

Keeping The Promise to all our children,
young people, adults and families

How we will
keep Our Promise
to You

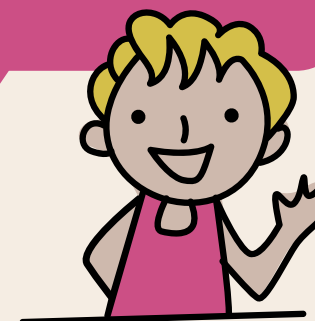


#Keep
The
Promise

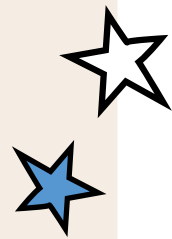
Scotland's Ambition for children and young people



We grow up loved, safe,
and respected so that we
realise our full potential

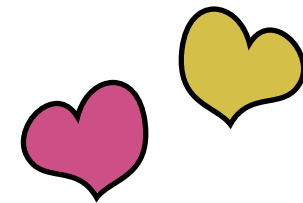


**#Keep
The
Promise**



Contents

Welcome	4
Our Promise	5
Putting you at the heart	8
Keeping families together	10
A good childhood	17
Scaffolding	21
Building capacity	24
What's next?	27
Other documents	28



Welcome

A message from the First Minister of Scotland

I have made a promise to the care community, a promise to ensure that you feel love, care and nurture wherever you grow up in Scotland. To help do this we will change the way the system around you works and do more to provide the support that you and your family needs.

I have met and heard many stories of children who grow up in care who go onto to flourish and do fantastic things, however I know that doesn't happen for everyone.

Your stories really help us make the changes that are necessary to improve lives and to help us to ensure that the memories made are good ones.



Almost three years on from the conclusion of the Independent Care Review, I am encouraged by the changes to services, structures and ways of working that have started to happen at both a local and national level.

We must keep up this good work, and I am proud to restate the commitment of the Scottish Government to continue to put our full efforts into making change happen as quickly as possible.

With love,

Nicola Sturgeon

Our Promise

The Scottish Government wants every child in Scotland to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they reach their full potential. We know that this hasn't been happening for every child. Some children have to go into care which means sometimes they need a bit more help throughout their life.



Our promise

In October 2016, Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, promised people with care experience that Scotland would do better. She said Scotland would come together and love each and every one of its children and give them a happy and healthy childhood.

To find out how to do this, the Independent Care Review was set up.

The Care Review had to hear everyone's voices. It needed to hear from the children and families who knew the 'care system' best – the people who had experienced it.

So for three years, between 2017 and 2020, the Care Review travelled all across Scotland to listen carefully to over 5,500 people. More than half of these people were children and adults who had been 'in care'. They told the Care Review what needed to change.

Lots of families also spoke to the Care Review about their experiences. So did the people who worked in the 'care system'.

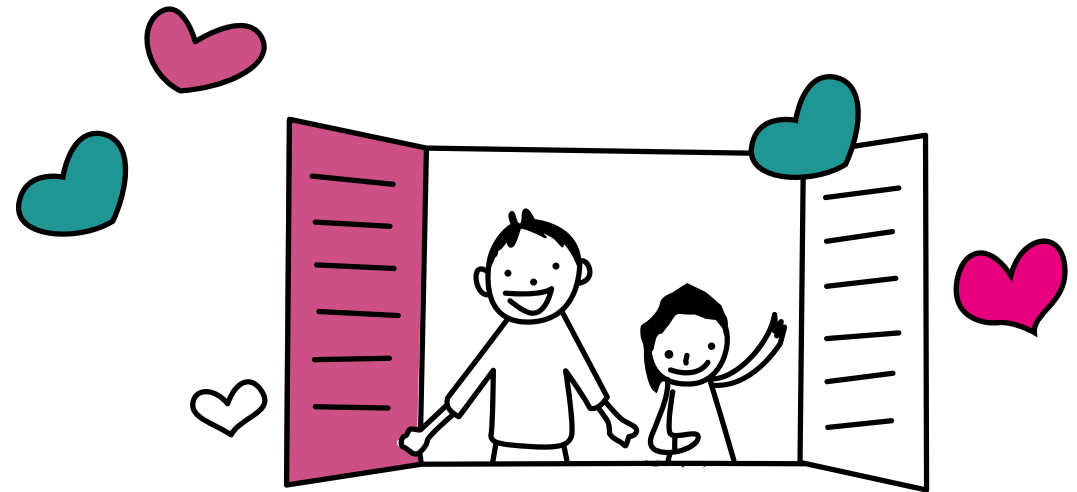
The Care Review heard that Scotland needs to change how we care for children.



