

FOI reference number: 202300380837

- Officials Meeting with Corra – PPF Criteria.
- Agenda re Officials meeting with Corra - Meeting on 6 June 2022
- Email with Agenda and note of meeting with Corra - 16 June 2022
- Keeping The Promise - Meeting with CORRA - 5 September 2023
- The Promise Partnership - 22-23 Year End Report
- Process Lessons Learnt Report
- Analysis of Proposals and Funding
- List of meetings with Corra
- Decision Makers Panel

Promise Partnership

Criteria development – 2022-2025

Summary

The Promise Partnership is administered and supported by Corra Foundation. It aims to provide additional investment to enable organisations to deliver changes in-line with Scotland's commitment to #KeepThePromise and holistic family support.

This paper provides an overview of how the investment of £8.3m has been used to date, the role and purpose of the Promise Partnership and feedback and insights shared from organisations working within the sector.

Role and Purpose of the fund

Corra's role is to adapt the fund criteria throughout the contract, ensuring it reflects when significant milestones are met within the Change Plan, and building on the learning from previous investments. To achieve this Corra will run annual funding rounds over three years. These will be based on:

- Addressing infrastructure and systemic issues in and around 'the care system' that will reshape services.
- Thematic focuses to boost ideas that are driven by what is happening across Scotland and evidence emerging from The Promise Scotland [Plan 21 - 24](#). (e.g., brothers and sisters).

It also aims to ensure that monies spent will support legacy planning and allow for longer-term savings at organisational, local and national levels. To achieve this there will be opportunities to apply for both one-off and multi-year funding that helps to deliver against sustainable changes.

Previous funding rounds

To date, there have been three investment rounds; one delivered during 2020/21 (which included two strands) and two in 2021/22.

Open Call Route (March 2021) initial investment of £3m to provide grants of up to £50,000 for organisations to invest in infrastructure to help them make necessary internal shifts to implement The Promise.

Diagnostic (March 2021) investment of £1m to provide grants of up to £200,000 where pre-identified collaborations by the Promise Scotland were invited to develop a proposal that would have national significance in supporting the Promise.

Getting It Right for Brothers and Sisters (August 2021) investment of £1m to support specific gap from the first open call. It was launched to complement the introduction of legislation and practice guidance 'Getting it Right for Brothers and Sisters.' All proposals to this programme had to be collaborative and required investment from other partners. There was also an option to apply for multi-year funding of up to £200,000 over two years.

A Good Childhood (October 2021) investment of £3.25m was developed based on themes emerging from The Promise Scotland Change Plan 21-24 and identified gaps in work from the first round. Grants of up to £100,00 were available. Based on insights shared from partners and the Promise Scotland, the criteria was focused on the 'Good Childhood' strand with priority for relationships, moving on, support and youth justice.

Investment to improve infrastructure was a key component across all investment rounds, with emphasis on reframing policies as well as supporting changes in practice. The importance of

relationships and the role of supportive and meaningful participation is an area that the organisations supported through the funds acknowledge should be strengthened. Most of the investment is focused on changing internal practices through dedicated staff. Many organisations have recruited people with care experience to help deliver and support the change.

Feedback and Insights

Since its inception, the Promise Partnership has worked with individuals and organisations to design the decision-making process and governance structure, in keeping with the approach taken by the Independent Care Review. Throughout the last few months, Corra has followed this method by engaging with the Decision Makers Panel and previous applicants of the Promise Partnership, to hear more about how the application process felt and what they see should be priorities for the next phase.

This insight, along with analysis of proposals, emerging themes from written reports and conversations, have illustrated both significant steps forward but also illustrated the barriers that organisations face as they begin to make the necessary shifts.

- **Language** has from the outset been a critical component to embed change with many organisations reviewing both materials and how staff communicate. The emphasis of this work has been focused on how language can make people feel, and ensuring that it is empowering and not stigmatising. However, applications continue to use language that does not reflect the Independent Care Review findings. Feedback is provided and organisations are advised to access resources from Each and Every Child.
- **Participation** is an area of work where organisations recognise the need for improvements. Most show a willingness to work on their methods of participation. In relation to participation, there are two areas that continue to warrant future focus:
 1. Recruitment of Promise Keeper staff who have lived experience of the care system. Many of the people recruited within these roles have at times felt isolated, and have felt significant responsibility in holding and delivering The Promise. It is important to ensure they do not carry this responsibility alone, as The Promise is a collective response. Feedback from funded organisations has highlighted that they would welcome a more formalised approach to a community of practice for those working as Participation Workers.
 2. At the group monitoring sessions people talked enthusiastically about the participation of children, young people and families with care experience, examples included their role in planning events and co-chairing multi agency operational groups. Participation is acknowledged as critical and there is a real appetite and commitment to making participation an embedded approach. Working with the Promise Scotland team we want to identify capacity building that will help to further strengthen voice and increase participation with children, young people, and families.
- **Staffing** recruitment and retention of staff has been highlighted by senior managers as a significant challenge. We will continue to highlight and share these lessons with the Promise Scotland team, and colleagues in Scottish Government in recognising the importance of the workforce.
- **Recruitment** is particularly hard across the sector at present, with many local authorities and third sector organisations struggling to recruit to roles. Some Children and Families Social Work departments have reported they are running at less than 50% capacity which has

impacted on the recruitment to the Promise Partnership funded roles. The challenges with the time and bureaucracy of recruitment were more apparent for local authorities, where in some cases, it took months to get approval for Promise Partnership job descriptions, before being able to advertise the post. In one case, this wasn't approved within the 12 months and the £50k had to be returned. The short-term funding also hinders the recruitment and retention of staff.

- **Short-term funding** caused challenges for organisations and local authorities with many acknowledging that this made it more difficult to plan for longer term change. Often once people are recruited there is little time remaining for work to start and become embedded, before having to plan an exit strategy. Most successful organisations have been in receipt of one year funding; and it is positive how much progress has been made; however, we do recognise that to make long-term shifts this will require long-term investment.
- **Lack of cohesion and alignment** within the sector. Many third sector organisations reported a lack of understanding or awareness of the work happening within their local authority and requested additional support to help co-ordinate this and make vital links. Frustrations were voiced around the need for alignment of the funding they received with other developments/opportunities such as Whole Family Wellbeing fund.

So far, the strongest, recurring themes identified through feedback from the sector and learning through the Open Call fund, highlight a need for investment to support workforce capacity and improving participation. These issues, therefore, should be considered as a key focus for the next phase of funding.

Next steps

Over the next few weeks, Corra will continue to engage with the Decision Makers Panel and the Advisory Group to help define the parameters of the fund and shape the criteria. Feedback from these sessions, along with the insights from The Promise Scotland Team and Scottish Government will help inform the criteria of the next phase to ensure we help drive forward change for children, young people and families.

Timescales for the next investment round will see the fund launching early July and closing in mid-September. Information sessions will be held at the end of July, providing an opportunity for applicants to explore the criteria and the remit further. The Decision Makers panel will assess the applications throughout October and November and will convene on 26th/27th November for the final decision day. Applicants will be informed of the outcome in December 2022.

Promise Partnership Criteria session

Monday 6th June 12.30-2pm

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| 12.30pm | Welcome & Intros | Carolyn |
| 12.35pm | Overview of paper | [Redacted] |
| 12.45pm | What are The Promise Scotland team hearing? | TPS |
| 1pm | Discussion: How can we best use the investment of £12 million to support the implementation of the Plan 21-24? Reflecting on what organisations have told us about current challenges and opportunities, what should the future priorities of the funds be? What else do we need to think about? | All |
| 2pm | Finish | |

From: **[Redacted]**
Sent: 16 June 2022 14:54
To: **[Redacted]; [Redacted]**
Subject: RE: This afternoon's meeting - suggested points to cover

Hi both,

Thanks so much for your time there. Just making a quick note of the actions and some key points while they're fresh in my head – feel free to amend as appropriate!

Actions

- Invoicing – quarterly claims are preferable for Corra in relation to the admin payments (the £250k per year element), **[Redacted]** will check the grant letter at Corra end to make sure that can be accommodated and advise if any tweaks are required. **[Redacted]** checking the requirements at Corra's end for ensuring release of the £4m PPF;
- Risk/milestones/KPIs – **[Redacted]** to send over the risk template she has and add tabs for milestones and KPIs to be added so that linked information is in one place – much can be lifted from Corra's tender document and the level should be pitched at contract level;
- Contract recovery/continuity plans – **[Redacted]** to check the templates and send over (with any relevant advice) for completion by Corra. Again, the Corra tender document will contain much of this information – these will be pitched at organisational level;
- **[Redacted]** to keep **[Redacted]** posted on progress following end June meetings on criteria progression.

Key points discussed/noted

- Discussion on risk around new criteria being set and HC content that SG happy to support the direction of travel arising from recent chats;
- Upcoming meetings on or around 28th June with The Promise Scotland on support for new grantees and the Advisory Group on criteria drafting.

Thanks

[Redacted].

[Redacted] Unit Head, Strategy, GIRFEC and Promise Division
[Redacted] **[Redacted]**

From: **[Redacted]**
Sent: 16 June 2022 12:59
To: **[Redacted]** <**[Redacted]** @corra.scot>; **[Redacted]** <**[Redacted]** @corra.scot>
Subject: This afternoon's meeting - suggested points to cover

Hi **[Redacted]** and **[Redacted]**,

I hope you're both well and I'm looking forward to catching up later.

