for universal and targeted health services.

To accompany this we will also develop a common core training framework for the integrated children and family's workforce this will focus on the core skills values and learning that the workforce will require to deliver family support and rights based practice.

We will continue to review the role of universal and targeted health services, such as health visiting and family nurse partnership, particularly during pregnancy and the earliest years of life, to identify where it could be further strengthened to respond more consistently to the needs of families at the earliest stage. Continuity of support to both identify unmet health needs and provide a continuum of support, regardless of where the child lives, from early childhood to adolescence and across and between services and disciplines.

Workforce Objectives to Delivering The Promise

We are committed to workforce planning through the children and families strategic partnerships outcomes framework. This will ensure continuity from legacy and current policies to future national policy initiatives in health, social services and the delivery of the national outcomes delivered by implementation of GIRFEC, UNCRC and The Promise. Central to this is the development of cross-sector messaging; and a multi-disciplinary and a common core training and skills framework for the integrated workforce to be delivered through advanced practice frameworks.

The £500 million to be invested in preventative spend through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, set out in Chapter 1, will deliver service re-design and help upskill the workforce, and we will also progress the delivery of a rights and relationship based practice and trauma informed training programme for the integrated children and family's workforce.

Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group

The Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group (CLG) brings together national and local government and other partners across children and families services, health, education, justice, and the third sector to take collaborative action to support children, young people and families in vulnerable situations.

CLG was initially set up to provide support during the pandemic but is now taking broader action as part of Scotland's renewal and recovery. The Group's key priorities include maintaining momentum on collective action to Keep The Promise and as part of this, CLG sub-groups are taking forward work on the provision of Family Support and Workforce Development.

CLG works closely with the Children's Services Planning Strategic Leads Network to help deliver more effective joined-up collaborations across services and across the country. CLG's work programme is also linked to UNCRC Implementation; the Covid Recovery Strategy and the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.



Leadership To Deliver Change

The work of the Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group includes a specific strand to support Children's Services Workforce Development. It aims to be able to promote and coordinate strong collective action to develop a trauma informed workforce that can deliver the level of change that is required. There is a busy programme of legislative and other changes ahead, and the subgroup is playing a vital role in coordinating the collective responses to these changes. The Promise made it clear we need to do more to reduce inequalities, and the Sub-group is also playing a decisive role in that sense.

Through this work we will progress an integrated whole system approach to workforce planning and workforce development for the children and families workforce, including the adult care workforce that support transitions. The work will align and inform decisions on policy priorities across Children and Families, Early Learning and Childcare, Children's Nursing, Allied Health Professionals, Mental Health and Health and Social Care Directorates. In practice, helping everybody understand their individual and collective contribution towards improving the coherence, alignment and implementation of Scottish Government policy, and as a result, to improve outcomes for children and families by carrying out the following actions:

- fully considering workforce implications of policy developments holistically across the wider system, while developing, deciding on and implementing policies relevant to children, young people and families;
- ensuring any implications of policies for the workforce are explored fully and the costs and impacts on all parts of the system are addressed through appropriate governance and funding routes;
- ensuring specific recommendations on/policies for workforce reflect the multidisciplinary and multi-organisational nature of support provision and consider the wider impacts of any changes proposed;
- building support and buy-in for agreed priorities for investment to strengthen or remodel how support can be provided most effectively to children, young people and families; and
- Highlighting positive impact, as well as driving improvement in areas where not enough progress is being made, the Group will enhance our accountability to Scotland's children, young people and families.

Workforce Regulation To Support The Promise

A review of Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) codes of practice is underway to ensure consistency with the skills and practice requirements of The Promise focused on trauma informed family support etc. The Care Inspectorate are also reviewing the inspection and scrutiny framework

- SSSC has committed to work with The Promise Scotland on a myth busting campaign on workforce regulation and standards of practice, which supports the shift towards relationship based practice and the development of ongoing relationships
- The Care Inspectorate have given relationships greater prominence in the new quality improvement frameworks that underpin inspections.
- The Promise Scotland will work with the Care Inspectorate, SSSC and other key stakeholders to create an enabling practice environment which supports and evidences a move towards relationship based practice

Building on national and local initiatives, we will support work to improve the wellbeing of the workforce and consider the impact of the pandemic and recovery, linking to the work of the national wellbeing hub which has allocated funding developed resources and implemented a staff specialist support service.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will consider establishing a National Social Work Agency to support the workforce and ensure equality of service and support.** This is an opportunity to establish a single national lead that has oversight and leads social workers' professional development, education, terms and conditions, workforce planning and improvement.
- **We will implement a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework in place and adhered to by all organisations and professions involved in supporting children and their families**
 - review the codes of practice to ensure they are consistent with the principles of rights based practice set out in The Promise.
 - update the common core skills framework for children to ensure it reflects the objectives of The Promise and is relevant and applicable across the integrated workforce centred on a family support model.
 - develop a common core skills framework for the integrated workforce centred on a family support model
 - we will consider how best to put in place the infrastructure needed to support and develop the social work workforce to ensure equality of service.
- **We will continue to review the role of universal and targeted health services, such as health visiting and family nurse partnership, particularly during pregnancy and the earliest years of life, to identify where it could be further strengthened to respond more consistently to the needs of families at the earliest stage**
- **We will work across Government to align and inform decisions on policy priorities across Children and Families, Early Learning and Childcare, Children's Nursing, Allied Health Professionals, Mental Health and Health and Social Care**