Our promise

Scotland has made a Promise to you. A Promise that:

- you will stay at home with your family where that is safe
- if you do need to go into care you will feel loved, safe and respected
- Scotland will look after you and love you, not only during your childhood, but as you move into the adult world



The Promise is our commitment to you to make sure that you have the right support around you, at the right time and in the right way to help you when you need it.

The Scottish Government has signed up to do all of the things that the review has told us needs to change to **Keep The Promise** by 2030.

In March 2022, the Scottish Government published its **Implementation Plan**. This document sets out all the actions and commitments that we will take to improve the lives of people with care experience.

Putting you at the heart

How the Scottish Government will Keep The Promise

We will Keep **The Promise** by 2030. It will take this amount of time because it's important we get the changes that are needed right. So how will we do it? The Scottish Government can't make all the changes on our own. We will work together with councils, health boards and all the organisations that are involved in your life. Most importantly, we want to work with you to get this right for you and all the children and young people with care experience in Scotland.

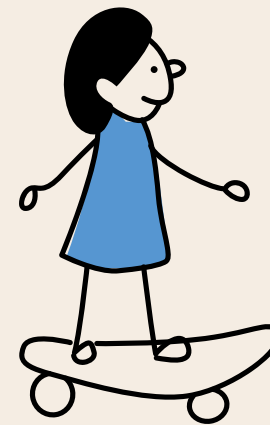
We know that our care system must fit the needs of every child. We will continue to recognise this when we build services to make sure they work for everyone

We will work as quickly as we can and we will not be afraid to try new ways of doing things

We will do more to hear the voices of our children, young people, adults and families with care experience making sure what we hear is at the heart of and guides what we do

Keeping The Promise will be at the heart of everything we do. We will place love, care and nurture at the centre of the changes we make

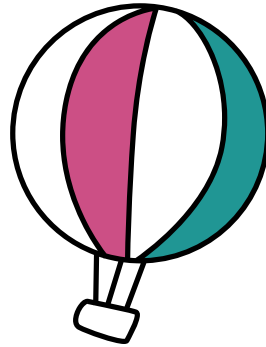
We will work together with everyone we need to in order to improve the lives of people with care experience



It is not always possible for families to stay together and sometimes children have to 'go into care'.

'Going into care' could mean something different for different people. Some children may be looked after at home. Some children may be looked after by another family member such as by a grandparent, aunt or uncle. Some children may be looked after by a foster carer, which is another family who look after a child. Some children may live in a children's home and some children may live in secure care.

We will:



Support our children, young people, adults and families who are care experienced, recognising that experience of care can have an effect on people throughout their lives

Support all our children, young people, adults and families, recognising that if we get the services that everyone uses right then people won't need the care system as much