I thought it might be useful to suggest some points to cover during discussion and have the following from my perspective:

- Invoicing;
- Risk, milestones, KPIs
- Contract continuity and recovery plans

- Exit plan
- Update on activity since last meeting between Corra, TPS, SG

Please feel free to add anything else you think would be helpful.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Unit Head, Strategy, GIRFEC and Promise Division | Children and Families Directorate | Scottish Government | Area 2A South, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ | t: **[Redacted]** | **[Redacted]**

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Scottish Government Keeping The Promise introductory and communications meeting with CORRA - 5 September 2023

Present:

[Redacted], Programme Manager, Promise Partnership Fund, CORRA

[Redacted] – Unit Head, Keeping the Promise Team, Scottish Government

[Redacted], Head of Sponsorship, Engagement and Ministerial Support, Keeping the Promise Team, Scottish Government

[Redacted], Keeping the Promise Team, Scottish Government

1. Introductions – there were general introductions to the new members of the Keeping the Promise Team, who recently took over management of the Promise Partnership Fund. It was agreed to plan regular contract management meetings.

2. There was a discussion about the upcoming announcement of the latest round of successful grant applications. The potential opportunities for the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping The Promise, Natalie Don, to visit the successful organisations and to promote good practice in Keeping The Promise.

3. There was a discussion and explanation about the background and management of the Promise Partnership Fund. The £4m from Scottish Government is the key source for the Fund but noted that some additional monies have been received from other private sector funders include STV and KPMG.

4. Decisions on grant award are made by a diverse independent panel, made up of 12 care experienced people with an age range between 18 to 59 years. There is also a wide geographical spread. All panel members receive training to develop the assessment process. An annual report is produced by CORRA which provides a useful report on monitoring outcomes. Panel members were due to discuss final decisions.

4. An outline of the PPF round 2 was provided which attracted 86 applications. Applications were required to address three thematic areas: a supported workforce, supportive school structure and youth justice rights. For this round, grants of up to £200,000, to be paid over 18 months were available. Requirements for funding include that the project should be: a new initiative; not service delivery; and demonstrate sustainability.

5. Support, feedback and monitoring of the grant awards processes were discussed. Following lessons learned, good progress has been made on an aligned approach and work is ongoing with The Promise Scotland to look at ways to capture data. As a result of this work, partnership working has improved and good progress has been made. CORRA offers information, feedback and focus groups for organisations prior to launching funding rounds and during the funding period.

6. Discussion on how CORRA responds to organisations who are unsuccessful in receiving funding. This includes giving one-to-one honest feedback.

7. Meeting concluded.

Summary

The Promise Partnership is administered and supported by Corra Foundation. The aim to provide additional investment to enable organisations to deliver changes in-line with Scotland's commitment to #KeepThePromise. Since January 2021, the Promise Partnership has:

- Designed and delivered participatory approach led by people with care experience.
- Delivered four funding rounds.
- 327 proposals received, totaling £33,424,772m.
- 149 proposals funded.
- Distributed £13.3m across all 32 local authorities.
- 51 % of successful proposals were from third sector organisations, 33% from the public sector and 5% from limited companies.
- Supported 33 collaborations.
- Progress across 132 proposals.

- **Introduction**

Corra has been delivering the Promise Partnership fund on behalf of Scottish Government since 2020. In 2021 additional investment was secured from the Cattanach Trust (£100,000) and STV Children's Appeal (£300,000). In 2022 STV Children's Appeal committed a further £300,000 for 2023. This has meant over £13m available for distribution in the last three years with a further £7m available in the next round – Keep the promise round 2.

This report provides an overview of the Promise Partnership since its inception. It provides information on the approach taken, key deliverables (including the profile of investments made), progress of organisations supported to date and insights that will help inform ongoing work of the Promise Partnership.

- **The approach**

Corra worked closely with The Promise Scotland team and the Scottish Government's Chief Designer to develop a co-produced, systemic approach to delivery of the Promise Partnership. All partners are committed and valued the importance of embedding the lessons from the Independent Care Review and agreed the proposed funding approach.

- **Lived Experience Led Decision-Making Process**

Corra openly recruited for committed individuals to form the governance and decision-making structures. Two groups were established: an advisory group and decision-makers panel with lived experience. The establishment of both groups has taken a co-production approach. They bring expertise, knowledge and a willingness to work with Corra to deliver a funding programme that is unique in investing in driving forward change for children, young people, and families.

The advisory group to help shape and establish funding principles, criteria, and application materials. The group holds Corra accountable to the Promise Partnership aims, helping define parameters and shape criteria. The group comprises of people working in both the public and third sector who have experience of delivering services in the 'care system.' Currently, more than 50% of the group have their own experience of the 'care system.'

The decision-makers panel is a separate group to the advisory group and compromised of people who have experience of the care system as well as other key skills and attributes. The Decision-makers panel lead on the assessment and decisions of applications to the Promise Partnership. The panel's role expanded during their period to offer insights on potential ways to continually support the work of the Promise Partnership (e.g., potential gaps in criteria, revising application material).

In May 2023 six new decision-making panel members were recruited. This widened the geographical spread and the age range of people with the youngest member

- **Key Deliverables**

1. Criteria Development

There have been four investment rounds; one delivered during 2020/21 (two strands), two in 2021/22 and one in 2022-2023. The emphasis of the Promise Partnership is to support change and not service delivery. This thread has remained within the programme as the four funding streams have evolved.

Open Call Route (March 2021) initial investment of £3m to provide grants of up to £50,000 for organisations to invest in their infrastructure to help them make necessary internal shifts to implement The Promise.

Diagnostic (March 2021) investment of £1m to provide grants of up to £200,000 supporting pre-identified collaborations that would have national significance in supporting the Promise.

Getting It Right for Brothers and Sisters (August 2021) investment of £1m to support specific gap from the first open call and launched to complement the introduction of legislation and practice guidance to support siblings. All proposals to this programme had to be in the form of collaboration and offered funding of up to £200,000 over two years.

A Good Childhood (October 2021) investment of £3.25m. Grants of up to £100,000 were available. Criteria designed on insights shared from partners and the Promise Scotland. It focused on the 'Good Childhood' strand of the Change Plan 21-24 with priority for relationships, moving on, support and youth justice.

Keep The Promise (December 2022) investment of £5.12m was developed based on three themes: A Supportive Workforce, Supportive School Structure and Youth Justice and Rights. These themes were identified through focus groups with previous applicants, advisory group, decision makers panel, The Promise Scotland Team, and Scottish Government.

Grants of up to £250,000 over two years were available.

2. Applications and Distribution of Funds

A total of 327 applications were received, and just over £13.3m distributed as detailed in Table 1 below. The decision-makers panel approved 149 successful proposals. This supported 110 organisations and included 33 collaborations.

The split of funding was slightly higher for charity/third sector organisations (51% of overall spend) compared to public sector (33%). Monies were allocated across all 32 local authorities (Appendix 2). Appendix 3 provides a detailed list of all organisations funded including the level of investment.

| Round | Applications Received | Success Rate | Amount Distributed |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Open Call | 85 | 77% | £2.994m |
| Diagnostic (this was invite only fund) | 6 | 83% | £940k |
| Getting It Right for Brothers and Sisters* | 20 | 40% | £1.04m |
| A Good Childhood | 134 | 30% | £3.21m |
| Keep The Promise | 82 | 36% | £5.124m |
| Total | 327 | 46% | £13.308m |

Table 1: Profile of applications and investment

The interest in the work of The Promise and the Promise Partnership has increased since the fund started. We have learnt to ensure in each round the criteria offers greater clarity and is based on experience of previous funding rounds and partner knowledge. The purpose both is to help manage and meet expectations and ensure funds are directed where additional resources will have the greatest impact.

The primary reasons for organisations not receiving funding were lack of fit with criteria (and/or priorities) and budget constraints.

The decision-makers panel felt the proposals were particularly strong for the Brothers and Sisters theme and wanted to maximise the opportunity in supporting this area. A strategic decision was taken to increase the offer of funding to more groups. As a result, four collaborations were offered two-years funding and a further four offered one-year of funding. The four collaborations that received one year funding have recently concluded and two of these have received 12 months continuation funding.

3. Additional Support and Peer Support

Corra staff have developed a relational approach to the programme providing both pre-application advice and ongoing support to successful organisations that is complemented by additional capacity building from The Promise Scotland team. This includes:

- An average 100 people attending information sessions.
- An average of 52 people attending each group monitoring sessions.
- 166 people signed up to attend drop-in peer networks delivered by the Promise Scotland.

Peer support has been a valued element of the programme, with many people from funded organisations and collaborations seeking guidance and learning from others across the county to help shape their own work.

The need for safe and supportive spaces

..... recognise that there is a need to collate information and share learning, building on what is happening in other areas and to avoid silos and work towards ensuring consistency and continuity to keep the Promise.

Extract: Promise Partnership Group Monitoring Summary

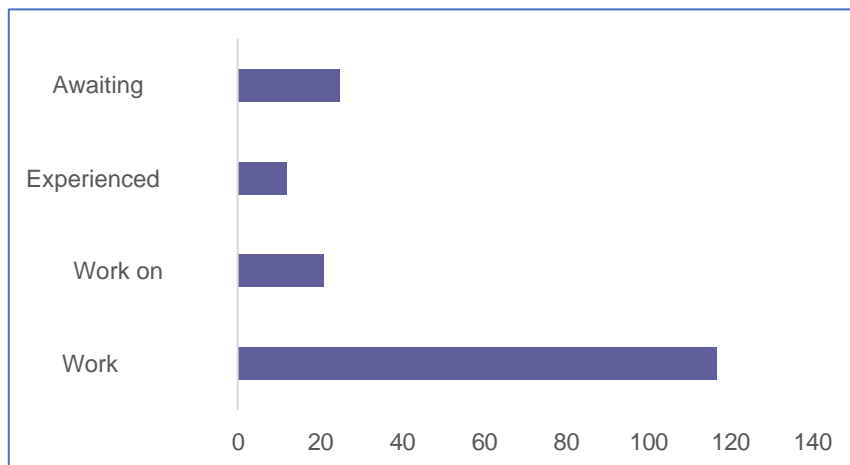
4. Progress to Date

All organisations and collaborations supported through the Promise Partnership commit to working with Corra to measure and understand the progress of work. Specifically, what has changed as a result of the investment and how do children, young people and families know or see these changes.