Chapter 15

Trauma-Informed Care

In line with commitments to children's rights and GIRFEC, we are committed to preventing adverse and traumatic childhood experiences as far as possible, and providing support to mitigate the negative impacts. As part of this, we are committed to developing trauma-informed workforces and services and have provided over £4 million funding for the National Trauma Training Programme to date.

Being *'trauma-informed'* means being able to recognise when someone may be affected by adversity and trauma, and collaboratively adjusting ways of working to respond in ways that supports recovery, does no harm and recognises and supports people's resilience.

All workers, in the context of their own role and work remit, have a unique and essential trauma-informed role to play in responding to children, young people, parents and carers who are affected by trauma. This does not mean that everyone needs to be a trauma expert, but it is important that workers recognise that every interaction with someone affected by trauma, is an opportunity to support their recovery.

Trauma-informed organisations assume that people have had traumatic experiences, and that as a result people may find it difficult to feel safe within services and to develop trusting relationships with service providers. Consequently, trauma-informed services are structured, organised and delivered in ways that promote safety and trust and aim to prevent re-traumatisation.

The National Trauma Training Programme

Since 2018, the Scottish Government has invested over £4 million in a National Trauma Training Programme, including £1.6 million of funding distributed to all local authorities in 2021/22 to work with community planning partners to further progress trauma-informed services, systems and workforces.

The overarching vision of the National Trauma Training Programme is:

"A trauma-informed workforce and services across Scotland, capable of recognising where people are affected by trauma and adversity, that is able to respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery, and can address inequalities and improve life chances."

The ambition is to ensure that services and care are delivered in ways that:

- are informed by people with lived experience
- recognise the prevalence and impact of adverse and traumatic experiences
- recognise the importance of wellbeing for the workforce and carers
- respond in ways that prevent further harm
- support recovery
- address inequalities and improve life chances

National Trauma Training Programme





Working with COSLA we have a joint ambition for developing trauma-informed workforces and services across Scotland. This commitment is supported by the National Trauma Training Programme, which provides accessible, evidence-based **trauma training resources** and support for implementation. This Programme is key to ensuring that children, young people and families are supported effectively by workforces and services that recognise the impact of adverse and traumatic experiences, and provide support which is centred around relationships and causes no further harm.

In 2017 NHS Education for Scotland (NES) published the **Knowledge and Skills Framework for Psychological Trauma** informed by people with lived experience of trauma. This Framework sets out four levels of knowledge and skills required across the Scottish workforce. As a minimum, all members of the workforce need to be at the level of trauma *'informed'*, but depending on the nature of different roles and organisations, members of the workforce may also need trauma *'skilled'*, *'enhanced'* or *'specialist'* knowledge and skills.

Practice Levels of the Transforming Psychological Trauma Knowledge & Skills Framework (NES)

NES have developed, and continue to develop, evidence-based online training resources to help increase awareness, knowledge and capability among all sectors of the workforce to understand the impact of trauma and embed trauma-informed practice and responses. These are available for free and are accessible to everyone in the Scottish workforce. In 2019, NES also published a **Trauma Training Plan** which details how to identify high-quality training that will meet the needs set out in the **Psychological Trauma Knowledge and Skills Framework**.

Involving people with lived experience of trauma is central to the implementation of trauma-informed approaches. We are currently funding a number of partner organisations to work with people with lived experience of trauma to co-create trauma-informed tools and resources to support local authorities and partners to safely create power sharing experiences with people with lived experience of trauma.

	<p>TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE LEVEL Knowledge and skills required for all members of the Scottish Workforce.</p>
	<p>TRAUMA SKILLED PRACTICE LEVEL Knowledge and skills required for workers with direct and frequent contact with people who may be affected by trauma.</p>
	<p>TRAUMA ENHANCED PRACTICE LEVEL Knowledge and skills for staff with regular and intense contact with people affected by trauma and who have a specific remit to respond by providing support, advocacy or specific psychological interventions to protocol, and/or staff with responsibility for directly managing care and/or services for those affected by trauma.</p>
	<p>TRAUMA SPECIALIST PRACTICE LEVEL Knowledge and skills for staff who have a remit to provide evidence-based interventions and treatment for those affected by trauma with complex needs.</p>

Support for Implementation and Sharing Learning

Support for trauma training and implementation, across all sectors of the workforce, is provided by a team of Transforming Psychological Trauma Implementation Co-Ordinators (TPTICs) based in every Health Board in Scotland. In 2021, a network of 'Trauma Champions' was also established, this includes senior leaders from across local authorities, health boards, and key community planning partners who work collaboratively to influence change across local areas. The Trauma Champions network is supported by the Improvement Service, with tailored advice and support for Champions and local areas and facilitated learning between local areas.