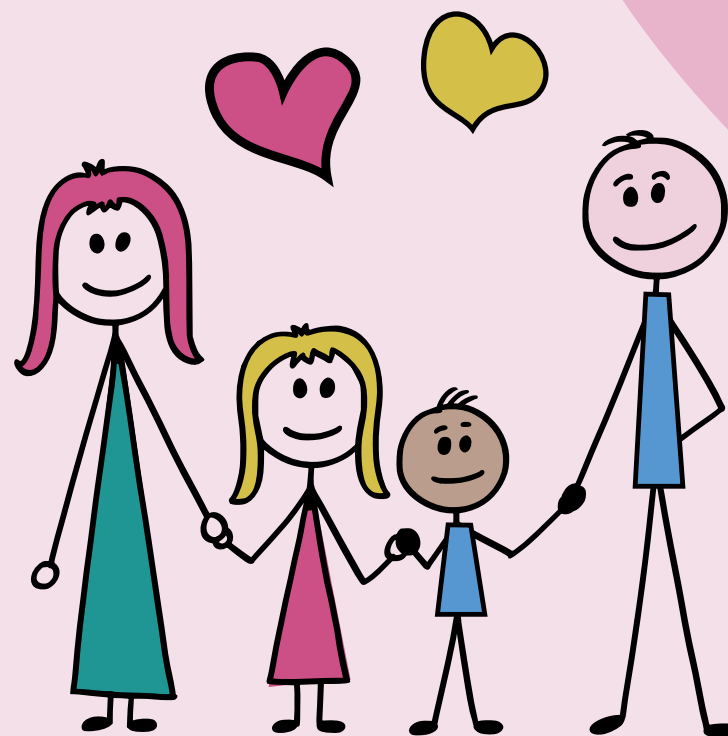
Support our children, young people, adults and families who we know are at risk of being taken into care, recognising that the right support at the right times will help keep families together and avoid the need for care

Keeping families together

We want children in Scotland to be able to live with their family, where it is safe to do so.

Family

Family can mean different things to different people. Family is very important because they can make us feel loved, supported and cared for. Sometimes relationships with family can be difficult – especially when families experience tough times. When those relationships do become difficult we want to make sure there is support in place to keep families together and navigate life's challenges. We recognise that this isn't happening enough just now and these are some of the things we will do to make things better.



Providing support for your whole family

We know how important it is to look after all of your family in order to help you to stay together and get through tough times together

We will:

- Invest in Whole Family Wellbeing to help families stay together and thrive
- Introduce a Scottish Recommended National Allowance for kinship and foster carers to provide financial support to them
- Provide support with the costs of living and ensure that advice is easily available in places that are easily accessible for example at the doctors; or at school; or at the shops
- Work together with local authorities and other providers to ensure families have the support they need. This includes easier access to childcare and help for families to get education and jobs

A Scottish Recommended National Allowance means that wherever in Scotland children are living their caregivers will receive at least this amount of money to help care for them



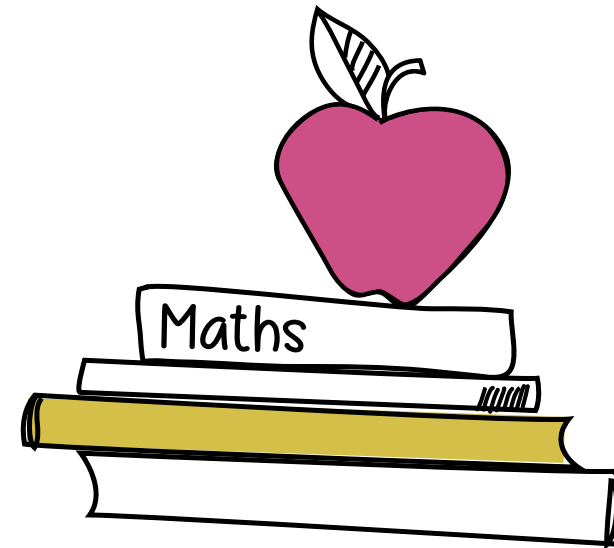
There will be
No Wrong Door
when you are
looking for help

Your education

We know that school is a big part of your life and that it does not always feel easy and this can have an impact on your happiness, friendships and how well you do in your learning

We will:

- Help to ensure you receive the support that you need in school and other education settings
- Give every school aged child their own digital device to help you to access learning
- Help children with care experience attend school and stay in school
- Make it easier for families to learn together and help adults learn how to support their children's learning
- Help people with care experience go to college or university if they want to



We will provide around £11.5m per year to local authorities to help support educational attainment

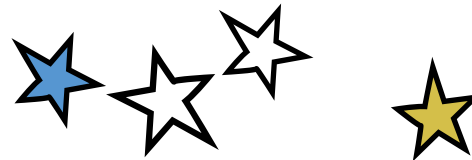
Getting a job

We know that we must continue to make it easier for our children and young people with care experience to be the best they can be, including getting a job, training and support.