Each organisation/collaboration is expected to attend group monitoring sessions, and produce a final lesson learnt report (which includes their follow-up self-assessment). In this section we can see progress is being made in to how they work to support children, young people, and families.

As is shown in the graph below most organisations supported through the Promise Partnership have offered insights and progress of their work.

Graph 1: Status of grant progress



▪ **Open Call**

From the 91 proposals received, 72 were successful with 69 organisations receiving just over £3.9m¹.

68 organisations have completed their grant. One organisation returned their grant due to challenges approving the job description, (more on recruitment in section 6 of this report). Analysis in relation to progress towards implementing the Promise from the Open Call round has shown that:

- 49% of all funded applications had evidence of improved capacity within their work.
- 40% of organisations showed they had embedded changes.
- 32% reported improved participation with children, young people, and their families.

We know several of organisations who received support from the open call have received further funding (see appendix 3) to help continue their work. For example:

One organisation used Open Call funding to externally review where they align with the Promise. They felt this had “opened to the door to spring through” and enabled the person employed through A Good Childhood to start delivery.

Extract: Promise Partnership Group Monitoring Summary

▪ **Diagnostic Route**

Five from the six invited collaborations received investment at just over £940,000 (£1.1m was requested). Five of the diagnostic approaches had a specific geographic focus and were led by public sector partners. The sixth was led by a third sector partner and covered multiple geographical areas. Table 2 below provides an overview of the diagnostic profile.

The collaborations and time required to embed change and progress learning has taken longer than the initial 12 months. Of the five supported, Dundee has provided a final learning report, the remaining four are on track to finish in summer 2023.

¹ Remaining £91,000 has been allocated to diagnostic budgets.
Promise Partnership Year-End Report (2022-23)

| Lead Partner | Thematic Focus (wider significance) | Investment Level | Update on Delivery |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Aberlour | Ending restraint | £200,000 | Aberlour and Kibble have been on a journey of culture change. Both have significantly reduced their use of restraint which has now changed from a common tool to manage young peoples' situations, emotions and behaviour to the last resort tool to avoid harm. |
| Dundee City Council | System transformation | £200,000 | Development and expansion of 'Alliance' to include non-commissioned partners who will be supported by TSI. The Alliance - an intensive family support hub has been established and offers support to families across Dundee. Figures show the number of care experiences young people have reduced, and the stability of care has improved. |
| Fife Council | Kinship care | £200,000 | Over 100 in-depth conversations with kinship community using trauma informed participation approach. Findings are still being collated with a view to developing a plan that will be implement across Fife. |
| Inverclyde HSPC | Whole family | £200,000 | A focus of this proposal has been improved partnership working between HSCP and Third sector organisations. There are plans to restructure and redesign children's services with children and families with the inclusion of a whole family support team which will include specific roles in order to ensure the delivery of the Intensive Family Support Principles. |
| Shetland Island Council | Island approach | £140,000 | Awaiting report |

Table 2: Update Diagnostic Funded Projects

- **Getting it Right for Brothers and Sisters**

From the 12 proposals received £1.4m investment was made to eight collaborations.

All collaborations are making progress in their work and are actively engaging with the support packaged offered by the Promise Scotland. An update on their work is shown in the table below. To date, we have received a total of five reports. Four organisations received two-year funding, and all four are on track:

- Three of the reports have reflected significant improvements within and between multiple third and public sector partner agencies.
- Four of the five reports reflected improved partnership working between public and third sector organisation.

| Lead Partner | Update on Delivery |
|----------------------------|--|
| Scottish Borders | Family Group Decision Making service is now ensuring that sibling relationships are considered and supported within family plans, with a comprehensive Brothers and Sisters assessment undertaken and completed in placement or permanence planning specific circumstances. |
| Adoption UK (AUK) | Reflective groups facilitated with parents, carers and brothers and sisters to understand their needs, allowing them to provide support, offer strategies whilst developing supportive relationships. The collaboration has resulted on an insights paper which will form the basis of a practice training resource for practitioners working with brothers and sisters. |
| Perth & Kinross | Through the funding, Perth and Kinross Council have started shifting support for families from crisis led need to early need. They have revised the remit of the Family Focus team from long term work to early help; the focus is now on supporting families in their homes at the earliest possible stage. |
| North Lanarkshire | Working with Lifelong links has had a visible positive impact on the young people supported. Young people have made connections with family members and previous workers. This work has also shown deficiencies in historical and contemporary practice which need to be addressed and improved. |
| Families Outside | There is a greater understanding of the prevalence and numbers of children and young people in care who are impacted by a brother's or sister's imprisonment, as well as highlighting sibling imprisonment as an issue and something that care-experienced children and young people may be facing. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Siblings Reunited (STAR) | The annual report is due in July 2023. So far, the funding enabled STAR to conduct research in partnership with AFKA. Through joint investment they have conducted focus groups and surveys, delivered a number of direct activities with sibling groups, analysing referral and impact data. Over the funding period, STAR have been enabled to become better connected across the sector and have demonstrated significant willingness to share learning and their experiences with other practitioners across Scotland, in order to support care experienced brothers and sisters. |
| Glenboig Development Trust | Awaiting report |
| North Ayrshire | Delayed start report due November 2023. |

Table 3: Update Brothers and Sisters Work

From the reports received, two have made progress but have experienced delays, citing significant barriers to progressing the project on time – notably, due to recruitment/ appointment of project teams. Again, this is a theme we will pick up in section 6.

- **A Good Childhood**

The focus of this funding stream was against four specific areas outlined in the Promise Scotland’s Plan 21-24 [Change Programme ONE](#). Of the 40 successful proposals, relationships were identified the most (33), followed by Moving on (25) and Support (23). Youth Justice was highlighted 12 times.

Successful organisations are currently in the process of delivering their year one plans. Progress reports are due throughout 2023, with 18 progress reports (45%) received to date. The reports demonstrate good rates of progress, with many of the projects on track at the point of reporting – only five reflect significant delays or barriers to progress.

Insights gained from the reports received so far, include:

- 11 of the reports (61%), are explicit in reviewing, revising, or adopting policies that reflect Whole Family approaches, or creating new operational structures.
- 13 (72%) highlighted the delivery of key training activities with several highlighting changes to culture, practice and levels of commitment to the Promise.
- Three projects have developed toolkits, and five (31%) have created new or revised current guidance.

- A greater level of co-design/co-production with families. Five funded partners reported co-design activities and three (19%) highlight co-production activities delivered during the funding period.

“This broad range of learning has helped us achieve our aim to broaden the skillset of the staff team. Additionally, the culture and ethos within the organisation encourages self- development and growth through open, non-judgmental discussion about holistic family support; about what families tell us has worked and what has not worked for them. We are growing and developing in this area of our work.

As people who all bring our own experiences and “stuff” to the workplace, we are encouraged, as a team, to grow and develop; to be honest and accepting of the fact that we are all just people who can support and help others. To the families we work with, we are encouraged to walk alongside them – not to be seen as “the worker” or “the professional” who can teach them how to be effective parents or to bring up children. Sharing of experiences and learning is integral to our work.”

- **Keep The Promise**

This most recent fund aims to support the sector to think differently and challenge existing ways of working. Focused on three key challenge areas, emerging from the sector and evident from the ongoing work of Promise Scotland.

Of the 82 applications received, A Supportive Workforce received the most applications (50), followed by A Supportive School Structure (22), followed by Youth Justice (10). Overall, 29 applications were supported: 17 Supporting the Workforce, seven Supportive School Structure and five for Youth Justice.

Reporting for the organisations supported through the first round of Keep The Promise is scheduled towards the end of 2023/early 2024.

5. Organisations/Collaborations Self-Assessing Change

As detailed in section 4 from the written reports and group monitoring, we can see practical steps being implemented to support children, young people, and families. Alongside this each applicant to the Promise Partnership is asked to complete a self-assessment to better understand an organisation’s progress towards #KeepThe Promise.

Organisations are asked to measure themselves from 1-10 (one = lowest and 10 the highest) against the five questions below:

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Whole organisation is committed to keeping the Promise | Decisions made are underpinned by children’s rights | Organisation involves and listens to children and families | Underpinned by family support principles | Challenges current practice and open to redesign |
|--|---|--|--|--|

There was slight variation in the scorings between successful and unsuccessful proposals. The average applicant baseline score was 7.5. Public sector organisations generally scored themselves lower (7.1) than the third sector (7.6). Table 2 below provides an overview of average scores for successful proposals in each investment round.

| | Open Call | Diagnostic | Brothers & Sisters | A Good Childhood | Keep The Promise |
|---|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Commitment to keeping The Promise | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 |
| Children's Rights | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| Involve and listen to children and families | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Family Support Principles | 7 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 7 |
| Challenge current practice | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 |

Table 2: Successful Proposals Self-Assessment (Baseline Average Scores)

Emphasis was placed on encouraging applicants to provide honest assessments that would build on their strengths and support areas for development. And we can see this in a shift from the first round to the last round, where it was evident that people were acknowledging where they needed to improve or where action was required or being planned.

Successful organisations on average scored themselves lower involving and listening to children, young people and families and their whole organisation's commitment to implementing the Promise. This again acknowledging areas where help is needed.