The Improvement Service, in partnership with NES, hosted three collaborative learning workshops for Champions in 2021 with a further four planned in 2022. These support champions to share learning, good practice, and discuss challenges and opportunities. In addition, the Improvement Service have established an online community of practice for professionals across Scotland to connect and share learning on trauma-informed approaches.

In 2020/21, the Improvement Service, NES and the Scottish Government launched a series of learning events to explore how adopting a trauma-informed approach can support key community planning priorities and support professionals to identify tangible steps to help ensure this approach is embedded in policy and practice moving forward. This included sharing the findings from a **learning event focused on supporting improved outcomes for children and families**. The Improvement Service are also developing a series of **'companion documents'** to support professionals working on a range of issues to embed trauma-informed approaches, including domestic abuse and alcohol and substance use.

The **trauma-informed practice toolkit publication** continues to be shared to support all sectors of the workforce in planning and developing trauma-informed services. In addition, learning is

continuing from the local authority delivery trials funded in 2019 to test out different approaches to rolling out trauma training in three the local areas (Argyle & Bute, Glasgow, and Midlothian). An **interim evaluation** was published in March 2021 and a further evaluation report will be commissioned in 2022/23.

Workforce and Sector Specific Workstreams

Building on the progress of the National Trauma Training Programme to date, a number of Programme workstreams are currently underway with specific sectors and workforces, to support implementation of trauma-informed approaches and develop learning for driving future progress. Two key workstreams for implementation of The Promise are:

1) Training and support on trauma-informed and skilled practice for people contributing to the lives of care experienced babies, children and young people.

Based on the **Transforming Psychological Trauma: Knowledge and Skills Framework**, a new training module has been included in the **NES 'Developing your trauma skilled practice' e-module**, focussing on children and young people. Building on this, NES are currently piloting a blended learning programme at the trauma skilled level which is specifically focussed on the needs of the workforce who are involved in the lives of babies, children and young people with care experience.

2) Programme of implementation support to develop trauma-informed social work services.

A plan has been developed for a programme of implementation support to develop trauma-informed social work services and an Expert Advisory Group has been formed to lead this work. This Group includes practitioners working in social work services across Scotland and individuals and organisations representing people with lived experience of trauma, and social work services. The Scottish Government, in collaboration with the Expert Advisory Group, will further develop the plan and work in partnership with key stakeholders to:

- Ensure necessary trauma knowledge and skills are core to social work education.
- Develop a consistent approach to support consolidation of the trauma skilled practice of Newly Qualified Social Workers in their supported year.
- Establish an implementation team to deliver a cohesive programme of workforce support for organisational change, for all of the social work workforce including operational middle and front line social work leaders
- Provide workforce support through ongoing implementation support, consultancy and coaching with a focus on power sharing and co-design with people with lived experience to develop trauma-informed policies, procedures, systems and environments.
- Ensure a suitable range of developmental and relationship-based trainings are available, (including Enhanced Trauma practice trainings for those working with children and young people and their families).
- Ensure trainings and implementation support that focuses on trauma and its impacts, reflective practice supervisions and worker wellbeing.
- Ensure there are suitable train the trainers programmes for trainings relevant to children's social care workers and the social work profession

Additional workstreams being undertaken as part of the National Trauma Training Programme include:

- In 2022/23, we will be supporting two trauma-informed maternity services pathfinder projects based in NHS Grampian and NHS Forth Valley. These pathfinder projects will provide tailored training, improvement planning and implementation support for trauma-informed practice, working alongside experts by experience and experts by profession. A national learning report will be published on completion of these pathfinders. This work builds on the refresh of existing NES maternity trauma training resources (including the '**One out of Four**' learning resource about the impacts of sexual trauma) and the **NES**

research report about the support needed to help maternity services to be trauma-informed.

- Continued work to integrate the National Trauma Training Programme training resources into Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) practitioners training modules and into Education Scotland training and resources for the education sector on relationship-based and nurture approaches (including the Compassionate and Connected Classroom resources).
- A pathfinder delivery trial, running over 2022/23, to help embed trauma-informed practice in substance use services in two health board areas (NHS Dumfries & Galloway and Orkney) and share learning for wider implementation. This will also provide support for implementation of the new **Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards** to enable the consistent delivery of safe, accessible, high-quality drug treatment across Scotland.
- Development of a Knowledge and Skills Framework for a trauma-informed justice workforce for people coming into contact with victims and witnesses, as part of the work for the Scottish Government's Victims and Witnesses Taskforce, as set out further in Chapter 6.