We will:

- Help people with care experience into jobs, treating people with dignity & respect
- Take a 'No One Left Behind' approach and continue to support young people with care experience through the Young Persons Guarantee
- Help people to access and understand what money they can get from the government to help them and continue to work with people with care experience to design our benefits services

The Young Persons Guarantee 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

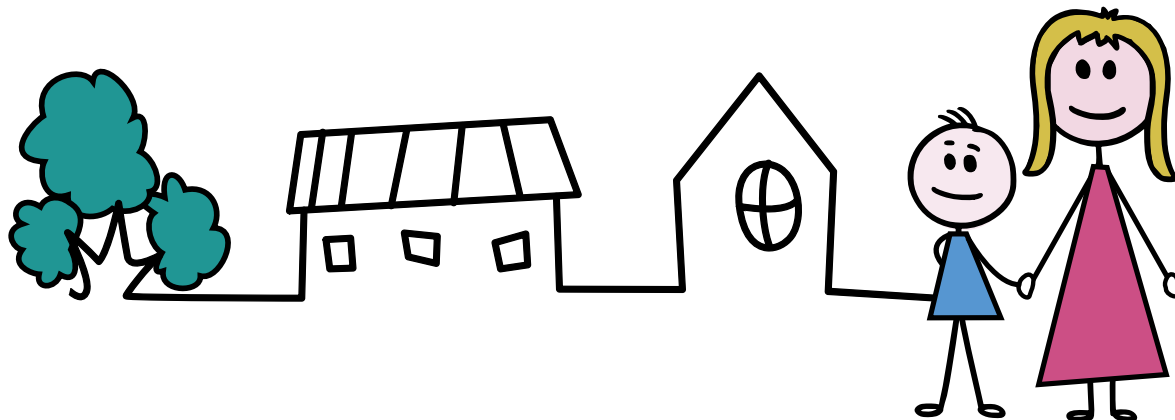


Your community

We know that the places we live, the communities we are part of and the environment that surrounds us has a big place in our lives.

We will:

- Introduce a new Human Rights Bill to provide full and equal access to community services that improve lives and strengthen your human rights protections
- Listen to the voices of everyone in our communities to make sure they can play in, and make improvements to, the local areas we live, work and play
- Continue to work with partners to reduce crime and build stronger, safer communities
- Continue to work with health services, the police and other organisations to reduce the number of young people with care experience who go missing

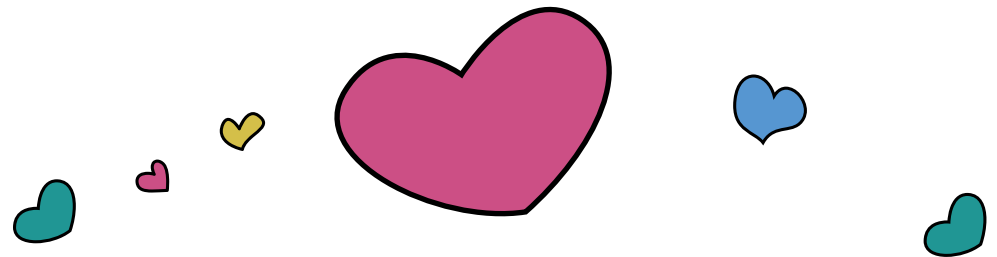


Health and wellbeing

We should all be able to live long, healthy and active lives, no matter who we are or where we come from. We know from the Independent Care Review that health and mental health services need to do more to support people with care experience.