Fifty-one baseline self-assessment questionnaires were received from funded organisations across the A Good Childhood, and Brothers and Sisters, programmes. To date we have received 17 updated self-assessment questionnaires. Collated results to date are, as follows:

| Indicator | Stage/Difference | Maximum | Minimum | Average | Median |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Whole Systems | Baseline | 9 | 4 | 6.5 | 7 |
| | End | 9 | 6 | 7.8 | 8 |
| | Difference | 4 | -2 | 1.3 | 1 |
| Children's Rights | Baseline | 10 | 3 | 7.1 | 8 |
| | End | 10 | 7 | 8.0 | 8 |
| | Difference | 5 | -2 | 0.9 | 1 |
| Implement | Baseline | 10 | 6 | 7.8 | 8 |
| | End | 10 | 6 | 8.2 | 8 |
| | Difference | 3 | -3 | 0.4 | 0 |
| Listening | Baseline | 10 | 7 | 8.1 | 8 |
| | End | 10 | 6 | 7.9 | 8 |
| | Difference | 2 | -4 | -0.1 | 0 |
| Redesign | Baseline | 10 | 4 | 7.9 | 8 |
| | End | 10 | 6 | 8.1 | 8 |

| Difference | 3 | -3 | 0.2 | 0

Overall, the combined reports demonstrate an increase against baseline scores - averaging a 2.7 increase against total scores. Most individual indicators show a slight increase - the Listening indicator had a marginal decrease on average, this reflects where most organisations (8) reported no change against this indicator, five reported only a very marginal increase, and four reported a decrease, one of which was a significant decrease (-4) which impacted the average change in score (-0.1). The biggest average change was against the whole System indicator (+1.3), where a majority of organisations (10) reported an increase and only two reported a decrease.

- The biggest positive difference was experienced by the Home Start Angus project - this reflects the concerted and intensive focus on the Promise and Plan 21-24 by the organisation and its partners and reflects the prominence which it has been given by the local authority and the improved strategic position of the organisation that has resulted, demonstrating true progress against the aims of the fund and towards meaningful systems change.
- The largest negative difference between baseline and review scores in the self-assessment was report by Perth and Kinross Council. While the report supports a reduction against the baseline score the narrative suggests activity that would have slightly increased, or, at the least, maintained the same score. The report does however highlight challenges and barriers related to implementation and co-production - namely stability of resources and the capacity of services.

"Feedback from recent development sessions with education staff and third sector colleagues has facilitated the identification of good practice in the provision of Whole Family Support, but also challenges and barriers to progress, including access to/support from multiple services, consistent and multi-year funding, parental engagement/support for parents, rurality issues, social factors, and the availability of childcare."

Perth and Kinross Council, Self-Assessment Review

6. Emerging Insights

Over the last two years, we have produced six insight reports (analysis of applications first round; Getting It Right for Brothers and Sisters applications; lessons from advisory group and decision makers panel, analysis of group monitoring sessions (2021 and 2022) and Year End report 2021-2022). These insights complement this report and are available on request.

Evident across the reported work to date is the commitment to participatory approaches. Most have reflected a commitment to working in this way and a small number have made significant progress – e.g. recruiting and appointing a dedicated team to review all services using this approach across a whole local authority area and/or implementing a co- production model.

“To progress forward with our 3 key priority themes, three sub-groups from the Highland Strategic Partnership were established. Each of these subgroups is led by a 3rd sector organisation and facilitated through systems change work: diagnosis of current system, strengthen the collective understanding of the current system. Each group utilizing the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtSD) methodology as well as contributing to the development of a wider Promise Transformation Program in Highland. There is wide representation across each of these subgroups which include, Care Experience Young People and Adults and professionals from Social Work, Health, Education, 3rd Sector, Police and Local Authority representatives.”

Strong partnership working is seen as critical in helping support change. In all funding rounds there are examples of where effective partnerships are being delivered across multiple disciplines and third and public sector partners.

“We have an established Operational Group which is co-chaired by the Service Manager from Children 1st and the Resources Group Manager from Children and Families Social Work. Membership also includes the Brothers and Sisters Team Leader and Project Worker from Children 1st, Team Leaders from Children and Families Social Work, a Child Protection Reviewing Officer, and the Promise Implementation Officer. We meet monthly to share updates and discuss challenges. We also have set up a Project Board which includes the Chief Social Work Officer from Children and Families and the Director of Children and Families from Children 1st. That group meets bi-annually to ensure project is on track and that the collaborative approach is embedded.”

Analysis of proposals, emerging themes from both written reports and conversations have illustrated both significant steps forward but also shone a light on the barriers that organisations are facing in making the necessary shifts. While partnerships as shown above are cited as positive there is an acknowledgement that partnerships are complex and need care support. Specific mentions of working with both internal and external partners, dedicated time and resources as well as strategic support that helps create wider and cultural changes. Particularly evident by some public sector partners who have reflected on the challenges relating to these internal barriers between public services.

Other main challenges reported by those funded have been highlighted previously. This includes recruitment issues, resulting in delays in progress. The other key areas were linked to short-term funding and the length of time required to build trust with children, young people and their families and being reported as the second largest issues.

- **Recruitment** is particularly hard across the sector at present, with many local authorities and third sector organisations struggling to recruit to roles resulting in delays to progress. Retainment of staff has been highlighted by senior managers as a significant challenge. We will continue to highlight and share these lessons with the Promise Scotland team, and colleagues in Scottish Government in recognising the importance of the workforce.

- **Short-term funding** caused challenges for organisations and local authorities with many acknowledging that this made it more difficult to plan for longer term change. Often once people are recruited there is little time remaining for work to start and become embedded, before having to plan an exit strategy. Most successful organisations have been in receipt of one year funding; and it is positive how much progress has been made; however, we do recognise that to make long-term shifts this will require long- term investment.

7. Developments

Since its inception, the Promise Partnership has worked with individuals and organisations to design the decision-making process and governance structure, in keeping with the approach taken by the Independent Care Review. Throughout the last 12 months, Corra has followed this method by engaging with the Decision Makers Panel and previous/existing applicants of the Promise Partnership, to hear more about how the application and assessment process felt and how this can be improved.

- **Decision Makers Panel**

After each funding round, Corra has facilitated reflection sessions with the panel. These sessions have focused on the assessment process and likes and dislikes, with the aim of improving for the next round. Changes have included adapting the assessment process, revamping forms, and changing the way the panel members access their assessments.

A key focus for Corra was to ensure that other people with care experience had the opportunity to join the panel, ensuring those quieter voices were represented. After a successful recruitment round in Spring 2023, six new people have joined the decision

maker's panel. All new panel members are bringing new skills, but also ensure more diverse representation from a gender, age, and geographical perspective. All panel members have received an induction and are being supported and trained by Corra staff and existing panel members to become assessors for the next funding round.

- **Application process**

Feedback gathered from previous Promise Partnership funding rounds indicated the desire for pre-application support. This was identified through some of the applications not quite meeting the criteria by not being innovative or ambitious enough. To respond to this, Corra provided detailed challenge briefs for each of the thematic areas, offering the sector information on what changes we are looking to see as a result of the investment. These were welcomed by the sector with applicants reporting they found these helpful.

To further this support, we worked alongside The Promise Scotland Team to identify pre- application support. This entailed The Promise Scotland facilitating three design thinking sessions focused on each of the challenge areas. These sessions were purposefully focused on support and space to co-design their idea (*e.g., Is their solution defined enough? How do we ensure it is the right solution?*). Over 130 people attended these sessions and gave positive feedback, thankful for the

opportunity to share their ideas with others and welcomed the chance to discuss the different design tools.

In response to feedback from both applicants and the decision maker's panel an additional stage – audio/video application has been introduced. This brings to life the planned proposals and offers a rounder conversation to the decision-making process.

- **Collaborations**

We understand the importance that collaborations are not only within the scope of funded organisations, but also how the Promise Partnership works alongside others including Promise Scotland.

We have continued to regularly meet with Promise Scotland to shape accessible and meaningful support as well as ensure learning and lessons can contribute to the overall Change Plan. Working together, we have refreshed our Partnership Agreement, and set-up ways to share insights, evidence and share lessons that help support delivery of the Promise. This has included a streamlined approach to the collation of evidence, a joint session with UK and Scottish based independent funders on their role in supporting the Promise and a planned event in spring 2023 where the Promise Scotland will host and showcase the achievements delivered by Promise Partnership funded work.

8. Conclusions

As shown in this report organisations and collaborations funded through the Promise Partnership are making progress. The importance of ongoing strategic commitment, willingness to collaborate and resource continue to be core in the how the Promise Partnership helps create the necessary systemic change specifically:

- Organisational culture that is adaptive and able to implement change.
- Organisations that have staff in place and 'ready to go.'
- Committed resource already to #KeepThePromise.
- Embedded participatory approaches.
- Open to active learning (knowing when things go wrong, reflecting and changing).

To build on this we have listened particularly to the needs of organisations who are tasked with implementing change and will continue to work with them to offer critical but realistic timescales to deliver their plans. Specifically, the offer of multi-year funding and additional capacity building support will help strengthen the overall aim of the Promise Partnership. We are continuing to work closely with colleagues in the Promise Scotland team to ensure capacity building and support offers are relevant and proportionate of organisations as work continues to change and adapt.