In order to help inform future plans there is a need to better understand existing professional education and continuous professional learning (CPL), and current provision of supervision, reflective practice and coaching, across the workforce. These issues will be explored as part of the programme of work on trauma-informed social work services (see above), as well as additional workstreams to:

- **Map current professional education routes and CPL opportunities for staff working within key sectors of the children and families workforce.** In 2022 we will commission research to map current professional education routes and continuous professional learning opportunities for staff working within key

sectors of the children and families workforce, including a review of the extent to which learning about the impact of psychological trauma and trauma-informed practice is included, and where there are gaps.

- **Map existing provision of supervision, reflective practice and coaching across key sectors of the children and families workforce.** By the end of 2022 we will commission an independent contractor to explore what models are currently used in different professions, what is involved, what skills levels are required, and where there are gaps.

Developing Learning and Next Steps

Two additional workstreams are also currently underway to further help with collating and sharing good practice:

- Collating the learning and emerging evidence from sector/workforce specific projects funded through the National Trauma Training Programme (detailed above) to inform continued knowledge sharing and future development of the Programme.
- Developing a Quality Indicators Framework for trauma-informed services, systems and workforces by end 2022, to support consistent implementation of good practice, gauge progress, and identify areas for improvement.

During 2022/23 we will take stock of the progress to date and develop plans for the future direction of the programme. This will involve learning from the current training, implementation support, research, and sector/ workforce specific workstreams, and engaging with a wide-range of people (including experts by experience and profession) to develop the next phase of the Programme. This work is being undertaken as part of our commitment to develop a national strategy on psychological trauma and adversity (including adverse childhood experiences) over the course of 2022/23.

As part of this work we will explore the best routes for driving progress on developing trauma-informed workforce and services across Scotland, whilst maintaining fidelity to the evidence-base and good practice established in the **NES Knowledge and Skills Framework for Psychological Trauma**. This is crucial given the fundamental importance of ensuring improved outcomes for children, young people and families by supporting recovery and avoiding re-traumatisation. In addition to the training needs, the next phase of the Programme will have an increased focus on supporting implementation and embedding trauma-informed practice within organisations and services, since training alone is not sufficient.

By April 2023, we will publish a long-term delivery plan setting out the training and implementation support the Scottish Government and partners will continue to provide to help embed and sustain trauma-informed workforces, services and care. This will include a priority focus on trauma training and support for adoptive parents, kinship, foster and supported carers.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will, by the end of 2022, roll out a trauma skilled learning programme focused on the needs of workforce involved in the lives of babies, children and young people with care experience.**
- **From 2022 onwards we will roll out a national programme of implementation support to develop trauma-informed social work services across Scotland.** This will focus on trauma enhanced social work practices and involve providing ongoing support for organisational change to social work service providers, including:
 - a broad range of trainings and coaching support,
 - reflective practice supervision, systems and approaches, and
 - leadership support.
- **During 2022/23 we will share learning and guidance to inform future progress on developing trauma-informed workforce and services, including:**
 - A Quality Indicators Framework for trauma-informed services, systems and workforce.
 - Mapping of professional education and Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) opportunities within the children and families workforce.
 - Mapping of existing provision of supervision, reflective practice and coaching within the children and families workforce.
 - Learning from pathfinders supporting trauma-informed maternity services and trauma-informed substance use services.
 - Publication of a Knowledge and Skills Framework for trauma-informed justice services for people coming into contact with victims and witnesses.
- **We will, by April 2023, publish a long-term delivery plan for further work to embed and sustain trauma-informed workforces, services and care.** This will include a priority focus on trauma training and support for adoptive parents, kinship, foster and supported carers.

Building Capacity

In the previous section we set out how the scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive to support our children, young people and families and the workforce when it is required.

To achieve this it is necessary that we build on a strong legislative framework, that our financial ambitions are aligned and recognise that to improve outcomes we must invest in

prevention; and that continued improvement must be underpinned by good information and evaluation so that we know that we have both kept The Promise and that we will continue to keep it.

In this section we will set out the actions that we will take to build this capacity to support the change required to improve the lives of our children, young people and families.

Chapter 16: Legislative Change

Chapter 17: Realigning Spend Toward Prevention

Chapter 18: Data Mapping, Collection and Evaluation



Chapter 16

Legislative Change

It is important that everybody, including our children and young people, understand their rights and how the law applies to them. The legislative framework which currently underpins the care system is set out across dozens of different pieces of legislation.

The Promise refers to 44 pieces of primary legislation, 19 pieces of secondary legislation and 3 international conventions. This is difficult enough for professionals to understand, let alone children and young people. As The Promise told us, there must be a clear legislative, enabling environment that supports families to stay together and protects and allows relationships to flourish.