We will:

- Provide money each year to help babies' and toddlers' mental health
- Create a national care service for adult health services, a decision on whether children's services will be included has yet to be made
- Work with SportScotland to ensure sports organisations understand the needs of people with care experience
- Create a whole family approach to mental health and support councils to provide new and better services for children and young people aged 5-24
- Ensure support is available all day and night to children and young people, their families and carers when things get really bad
- Support mental health pathways and services for children and young people and ensure that support is available and accessible to those who need it, at the right time



You and the law

We know that too many of our people with experience of care are at risk of ending up in prison.

We will:

- Help improve all children's journey through the justice system, including through introducing Bairns' Hoose to make sure that children and young people get the right support and care they need to recover
- Make things better when somebody in your family goes to prison by putting in place different supports and understanding better the impact it has on you
- Support people who are in prison, listening and understanding to what has happened to them during their lives helping them stay connected to the place they are from
- We will support local areas to implement the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) encourages everyone to work together to build a scaffold of support around children and young people. One that can provide support if needed, for as long as it's needed. This can be a named person who is a clear point of contact for support and advice; a child's plan, giving a full understanding of wellbeing and a model for all to follow; and, planned support across all services, this can be managed by a lead professional

The Bairns' Hoose

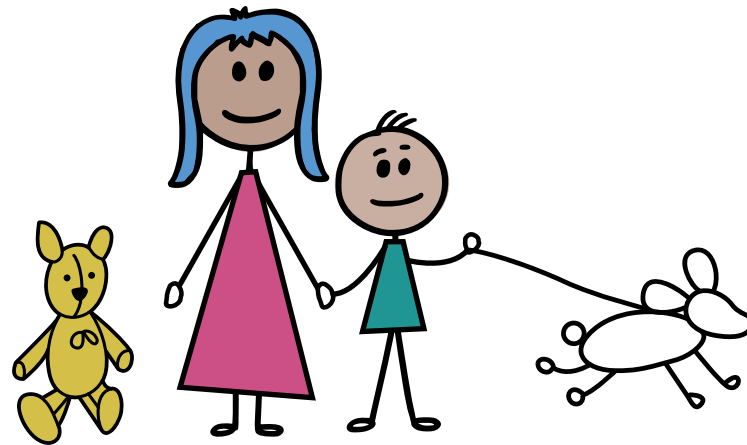
will be a child-friendly, safe and welcoming space for children to talk about what has happened when someone has broken the law. It will reduce the number of times that children have to tell their story to different professionals. If a child needs to give evidence in a court process, someone explains what is happening and supports them through this.

A good childhood

We want you to feel loved, safe and respected and have the opportunity to be the best you can be

We want all children and young people to have the best possible experience of life with love, support and the opportunity to be their best self.

Not every family can be supported to stay together, especially if the children are not safe at home. Sometimes children have to be taken into care.

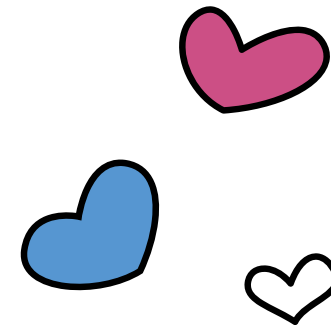


If you are in care

We want to make sure that every child who does enter care has the support and love that they need