The strongest, recurring themes have been identified through feedback from the sector, conversations with The Promise Scotland Team, the advisory group, reports, and group monitoring sessions highlight a need for investment to support the same three themes:

- Right to education

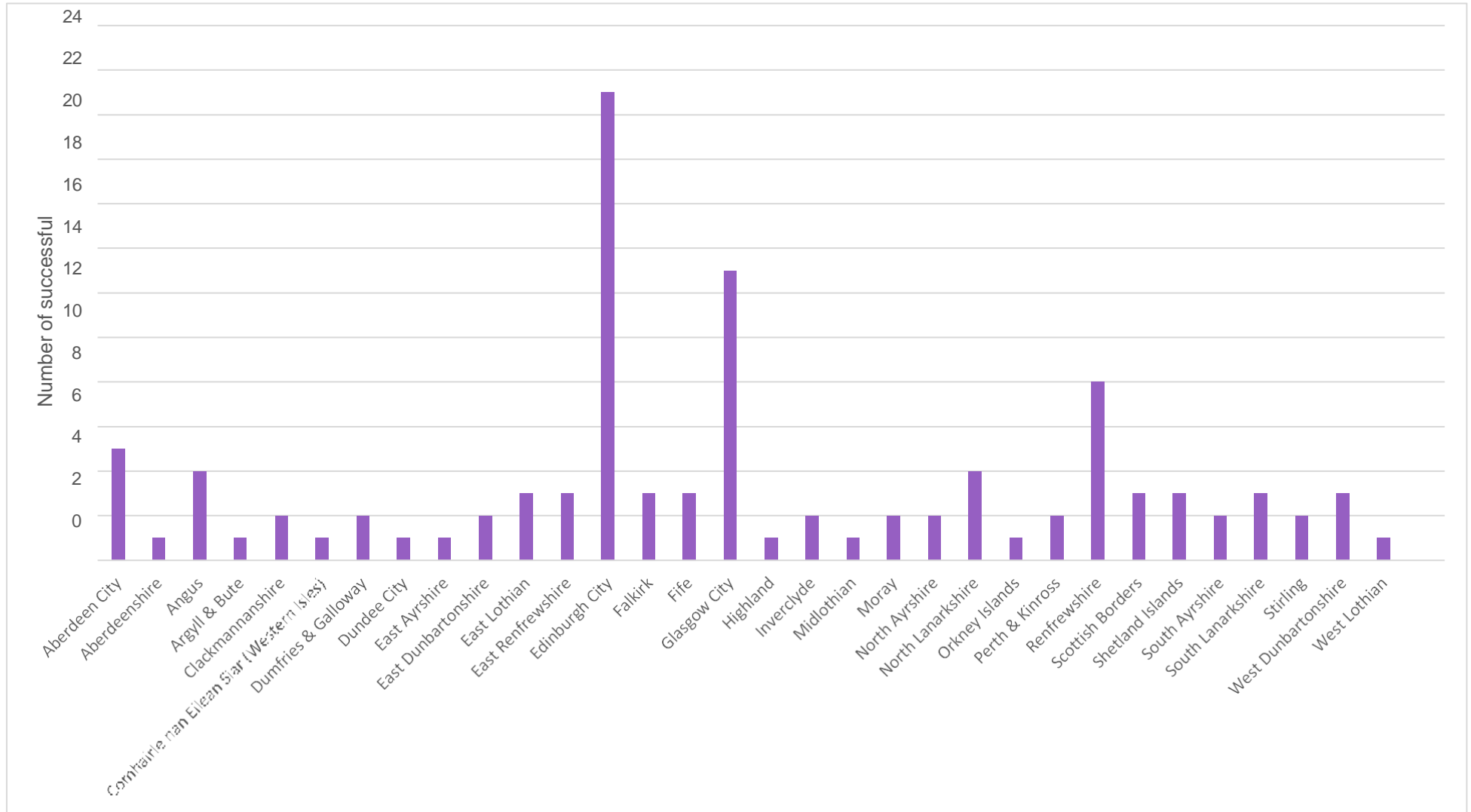
- Youth Justice & Rights
- Workforce capacity and support

These themes have shaped the last two funding rounds and will continue to help enable delivery of the Promise.

To continue to do all this well, there needs to be consideration for ongoing future financial resource that aligns the timescales of delivering on the Promise, and for funding through mechanisms like the Promise Partnership continuing to offer bolder grant and grant-making in creating space, flexibility, and creativity to embed the changes.

As this report suggests Corra is willing to support these bolder solutions and is open to continually evolving the Promise Partnership to meet the aspirations of the Scottish Government and others in delivering the Promise.

○ Appendix 2 – Successful Proposals (by local authority)



o Appendix 3 – Supported Organisations

| Lead Organisation | Amount Invested | | | | |
|--|-----------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Open Call | Diagnostic | Brothers & Sisters | A Good Childhood | Keep the Promise |
| Aberdeen City Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| Aberlour | £50,000 | £200,000 | | £99,500 | |
| Action for Children | £50,000 | | | £87,676 | |
| ACVO TSI (Third Sector Interface) | | | | £40,000 | |
| Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland | £25,000 | | | £69,260 | |
| Adoption UK, Scotland | £42,000 | | £98,000 | | |
| Angus Council on behalf of Corporate Parenting Board | | | | £100,000 | |
| Argyll & Bute Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| Articulate Cultural Trust | £50,000 | | | | £250,000 |
| Autism & Neurodiversity | | | | | £125,000 |
| Avenue Confidential | £50,000 | | | | |
| Barnardo's | £50,000 | | | | |
| Care Visions Fostering Scotland | | | | £96,739 | |
| CELCIS | | | | | £49,087 |
| Children's Services Voluntary Forum | | | | £92,958 | |
| Children 1 st | £50,000 | | | | |
| Children and Families Social Work Services, Dumfries, and Galloway Council | £50,000 | | | £99,206 | |
| Children & Young People's Centre for Justice | | | | | £241,893 |
| Children In Scotland | | | | | £249,947 |
| Church of Scotland Social Care Council (Cross Reach) | £50,000 | | | £98,000 | |
| Circle | £20,000 | | | £36,314 | £135,000 |
| City of Edinburgh | | | | £70,000 | £194,555 |
| Clackmannanshire Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar | £50,000 | | | | |
| Community Law Advice Network | £50,000 | | | £100,000 | £250,000 |
| Community Volunteers Enabling You (COVEY) | £50,000 | | | £43,590 | |
| Cyrenians | £50,000 | | | £100,000 | £240,000 |
| Dean and Cauvin Young People's Trust | £40,000 | | | | |
| Dundee City Council | | £200,000 | | | |
| East Ayrshire Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| East Dunbartonshire Council | £50,000 | | | £100,000 | |
| East Lothian Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| East Renfrewshire Council - HSCP | | | | £88,000 | |
| Educating Through Care Scotland | £50,000 | | | | |
| Falkirk Children's Commission | £50,000 | | | | |

| Lead Organisation | Open Call | Diagnostic | Brothers & Sisters | A Good Childhood | Keep the Promise |
|---|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Falkirk Council | | | | £95,000 | £217,000 |
| Family Journeys | | | | | £235,356 |
| Families Outside | | | £196,904 | | |
| FCA Scotland | £50,000 | | | | |
| Fife Council | | £200,000 | | £100,000 | |
| Foster Care Connect | £41,000 | | | | £71,096 |
| Fostering People Scotland | £30,000 | | | | |
| GCVS | | | | £100,000 | |
| Glasgow City Council | | | | | £70,585 |
| Glasgow HSCP | | | | £65,000 | |
| Glenboig Development trust | £35,000 | | £96,929 | | |
| Harmeny Education Trust Limited | £50,000 | | | | |
| Home Start Angus | | | | £35,000 | |
| Home-Start UK | £50,000 | | | £99,412 | |
| HUB for SUCCESS | £50,000 | | | £83,000 | £214,019 |
| Includem | £50,000 | | | | |
| Inspiring Scotland | £40,000 | | | £67,000 | |
| Inverclyde HSCP | £50,000 | £200,000 | | | |
| JMT Fostering | £25,000 | | | | |
| Kibble Education and Care Centre | £50,000 | | | | |
| Moore House Group | £20,000 | | | | |
| Moray Council on Addiction | £50,000 | | | | |
| NHS Grampian | | | | £100,000 | |
| North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership | £50,000 | | £140,000 | | |
| North Lanarkshire Council | £50,000 | | £100,000 | | |
| NSPCC Scotland | | | | £55,000 | |
| One Parent Families Scotland | | | | £87,323 | £240,139 |
| Orkney Islands Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| Passion4Fusion | | | | | £125,000 |
| Perth and Kinross Council | | | £57,585 | | |
| Place2Be | | | | | £103,840 |
| Project Change | £30,000 | | | | |
| Quarriers | £50,000 | | | | |
| Renfrewshire Council | £50,000 | | | £100,000 | £250,000 |
| Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership | £50,000 | | | | |
| Resilience Learning Partnership | £50,000 | | | | |
| Rossie | £50,000 | | | | |
| Safe Families | £50,000 | | | | |
| Scottish Adoption Association | £25,000 | | | | |
| Scottish Attachment in Action | £15,000 | | | | £154,000 |

| Lead Organisation | Open Call | Diagnostic | Brothers & Sisters | A Good Childhood | |
|---|-----------|------------|--------------------|------------------|----------|
| Scottish Borders Council | £50,000 | | £160,000 | | |
| Scottish Mentoring Network | £30,000 | | | | |
| Seamab Learning & Care Services | | | | | £50,000 |
| Shared Lives Plus | | | | £77,180 | |
| Shetland Islands Council | £50,000 | £140,000 | | £100,000 | |
| Siblings Reunited (STAR)(SCIO) | | | £200,000 | | |
| South Ayrshire Council | £50,000 | | | | £229,937 |
| Speak Out Scotland | | | | £70,000 | |
| Staf | £50,000 | | | £58,000 | £250,000 |
| Stirling Council | £50,000 | | | | |
| St Margaret's Children & Family Care Society | £50,000 | | | | |
| The Fostering Network in Scotland | £50,000 | | | £95,000 | |
| The Good Shepherd Centre | £50,000 | | | | |
| The Princes Trust | | | | | £236,595 |
| The Robertson Trust (Each & Every Child) | | | | | £170,000 |
| The Why Not? Trust | | | | £39,000 | £106,972 |
| The Yard | | | | £100,000 | |
| Volunteering matters | £50,000 | | | | |
| West Dunbartonshire HSCP (Health & Social Care Partnership) | £50,000 | | | | |
| West Lothian | £50,000 | | | £100,000 | |
| Who Cares? Scotland | £50,000 | | | £99,091 | |
| Winning Scotland | | | | £45,000 | £62,800 |
| With Kids | | | | £67,500 | |
| YMCA Edinburgh SCIO | £10,000 | | | £55,378 | |
| Young Scot | £16,000 | | | | |
| Ypeople | £50,000 | | | | |
| Y Sort It | | | | | £104,164 |

Appendix 4 – Additional Case Studies

Aberlour’ s Poverty & Hardship fund was supported through the **Promise Partnerships Open Call fund**. The aim being to support families experiencing extreme poverty by testing/refining solutions. Using the Scottish Approach to Service design, Aberlour developed a test of change which provided debt relief to families who were engaging with their family support services across Tayside. Many families supported through this test of change, had multiple debts, 75% of which were public debt-related, such as council tax and rent arrears. This project cleared family’s debt and also linked families into Welfare Rights Services, who were able to offer help around income maximisation and wider money advice. Through this approach, families reported reduced stress and anxiety. Improved engagement with the wider support services was also highlighted.