What The Scottish Government Is Doing To Support Change

A Legislative Programme to Support Change

There are parts of The Promise that require legislative changes to progress outcomes in the immediate term. In order to support the change required, we will introduce legislation between now and 2030 including:

- delivering our commitment to **incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law**. Following the Supreme Court judgement in March 2021, we are urgently considering the most effective way forward for this important legislation. We remain committed to the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law to the maximum extent possible as soon as practicable.
- a **Bail and Release from Custody Bill** will be introduced this Parliamentary session. This will be brought forward to reform how remand is used and how release mechanisms work for certain prisoners in a Bail and Release from Custody Bill. We consulted on this between November 2021 and February 2022.
- a **Children's Care and Justice Bill** will be introduced this Parliamentary session to enable improvements to youth justice, secure care, aspects of the children's hearings system, victims' services and the criminal justice system.
- a **Housing Bill** will be introduced this Parliamentary session. This will be a wide-ranging Bill including measures to both strengthen existing homelessness prevention legislation and introduce new duties on public bodies to 'ask and act' to prevent homelessness before someone reaches crisis point.
- a **Legal Aid Reform Bill** will be introduced in this Parliamentary session, to ensure that the system is flexible, easy to access and meets the needs of those who use it.
- a **Human Rights Bill** will be introduced in this Parliamentary Session to ensure Scotland is a global leader in human rights. The Bill will give effect in Scots law to the maximum extent possible of a wide range of internationally recognised human rights – belonging to everyone in Scotland and strengthen domestic legal protections by making them enforceable in Scots law. We will consult on the Bill in the coming year.
- By the end of this parliamentary session, we will bring forward a **Promise Bill** to make any further legislative changes required to Keep The Promise. For example, should legislation be required to implement the recommendations of the Children's Hearings Working Group, this may be included in this Bill. Also, where we bring forward guidance that requires to be put on a statutory footing to make sure that public authorities do what is necessary to keep The Promise, these provisions would be included in this Bill.

A review of the current legislative framework

We will undertake a review of the legislative framework relating to the care system in Scotland. We will consider the desirability and extent of a re-statement of the law in this area so that the law relating to the care system is identifiable and understandable before considering whether a Bill re-stating the law is necessary.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We will introduce a Promise Bill to make any further legislative changes required to Keep The Promise, including in relation to the Children's Hearings Systems redesign, by the end of this parliamentary session.**
- **We will undertake a review of the legislative framework relating to the care system in Scotland.**



Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly recognises the central role played by parents and families in ensuring that children grow up healthy, happy and safe. It recognises that families need protection and assistance to support the rights and wellbeing of children. Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law would mean that all Scotland's public authorities would be required to take proactive steps to ensure the protection of children's rights. These rights include, for example:

- the right for children not to be separated from their parents against their will (unless this is necessary for the best interests of the child);
- the right, when separated from one or both parents, to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents (except if it is contrary to the child's best interests);
- for those temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, the right to special protection and assistance provided by the State;
- for those capable of forming their own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them, and for those views to be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity;
- the right to appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians to help them raise children;
- the right to a standard of living adequate for children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development; and
- the right to appropriate measures to promote children's physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration if they have been a victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts.

Incorporation would make it unlawful for public authorities, including the Scottish Government, to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements as set out in the Bill. Children, young people and their representatives would have a new ability to use the courts to enforce their rights.

Our UNCRC implementation **action plan** includes building the capacity for public authorities to take a child rights-based approach in the design and delivery of services and ensuring that children, young people, their families and all of Scottish society are aware of and understand the UNCRC. In our work to deliver the UNCRC we will:

- develop guidance and materials needed to support the fulfilment of children's rights in practice, including Statutory Guidance on the duties on public authorities, within 6 months of the Bill receiving Royal Assent;
- consult on and publish a Children's Rights Scheme which will set out how Scottish Government will give better and further effect to the rights of children, again within 6 months of the Bill receiving Royal Assent;
- launch a National Leadership Forum for Children's Rights by the end of June 2022.
- develop, by the end of March 2023, a knowledge and skills framework to support capacity building in public services in taking a child's rights approach in practice to drive forward the culture change required; and
- continue to promote the importance and adoption of Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs) amongst bodies other than public authorities, as well as continuing work to improve CRWIA training and develop an impact evaluation process by the end of March 2023.

Chapter 17

Realigning Spend Toward Prevention

The Promise Scotland set out in ‘The Money’ and ‘Follow the Money’ that every year, Scotland invests £942 million in the care system and the universal services which can be associated with care costs a further £198 million per annum. Failures to accommodate the needs of children and young people result in poor outcomes in health, education and employment.

In addition to these poor outcomes, care experienced adults often require additional services to support them with the impacts of their negative experiences which is estimated to cost around £875 million per annum. Preventative spend is key to ensuring that children and young people achieve positive outcomes which is beneficial to them, their families and the wider economy.

We strongly support The Promise Scotland’s work with local authorities on piloting Human and Economic Cost Modelling (HECM) and we will ensure that this work is linked to our broader ambition to create a wellbeing economy. This will benefit everyone by creating a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for Scotland’s people and places.

Only through policy and financial alignment will we shift the balance of investment in families from crisis management towards prevention. Our ambition is that, from 2030, we will be investing at least 5% of all community-based health and social care spend in preventative whole family support measures that will enable us to create a Scotland where more children will only know care, compassion and love, and not a care system. At current levels of investment we estimate this to be around £500 million per year. The Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, set out in Chapter 1, is a big step forward on this journey to preventative spend.