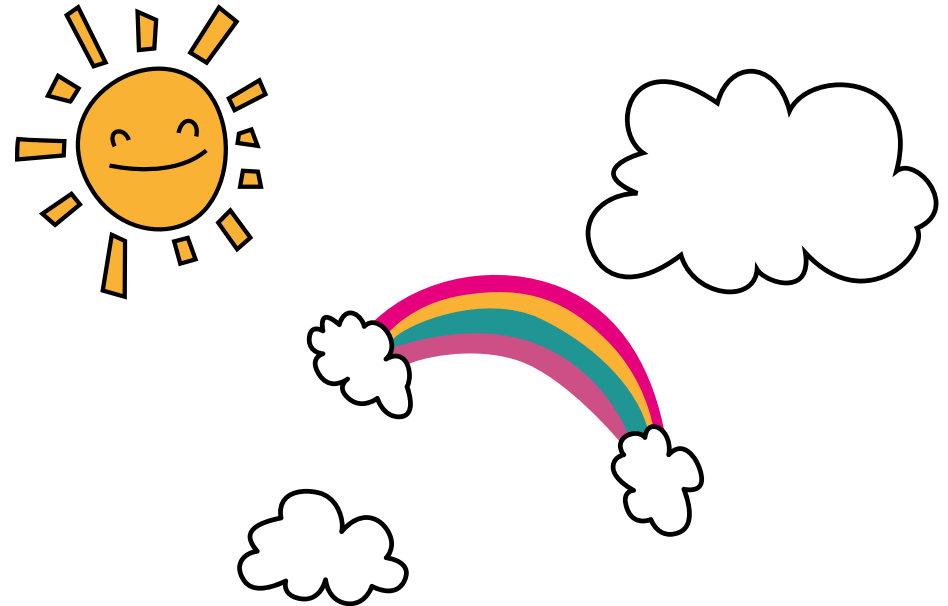
We will:

- Work hard to keep families together wherever it is safe to do so but where this is not possible we want to make sure that care services are built around the needs of the children and the family
- Improve the language we use – and the attitudes and behaviours this creates – to make sure we remove the stigma and discrimination that is felt from being in care
- Work with children and young people who are or have been in care to explain what this means and improve the language that we use
- Support brothers and sisters to be a part of each other's lives and we will continue to work with councils to help do this
- Provide support to parents whose children have been taken into care
- Make sure that your voice is heard and to help do this we will work to develop national advocacy services for people and families with care experience



A good childhood

- Continue to protect all children with care experience wherever they live from violence through the safeguard of equal protection legislation
- Stop young people aged 16-17 years old from going to Young Offenders Institutions
- Raise the age that you can go to the children's hearing system up to 18 for all who need it
- Continue to ensure that the use of restraint must be an absolute last resort where it is necessary and should always be pain free



Brothers & Sisters

it is the law that local authorities must help care experienced infants, children and young people to be together with their brothers and sisters. This includes listening to the views of the child's brothers and sisters before making any decisions about their care, and where it is safe to live together they should do or as near to each other as possible

When you leave care

We know that when you grow up you might need some extra support when you become an adult, especially if you don't have family and money to help you.

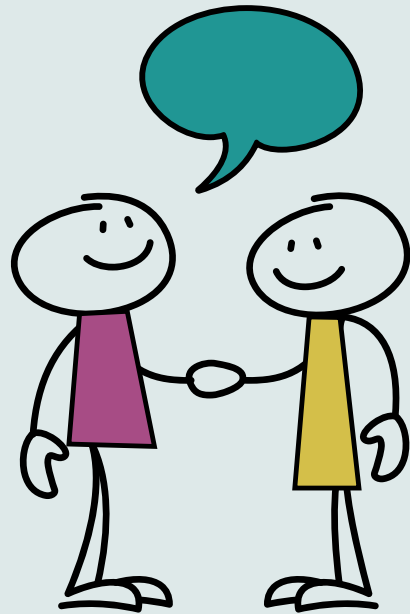
We will:

- Provide money to help care experienced people aged 16-25 years old through a new grant called the Care Experience Grant
- Help care experienced people aged 16-24 years to a job or further learning when they leave school through the Young Persons Guarantee
- Continue to ensure young people with care experience have access to housing



Scaffolding

We will help to make sure the people who support children and families have all the help they need to do the best job they can



Supporting the people who support you

We know there are lots of people in different services who work to protect and support children, young people and families with care experience. These services work together to provide you with the support you need, when you need it.