Families who have had the debt removed have reported significant relief and unburdening with a positive impact on their levels of anxiety and hope for the future. One woman commented:

- “I felt very depressed knowing I had this extra money to pay every month. It was on my mind constantly” and “I knew this was something that would be difficult to be paid off especially with two young children and another child on the way”

Following the removal of her debt she said:

“The amount of stress that has been relieved is unreal and now I feel I can maintain and budget my current income to support my girls”

“In the future, as my debt has been paid off, I am able to get support from housing to hopefully move to a bigger house with more bedrooms and I also want to go to college to do hairdressing”

Aberlour also developed resources and tools (including the creation of a financial well-being toolkit) to ensure practitioners were offering families good financial support. This is currently being utilised across all of Aberlour’ s services in Tayside and is likely to be rolled out more widely across services in Scotland.

One of the key findings identified was the significant period of time taken for families to be fully assessed through Welfare Rights Services. This is an area that has been highlighted across the Tayside Steering Group with the aim of influencing speedier allocation and assessment of families which, in turn will enable faster clearing of the debt for families.

The experience of families living with debt has enhanced Aberlour’ s understanding of the challenges faced by families. It has also supported the wider research and influencing work undertaken in relation to poverty at a national level.

CLAN Anonymised cases study:

Aisha came to Scotland as an UASC. She was looked after by an English local authority, but never lived in England. She was in a foster family for several years in Scotland and when she turned 18, the English local authority told her that she was not entitled to any more support. They told Aisha to apply as homeless and get temporary accommodation from the local Scottish authority. When she tried to do this the Scottish local authority provided a hostel, saying the English local authority would have to pay for supported accommodation. The English local authority did not have a legal duty to pay for supported accommodation. Aisha was in adult homeless accommodation at 18 and lived there for eighteen months. She found living with vulnerable adults very difficult, she dropped out of college and her mental health was impacted. As things stand care experienced young people who live in Scotland but were looked after by English or Welsh local authorities do not have rights that prevent them becoming homeless when they leave care.

CLAN enabled Aisha to take the case to the Court of Session, she hoped that her voice, her sense of fairness and her determination might show why young people in her situation need this to change. Aisha was offered a house and support by the Scottish local authority, and the question of what rights young people like Aisha have has not been answered. We have more cases like Aisha's waiting to be taken to court. These cases are complex, the regulations are inconsistent with the legal duty set out in the Act, and there have never been cases like this before in Scotland, young people need expert lawyers to be able to take action like this.

Care Visions received investment from A Good Childhood fund to support the collaboration of three partner organisations: Care Visions, Scottish Attainment in Action, and Early Years Scotland. Their aim is to recruit a co-production team to offer a completely new approach to supporting families. From this the Village was born.

The Village is an accessible, independent online community which provides knowledge and support to care experienced parents and parents-to-be. The Village was designed to break down stigma with parents choosing to join with no referrals needed. Once joined, they are linked with a Village team member who can offer a listening ear, specific advice or general support.

Co-production and active participation are central to the Village ethos. This approach has changed the power dynamic, with parents actively choosing to be involved, adding value to the community overall. Referrals are not accepted from third parties and support is driven by what parents want and need. The aim is to empower parents and allow them to have full control of their involvement. There is no requirement for parents to prove their care experience at any point. Instead, all are welcomed into a trauma-informed, safe and confidential space where support and guidance are made available in a manner which best suits those accessing it. No assessments made or case records kept, unless there are serious welfare concerns 'what is said in the Village, stays in The Village'.

- [About Corra Foundation](#)

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness, and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

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DATE OF PUBLICATION 26

June 2023

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Promise Partnership

Promise Partnership Lessons and Insights on Co-production process of funding decisions

Introduction

This paper is a light touch evaluation of the process of delivering the Promise Partnership.

The Promise Partnership was designed to ensure that the investment model would reflect the findings from the independent care review and put people with care experienced at the heart of the decision making and shift the power dynamics. To support this an Advisory Group and Decision Makers panel were established. The advisory group to shape and challenge the criteria and application materials; the decision makers panel to design and make all funding decisions. The aim to:

- Encourage and support diversity in shaping The Promise Partnership.
- Listen to people who are able challenge norms and offer new ways to support change.
- Invest in work that children, young people and families with care experienced want and need.

This paper provides reflections on this process from Corra staff, decision makers panel and the advisory group. The paper also offers suggestions made by panel members and advisory group that could support future developments of the Promise Partnership.

Summary of Findings

- Meaningful co-production.
- The open, reflective process allowed for healthy professional challenge to improve processes and use of language; both promoting an inclusive approach.
- Positive relationships with Corra, staff were supportive and encouraged a team approach.
- Corra's ability to listen, reflect and learn from early mistakes.
- There was strength in having a separate Advisory Group and Decision Makers Panel. Application materials were progressive. People had to think seriously about how they would live up to the Promise.
- Important to acknowledge and learn from the diversity of skills and depth of experience both the Advisory Group and Decision Makers Panel.
- Processes could be improved. Providing information at recruitment stage of decision makers regarding payments, estimated time commitment, role and boundaries.
- Build more time into the development of criteria, testing processes and assessing.

1. Recruitment of Advisory Group/Panel Members

Recruitment was an open call via social media posts and information on Corra's website. Several people heard about the opportunities through 'word of mouth'. People reflected the primary reason for joining the Advisory Group or Decision Makers Panel was their commitment to making The Promise work. *"Everybody came with their own unique set of circumstances and experience no one was there for their organisation, they were there because it was right for Scotland and was right for young people and that came across really strongly."*

Panel members felt it was important not to overly formalise the recruitment as it 'could put people off', especially those with quieter voices who may not necessarily see they have a lot to offer. People welcomed the 'informal' chats by Corra staff who were able to give a bit more detail on the role, find out about their expectations and their own experiences and background.

The Decision Maker Panel highlighted the need for Corra to record people's individual skills and experience. They felt this offered a greater degree of governance and accountability, especially in the infancy of participatory decision-making. Many of the panel members also felt it was important to recognise that this framed their role differently, seeing beyond 'the care experienced' and what can be gained from shifting decision-making. "Care experience maybe what brings you to the table, but it isn't the only thing you offer."

Corra's approach was overall light touch and helped people engage. People did identify areas where additional information would have been beneficial during the recruitment phase and could encourage others to get involved. Specifically, more information on expectations and payment processes.

2. Supporting the Advisory Group/Panel Meetings

A definite advantage to lockdown restriction was people's ability to join from across different parts of the county. While it was acknowledged zoom meetings are not perfect in helping develop relationships they did allow for greater levels of participation. This was recognised as being important given the time constraints of the Promise Partnership.

People commented on the real sense of co-production being at the centre of everything. Panel members talked warmly about their relationship with Corra staff and particularly about being supported. Corra staff helped to 'create a team feeling'. There was recognition across both the advisory group and the decision makers panel that people felt able and comfortable to challenge, allow for suggestions to be considered and that Corra would take the necessary actions. "The advisory group meeting was full of energy, thoughtful, collaborative and respectful of difference."

Both groups acknowledged that Corra listened and was willing to take actions to address any concerns with the process. This was a particularly important point for the decision-makers with some framing of external communications. The panel members felt able to openly speak with Corra to address concerns and agree necessary measures and lessons learnt.

Again, both groups felt relationships naturally formed and felt that Corra had worked hard to keep people engaged but still ensuring tasks were completed. "Corra were all over it but not in an intrusive way but supportive way."

There were significantly more meetings than had originally been scheduled, but it was recognised that was to match the process and ensure it was right. A couple of people on the decision makers panel did suggest that some of the meetings could have been shaped differently. Less on testing mock applications and possibly more training and consideration of wider assessment options.

3. Designing the Criteria and Application Materials

Similar, to the decision makers panel the advisory group felt this was a genuinely co-produced approach. While time constraints were acknowledged (one member commented it would have been helpful to have had time to review all documents together). The advisory group agreed it was beneficial to have draft outline documents. "*If Corra had come without the draft criteria the group wouldn't have got anywhere, starting with something was a good way of doing it.*"

What was important to the group was they all felt their voices had been heard, all suggestions acknowledged and worked through to see how it would contribute to the overall shape of the criteria and application forms. The group felt that skills in the advisory group helped to support

this process. *“Having a broad mix of experience in the advisory group did give the design process a good angle, debating issues was a healthy way to approach funding, it was good to bring realistic examples.” “It was energising to work alongside dynamic professionals with a shared vision.”*

Both the advisory group and the decision makers panel felt the self-assessment within the application form was an important aspect. The groups felt the designed materials encouraged space to be reflective and show a commitment to the Promise. “I think we got the materials right, the focus on what this would mean for children, young people and families.... I was speaking with people who applied and they said they couldn’t just cut and paste like they usually did when applying for funds....they had to take time and think through their response and what would be different as an organisation and what this would mean for children and young people they supported.”