Social Outcomes Contracting for the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

Support for Keeping The Promise and improving the outcomes for children, young people and families extends beyond public and third sector ambition. We are exploring whether philanthropic investors would consider the opportunity to progress a social outcomes funding approach.

A Social Outcomes Contract means a contract where payments are only made by investors once outcomes have been achieved. A social outcomes fund is a funding mechanism that enables several social outcomes contracts to be developed and supported in parallel, under a common framework. It enables an approach that is fixed on the outcomes and therefore enables the flexibility to focus on the range of support the person really needs – e.g. parenting support, schools interventions, mental health support etc. Spanning delivery by more than one organisation, an outcomes fund allows projects to adapt to emerging issues and with a heavy emphasis on real-time data management and accountability.

We will explore the opportunity to undertake a social outcomes approach over the coming months with an aim to augmenting the impact of our Whole Family Wellbeing Funding through this innovative finance model in partnership with philanthropic investors.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership – Collective Leadership

North Ayrshire has the second highest rate of child poverty in Scotland (27.9 percent) and 41 percent of residents live in the most deprived areas compared to 20 percent of the Scotland population.

As part of the response to this, North Ayrshire have adopted 6 approaches across the Local Authority to support children and families in line with Keeping The Promise. They place the children and families at the heart of their approach, and work across teams and boundaries to provide support and better outcomes. There 6 approaches are:

- Wellness Model
- Locality Working – Multidisciplinary teams
- School based Social Work Integrated Project
- Residential Social Work Team
- Integrated Universal Early Years' Service
- Employability – We Work For Families

As an example, The Employability – We Work For Families approach is targeted at unemployed and low income parents and carers. Referrals are made through a health visitor or family nurse. The service provides intensive, person centred support to overcome barriers to employment, education and training. One example of this work in action involved:

A mum to 3 children was referred to the We Work For Families service by her health visitor had low self-esteem and confidence as well as poor mental health; childcare issues and household debt. Regular intensive support was provided by We Work For Families and other services and although there were periods when engaged was difficult Mum remained open to support from the service. This continued throughout the pandemic including support to make a college application, which led to success, and Mum started a HNC Childhood Practice Course in August 2021. Mum feels her confidence has increased and is now able to participate in activities with her children. *'I feel like I now have a purpose in life'*.

Key Actions We Will Take



- **We have an ambition that at least 5% of all community based health and social care spend will be invested in preventative whole family support measures by 2030.** At current levels of investment we estimate that this will mean that by 2030 around £500 million per year will be redirected into preventative activity that will support our families
- **We will explore the opportunity to undertake a social outcomes funding approach over the coming months with an aim to introduce a social outcomes programme that will work in compliment to the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.**

Chapter 18

Data Mapping, Collection And Evaluation

Scotland's approach to data and monitoring currently splits individuals' lives into moments, often missing the opportunity to place outcomes firmly within the context of lived experiences and day to day lives. The Promise identifies a lack of understanding and focus on experiences and relationships, which, when coupled with disconnected system-focused data processes, actively creates stigmatising and triggering experiences for people moving through the system.

Scotland is striving to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. We know there are many factors that impact this ambition and, importantly, that affect the lives and wellbeing of families. This Implementation Plan, alongside other key transformational programmes including the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, must take these factors into account in all its efforts. The support that is provided, the services that are designed and delivered, the tools we use to monitor and evaluate, must always focus on what matters, ensuring that the experiences and outcomes of children and families are held centrally.

Improving outcomes for children and families requires transformational change across Scottish Government policy areas, national and local public authorities, communities, and Third Sector delivery partners. We have a clear understanding of the action needed (the '*what*') and the values, principles, and approaches which make a positive difference (the '*how*').

Scotland's National Performance Framework is at the root of Scotland's aims to create a more successful country; it is how we know if we are providing opportunities to all people living in Scotland; increasing the wellbeing of people living in Scotland; creating sustainable and inclusive

growth; reducing inequalities and giving equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress. To provide the focus required for collective action, the framework sets out 'National Outcomes'. These outcomes describe the kind of Scotland we all want to live in.