We will:

- Set up a national social work agency so that you will receive the same support you need wherever you live in Scotland
- Ensure that the social workers that support you have the right support and training to help them do their jobs
- Change the children's hearing system to make it more child friendly and focused on your rights
- Make sure the care system is built around what matters to you
- Help ensure that those who support children and adults understand the impact of what has happened to you in your life and how this may affect how you might see things

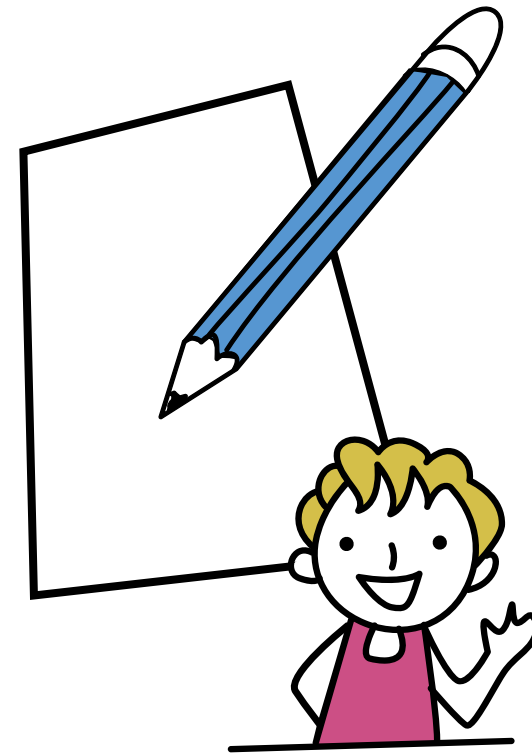
A Review of the Children's Hearing System is happening. It is listening to children and families with experience of the Children's Hearings System to help shape how the system can work better. This will tell us its ideas for change in 2023

Information about you

We know that as you grow up there is a lot of information gathered about you but also that you need to tell your story too many times

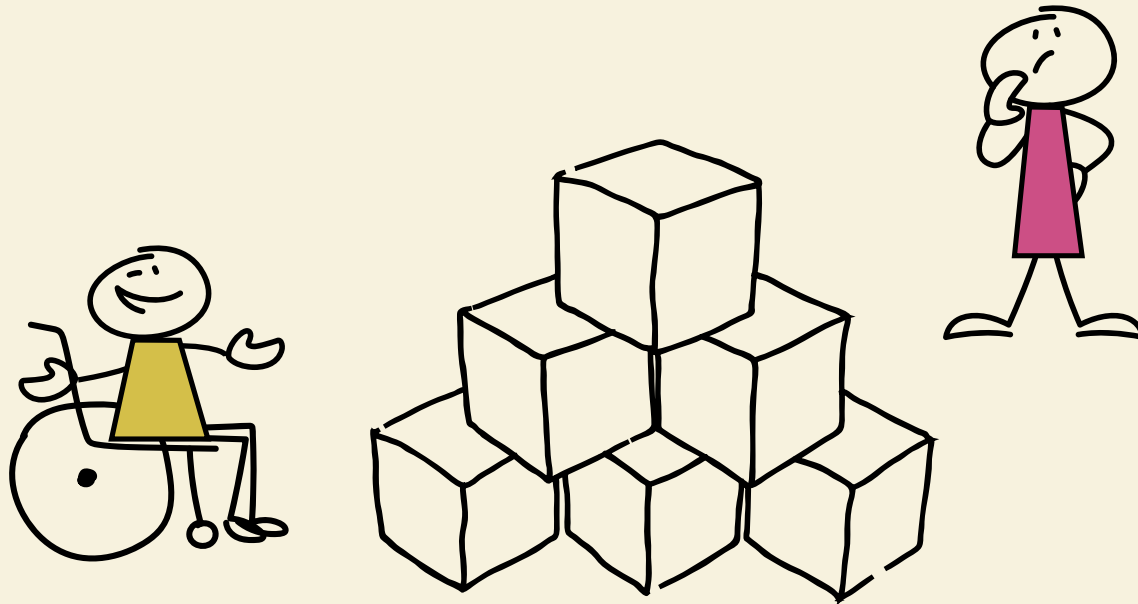
We will:

- Help to ensure that when children speak, they are listened to by adults; and adults include children in decisions that affect them
- Make sure that children can bring the people they trust into the places where decisions about them are made and that decisions about children and their family are based on what children want and need
- Improve the way information about you is held and used so that children don't have to retell their story over and over again