4. Assessing the Applications

The decision-makers panel designed their own assessment process. The group acknowledged that it was helpful to have members of the panel who had previous experience of assessing applications, it offered confidence to other members. *“Really valuable experience and learning from the skills and experience from the group.”*

The assessment process involved each application being reviewed twice by two different panel members. The panel originally had planned to three separate assessments for each application to ensure a robust and open approach. However, due to time constraints Corra suggested alternatives. The panel agreed on the two individual assessments before a final group assessment. The panel did feel this was a necessary given the time constraints and still ensured all decisions were made fairly. *“Felt it was a robust process to help ensure decisions were accurate.”*

Some members of the panel acknowledged that having critical distance from the issues helped when making decisions. But all panel members were mindful that issues discussed could still be difficult. *“Important to message that people were not left on their own.”* The panel did feel that the meetings were a safe space and found ways to help support each other, especially as all meetings were online. This included going off-line, texting, direct messages in zoom.

Corra staff and advisory group members recognised and acknowledged how much time, work and commitment was given by panel members. They were asked to do a lot within a short period working in the evenings and at the weekends. “We (Corra) asked a lot of the panel, amazing how the group remained engaged.” The commitment to the Promise was the main driver to maintain this level of work, but again the decision makers panel did advise that more time to complete assessments would have been useful.

5. Accountability

There was a strong sense from both groups that the Promise Partnership needed to transparent, robust and respond to potential biases. There was an overwhelming sense of ownership in the process and accountability in distribution of public monies.

The separation of designing the criteria and material and the decision making was an effective way to ensure this and support the decision-making panel. “The importance of transparency – who is involved, what’s the purpose and publishing this – provided an added level of scrutiny. “ The supportive structures put in place by Corra, also encouraged both groups to hold Corra to account. The groups talked about Corra staff listening and finding ways to respond to comments, address concerns and offer additional help.

Final remarks

People generally felt this was a positive experience and that everyone was committed to the work of the Promise. It was evident from the feedback that the process benefited from having safe, supportive and welcoming spaces were provided that enabled people to work together in creating the processes and making decisions.

Both groups acknowledged that time had been a barrier and that more could have been done to widen recruitment of new members, offer more training and greater more space for reflection. Listening was seen as a key theme with both groups acknowledging that Corra were willing to listen and adapt to comments. This was particularly evident in the early stages of setting up the decision-makers panel.

Overall, the advisory group and decision makers panel found the Promise Partnership to be an excellent example of co-production that recognised and valued the skills and experience of both groups. *“This co-produced approach nudges a culture of ‘I don’t care who gets the credit as long as it gets done’ which must be good for dismantling any professional silos.”*

Recommendations

1. At the development of any co-production ensure to allocate space to agree the framing of the work (i.e., language) with members of the group. This should include how the group will be referred to in any external communication.
2. Develop an approach that will encourage ‘quieter voices’ to participate and feel they are contributing.
3. To develop co-production well, build more time than you expect into the design and development phase.
4. Increase the amount of time to complete assessments.
5. Ask and provide training and skills development for members of any co-production.
6. At recruitment provide information on the likely length of engagement, remit of group, any payments, and expenses covered.
7. Find ways that enable people to share their skills and experiences that will help support the group to achieve the overall aim.
8. At the point when people are joining the group ensure that all necessary paperwork (i.e., payment structures) are in place.
9. Make sure people feels supported and people know help is available if they need it.
10. Ensure there are continual check-ins and opportunities for informal chats to keep people feeling connected

Summary of Findings

- 91 applications assessed.
- £3,909,000 investments made to 69 organisations.
- Investment made in 26 of 32 local authority areas.
- Primary reason for applying dedicated staffing costs to change practice.
- Lowest scored self-assessment; listening to children, young people and families.

- **Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the proposals received for to the Promise Partnership's Open Call and Diagnostic Route. It highlights potential gaps and offers insights into themes identified from the content of the proposals and completed self-assessments.

The Promise Partnership was a £4m Scottish Government fund with the specific aim to deliver change in-line with Scotland's commitment to #KeepThePromise and holistic family support to ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected.

Two identified routes to funding where administered:

- Open Call – infrastructure investment to organisations.
- Diagnostic Route – identified collaborations by the Promise team.

All applicants had to complete a short application form and self-assessment.

- **Application and Fund Allocation**

Ninety-one proposals were received totalling just over £4.87m. From this, 72 investments were made to 69 organisations totalling just over £3.9m¹. The distribution of investment was 75% to open call and 25% through the diagnostic route.

The success rate for the Promise Partnership was 79%. Almost half of unsuccessful applicants (47%) did not meet criteria. The main other unsuccessful reasons were a lack of evidence on how the work would contribute to the Promise and how organisations would work alongside children, young people and families.

- **Geographical Coverage**

Applications were received from 31 of the 32 local authority areas (only Highland not covered). Along with Highland there were two other areas where investment was not made (Midlothian and Perth & Kinross). A significant proportion of the investment supports Scotland-wide organisations (just over £1.1m). Appendix 1 provides an overview of investment across local authority areas.

- **Open Call**

Over 200 eligibility checks were completed for the open call resulting in 85 organisations completing a proposal. Most ineligible checks were due to organisations seeking funding for 'service delivery'. From the 85 organisations who completed the open call, 79% were successful securing just under £3m in investment.

¹ Remaining £91,000 has been allocated to diagnostic budgets.

The public sector had the highest success rate. As expected a higher volume of applications were from the third sector (secured 59% of investment). Table 1 provides the sector profile.

| Sector | Number of Applications | Success Rate | Funding Amount |
|---------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Public | 26* | 92% | £1,150,000 |
| Third | 56 | 75% | £1,764,000 |
| Private | 3 | 67% | £80,000 |

Table 1: Open Call; Application Profile by sector

*No applications from the public sector in Angus, Edinburgh City, Glasgow City, Highland, Perth & Kinross and South Lanarkshire.

- **Diagnostic Route**

Six organisations who had already formed collaborations identified by the Promise Team were invited to apply to the Diagnostic Route. All six collaborations developed a proposal of which five received investment at just over £915,000 (£1.1m was requested).

Five of the diagnostic approaches had a specific geographic focus and were led by public sector partners. The sixth was led by a third sector partner and covered multiple geographical areas. All six lead partners had also applied through the open call. Table 2 below provides an overview of the diagnostic profile.

| Lead Partner | Focus | Successful | Funding Amount | Successful in open call |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Aberlour | Ending restraint | Yes | £175,000 | Yes |
| Dundee City Council | System transformation | Yes | £200,000 | No |
| Fife Council | Kinship care | Yes | £200,000 | No |
| Inverclyde HSCP | Whole family | Yes | £200,000 | Yes |
| Renfrewshire | Lifelong links* | No | - | Yes |
| Shetland Islands Council | Island approach | Yes | £140,000 | Yes |

Table 2: Diagnostic Route; Application Profile

*The panel did indicate the need for investment in work to support siblings.

- **Purpose of Funding**

Investments are primarily to employ a dedicated role to help change practices (most referenced Implementation or Development Officer posts) as is shown in Table 2 below. 54% of organisations are seeking support across multiple purposes.

| Funding Purpose | Number of times requested |
|---|---------------------------|
| Changing practices through dedicated staff | 42 |
| Engagement and participation | 34 |
| Reviewing policies and procedures (internal) | 22 |
| Influencing other stakeholder practices or behaviours | 9 |
| Service delivery redesign | 9 |
| Organisation-wide cultural changes | 8 |
| Improving data collection and systems | 6 |

Table 2: Application Profile (Funding Purpose)

- **Self-Assessments**

The self-assessment was included to help provide a baseline and establish where organisations were on their journey of change. The average applicant baseline score was 8. On average, public sector organisations scored themselves lower (7) than the third and private sectors (8).

Emphasis was placed on encouraging applicants to provide honest assessments that would build on their strengths and support areas of identified weaknesses. Successful organisations on average scored themselves lowest against involving and listening to children, young people and families and their whole organisation’s commitment to implementing the Promise. There was recognition that progress was needed across most areas as shown Appendix 2.