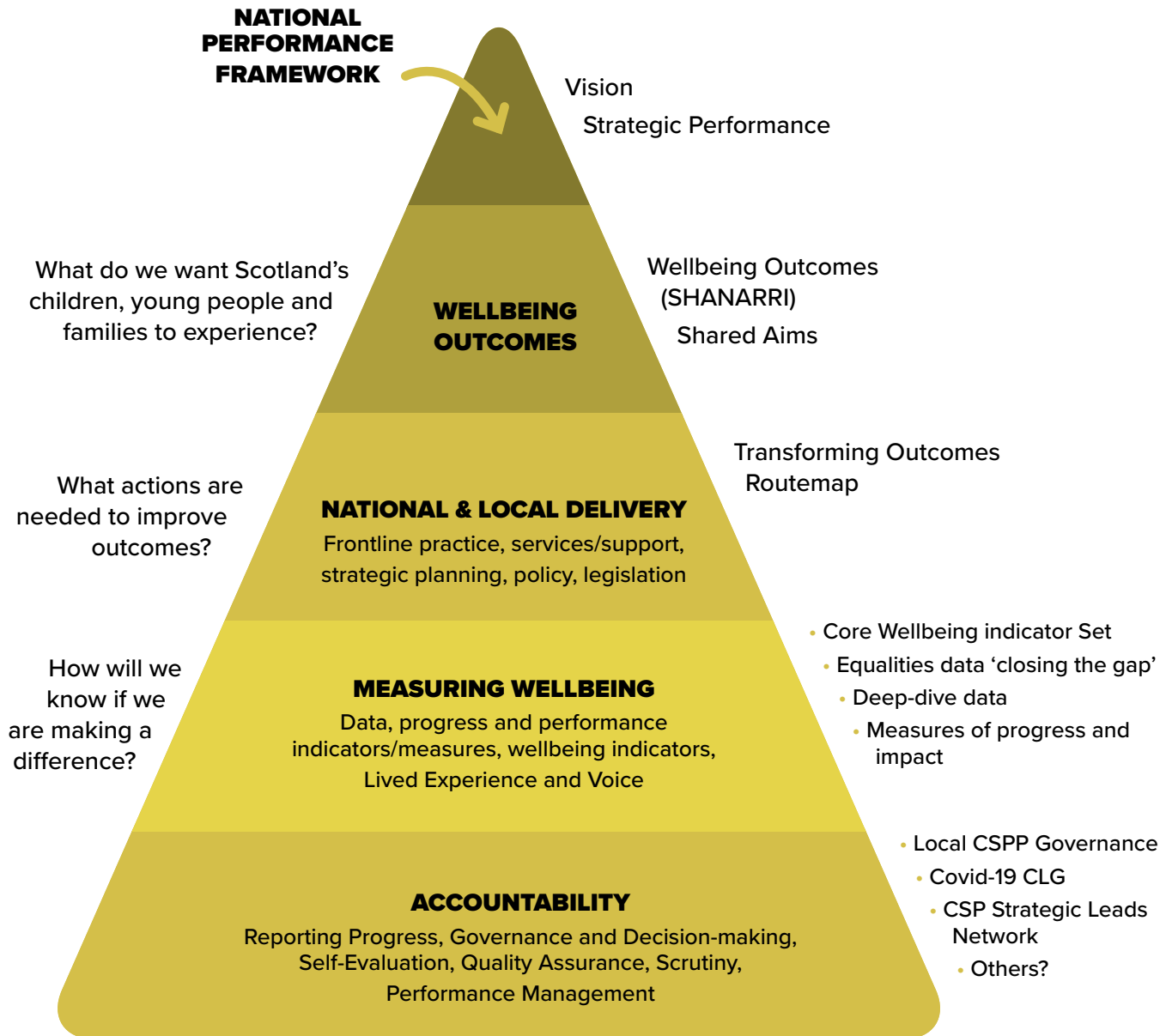
The Promise was clear that whilst outcomes are important, it is the experiences and relationships that happen on the journey to those outcomes that really matter to children, young people and families and have long lasting consequences for their lives. Therefore, we must translate the national outcomes into something that is meaningful to lives so that we can understand if Scotland is truly the best place for children and young people to grow up. We must not allow our processes to ignore experience in favour of tracking outcomes.

The Children Young People and Families Framework

This work has begun with the development of an Outcomes Framework for Children, Young People and Families which will contribute toward a holistic understanding of what we mean by wellbeing, based on what children and families have told us matters, and rooted in GIRFEC and children's rights.

The Outcomes Framework plays a key part in providing the overarching strategic coherence needed, but it is not enough on its own. The outcomes approach will only add value if we commit to contextualise it within wider sources of data, information and evidence, where we consistently work to link local information to decision making and national monitoring.

Overview of the Children, Young People & Families Outcomes Framework



Outcomes, Aims and Indicators

The Outcomes Framework includes 8 Wellbeing Outcomes, underpinned by a set of Shared Aims which set out in more detail what we need to work together on to achieve these outcomes.

The 8 Wellbeing Outcomes are interconnected – intended to be understood holistically not individually or in silos. For children and young people's wellbeing to flourish, all aspects of wellbeing (SHANARRI) must be in place and each Wellbeing Outcome has a descriptor which outlines the types of things relevant to each at a population level for babies, children, young people and families.

To start, a draft Core Wellbeing Indicator Set has been developed consisting of 21 indicators covering key aspects of wellbeing. The purpose of the set is to provide a high level and holistic overview of the state of wellbeing of children, young people and families in Scotland, highlighting whether desired long-term outcomes are being achieved, and identifying areas where further attention is required.