Building capacity

We will lead and support the change needed to improve the lives of children and families



Putting your rights at the heart of decisions

To make change happen we need to change the law and improve how we work together

We will:

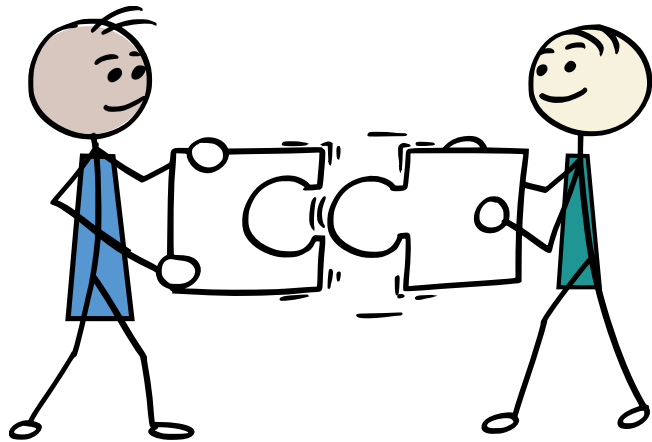
- Look at making the laws about the care system easier to understand because we know it is important that all children and young people understand their rights and the different laws which affect them
- Make the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC) part of the law in Scotland. This would mean that public authorities (such as the Scottish Government, courts, schools, councils, police and the national health service) must protect children's rights, including by listening to children when making decisions that affect them
- Change how we spend money to provide support early rather than when families are struggling to find their way. This is called "preventative spend"



How will we know the changes we are making are doing what they should do for you?

We will:

- Work with local authorities and other partners to share what we know and the information we hold to show that the work we are doing is making a difference
- Learn more about our children and young people who are in care and understand more about children and young people's experiences and relationships by listening to them



The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) includes the right to be kept safe from harm and protected against violence and abuse and to be protected from all sorts of exploitation. It also includes rights about what should happen if you can't be looked after by your mum and dad

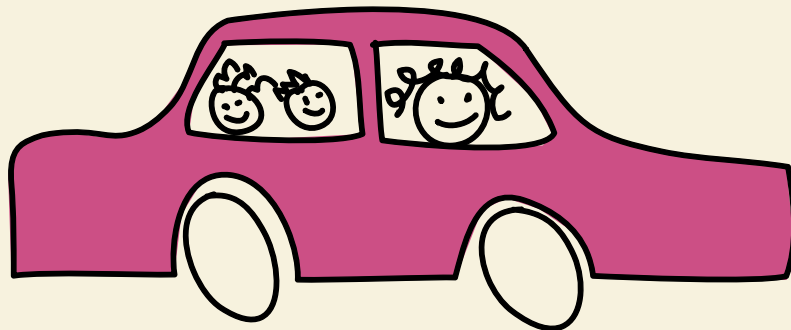
What's next?

This document has set out how the Scottish Government will Keep The Promise and what actions it will take to do this.

We want you to come along with us on the journey to 2030 and ensure your voice is at the heart of everything we do

By 2030 we imagine a Scotland where all children grow up feeling loved. Where each and every child can thrive

We are on a journey to change and only by working together with you and with other organisations will we Keep The Promise



Other documents

There are other documents that have been published by the Scottish Government and other organisations that you might find helpful.

Promise Implementation Plan	Keeping the Promise implementation plan – gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Independent Care Review reports including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Promise• The Pinky Promise• The Money• Follow The Money• The Rules	Care Review Reports – Independent Care Review
Who Cares? Scotland Paving The Way Report	Paving-the-Way-Report-June-2022.pdf (whocaresScotland.org)
COSLA Promise Annual report	The-Promise-Annual-Report-COSLA-2022.pdf
Scottish Government’s Cost of Living Crisis website	costofliving.campaign.gov.scot

Notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



**#Keep
The
Promise**



© Crown copyright 2022

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-208-5 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, December 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1190482 (12/22)

W W W . g o v . s c o t