A set of Shared Aims sit underneath the 8 overarching Wellbeing Outcomes. These build more specifically on what it means to children, young people and families to have flourishing wellbeing. These Shared Aims are based on what children, young people and families have already told us matters most, based on views shared through a wide range of direct engagement, survey responses, and engagement reports. The engagement reports will focus on our progress to Keep The Promise, taking a more detailed approach than the 21 core wellbeing indicators.

This indicator set is designed to be used within local level reporting across Scotland through annual progress reporting on Children's Services Plans, and at a national level as part of reporting on wellbeing.

In reporting on the core wellbeing indicators, analysis will identify where there are significant differences in outcomes for particular groups of children and young people. This means that as well as identifying key trends, areas of success, and areas of concern within the Children, Young People and Families population, reporting will demonstrate how well Scotland is closing any 'wellbeing gaps'. This in turn helps to inform priority setting and adapt planning at both a local and national level.

We know that there are significant limitations in the wellbeing data, therefore, the indicators cannot be used in isolation. To improve this, we will supplement core wellbeing indicators with other types of data and information to fill gaps. By using a broad range of data sources for different purposes and examining the broader context at a local level, we will be better equipped to identify areas of success or concern.

The indicator set will also facilitate more consistent reporting across children's service plans, with core indicators supplemented by other data as required, including other indicator sets, both higher level and more detailed. The indicator set is a first step in an ongoing process of data improvement, with recommendations for areas of future indicator development to address gaps in progress. Engagement with stakeholders to support a phased implementation of the framework is ongoing.

Widening from Outcomes to Experience

Monitoring progress towards outcomes requires data, information and evidence that provides an understanding of whether experiences are improving, or whether things are getting worse. Some of the data we have is good enough to do this, most of it is not. The Promise highlighted fundamental flaws in our data collection and analysis, most notably that the data we use to tell national stories of outcomes rarely includes the things that children and families said are important to them. Some of the tools we use reduce the experiences of children and families to single

outputs that are not particularly meaningful in their lives. We often count the things that matter to the system, and use the best data we have available to do this, rather than beginning from a position of what matters and thinking critically about how we could monitor and measure whether children and families think their experiences are positive and their outcomes are met. This must begin with listening to our children and families.

Alongside the development of the Outcomes Framework, The Promise Data Map has been working to take what children and families told the Independent Care Review mattered to them to create a framework that local and national datasets across Scotland can be mapped onto. This mapping directly links the experiences of children and families with the types of data we typically use to tell the story of their wellbeing. It is surfacing the gaps in our data landscape which need to be filled with other types of data, information, and evidence, including those at local and hyperlocal levels. By combining The Promise Data Map with the Outcomes Framework, we aim to expand our national processes for monitoring, understanding and improving to include the experiences of children and families at every level, recognising that the solution does not necessarily lie in more national data collection.

Drawing on learning from the evolving findings of The Promise Data Map we will:

- Ensure that data, evidence and information about experiences and relationships are prioritised in the way we monitor progress towards keeping The Promise and used to give context to indicators, ensuring a focus on what matters to children and families.
- Support local areas to develop their own use of such types of data in their reporting and monitoring and explore methods of using experiential data at local and national levels to inform improvement, keeping the perspective of children and families at the forefront of how services are designed and delivered.

The Promise Collective

We know there is already a lot of work going on across Scotland to improve the lives of children and families. For The Promise to be kept, we recognise that we must play a key role in alignment and cohesion across this landscape and ensure that all policies, programmes, and investments are joined up and focused on the things that really matter to children and families.

Similarly, data, information and evidence must reflect what matters and be used to inform decision making at every level. To begin this work, we will establish The Promise Collective co-chaired with The Promise Scotland to support alignment and cohesion of activities. The Promise Collective will be convened as a strategic forum to ensure alignment of all Scottish Government funded delivery and improvement initiatives that are working to Keep The Promise. We are yet to fully scope the role, remit, and membership of this group, however it is anticipated their work will:

- Understand the **service design and improvement assets and resources available** to support the change, innovation, improvement, and service design activity required to Keep The Promise.
- Run in parallel to the development of the Outcomes Framework and aim to fully understand the **current improvement landscape**, surfacing all work underway to support and deliver transformational change across Scotland.
- Develop **ground up approaches using service design and improvement methodologies**, utilising outputs produced by The Promise Scotland. Upon agreement of joint aims and approaches a Governance and reporting structure will be established to report to Ministers.
- Focus on **data, information and evidence** at national, local and individual levels, working to identify sources to supplement the wellbeing outcomes and national indicators and link local data, information and evidence with national frameworks where appropriate.



Key Actions We Will Take

- **We will develop a subset of indicators which will support the National Outcome “we grow up loved, safe, respected and that we realise our full potential”. These indicators will be monitored to track our progress in Keeping The Promise.**
- **We will establish The Promise Collective co-chaired with The Promise Scotland to support alignment and cohesion of activities.** This group will be convened as a strategic forum to ensure alignment of all Scottish Government funded delivery and improvement initiatives that are working to Keep The Promise. We are currently scoping a full remit of this group and we will hold the first meeting by the end of the Parliamentary year.



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