- **Feedback from Decision Makers Panel**

All applicants to the Promise Partnership received tailored feedback on their proposal and plan. Nearly 40% of applicants received feedback on the strength in their plans particularly around participation and co-production. The remaining 60% of successful organisations received additional feedback on areas for improvement. The panel identified five emerging themes where additional feedback could help shape ongoing support from the Promise Team (Table 3 below).

| Feedback | Number |
|---|--------|
| Benefit from additional support to help sustain plan | 15 |
| Urgent need to review language aligned to findings from The Promise | 8 |
| Further work and support around participatory approaches | 8 |
| Need 1-1 support the Promise Team | 7 |
| Need to revisit their self-assessment | 5 |

Table 3: Application Profile (Funding Purpose)

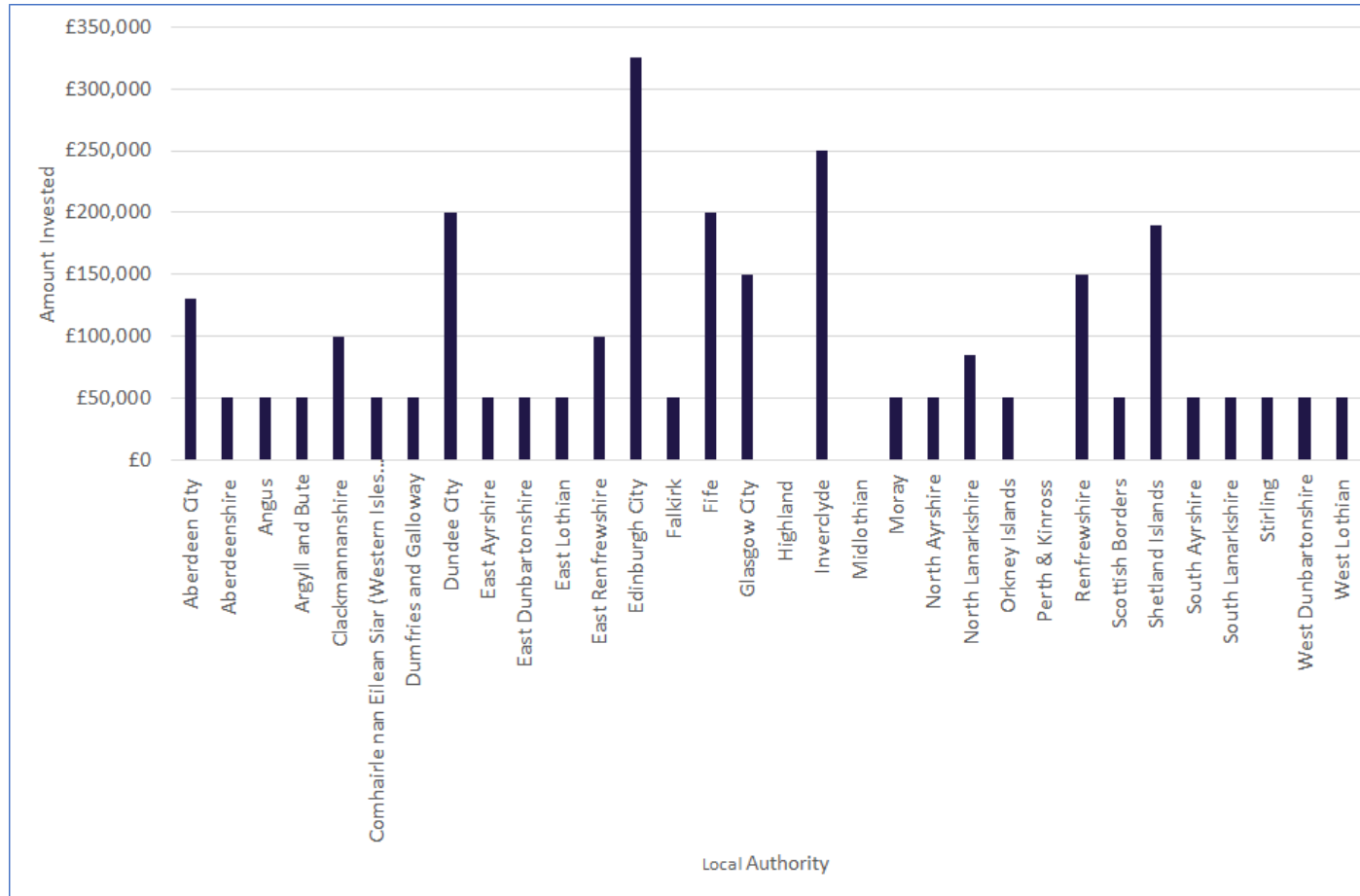
- **Final remarks**

The Promise Partnership was to provide initial support to help shift to new normal sector-wide collaborations which listen to families when they speak, supporting them where they need it. Focusing the criteria on infrastructure and collaborations has helped to support this. Successful organisations identified areas of support and change that were aligned to the plans of the Promise, and family support particularly around changing practices, and participatory approaches.

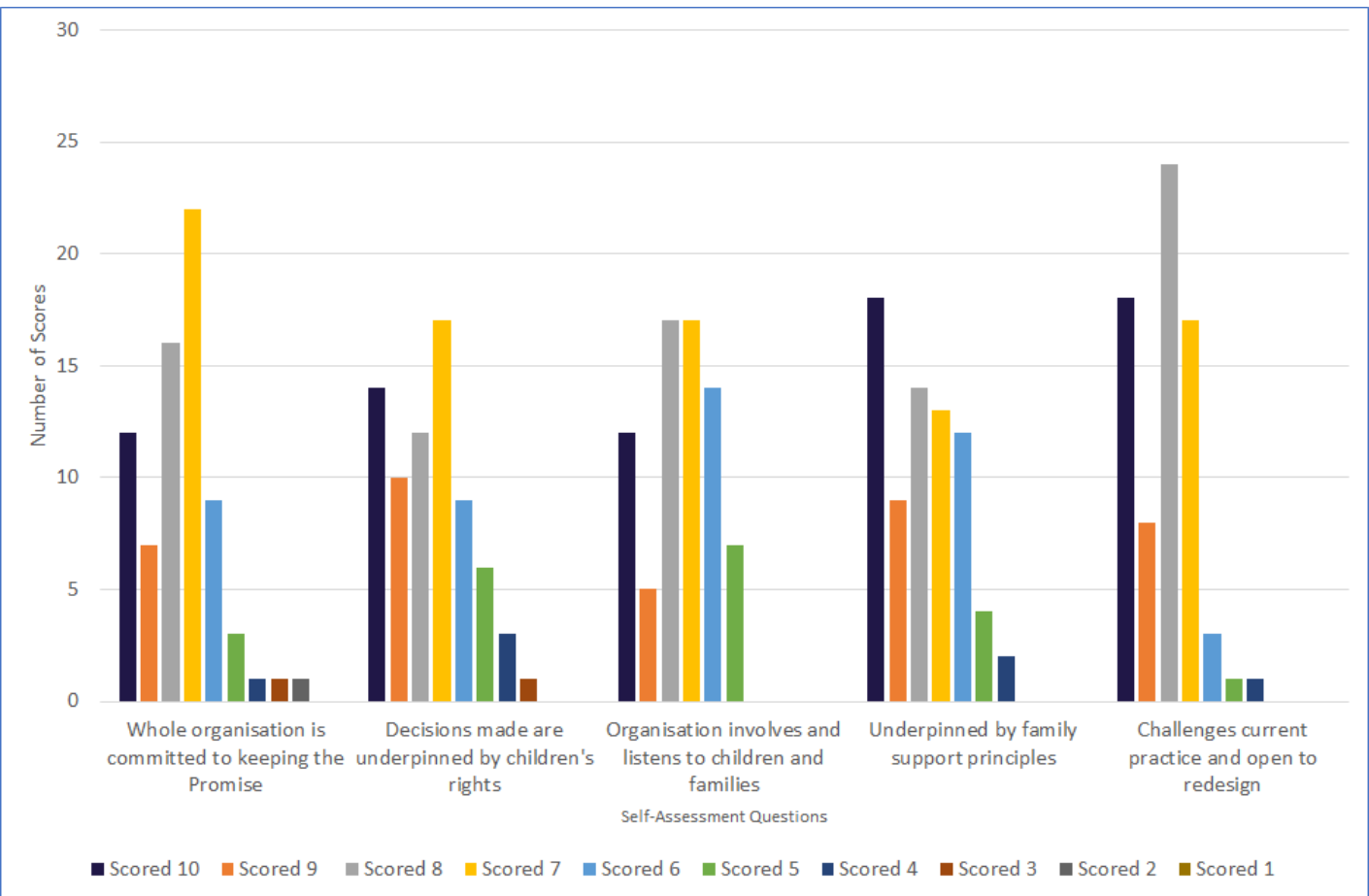
Feedback from the panel has indicated that organisations would benefit from further help to fully understand participatory approaches. It was also recommended that staff employed with a remit to implement change are given additional support. The focus to ensure they have management backing and confidence to carry out their remit and sustain change across their organisations. While not all diagnostic proposals were funded, the panel did identify a need for additional investment to maintaining lifelong links.

The total Scottish Government budget of £4m has been spent in nearly every locality across the country. The panel has acknowledged there are gaps both geographical and thematic.

Appendix 1 - Investment across Local Authorities



Appendix 2 – Self-Assessment Baseline



List of meetings with Corra

- **3 May 2022** – Contract inception meeting with Corra and SG officials.
- **6 June 2022** - Officials meeting with Corra
- **16 June 2022** – Meeting with Corra
- **25 August 2022** – Promise Partnership Fund launch meeting with Corra.
- **30 November 2022** – Promise Partnership Fund check-in with officials.
- **6 December 2022** – Promise Partnership Fund check-in with officials.
- **24 January 2023** – Introductory meeting with Corra and new lead SG official.
- **6 February 2023** – Meeting with Corra and SG officials to discuss contributions to Bright Start, Best Futures and Promise commission
- **5 September 2023** - Keeping The Promise team introductory meeting with Corra

Response to request for information regarding Decision Makers Panel

The Decision Makers Panel consists of people with a diverse range of skills, experience and expertise as well as lived experience of Scotland's 'care system'. Recruitment of the Panel was an open call through the social media posts and information on Corra's website.

The decision-makers panel is a separate group to the advisory group and comprised of people who have experience of the care system as well as other key skills and attributes. The Decision-makers panel lead on the assessment and decisions of applications to the Promise Partnership. The panel's role expanded during their period to offer insights on potential ways to continually support the work of the Promise Partnership (e.g., potential gaps in criteria, revising application material).

In May 2023 six new decision-making panel members were recruited. This widened the geographical spread and the age range of people with the youngest member being 18 years old.

Scottish Government officials were not involved in the recruitment process.

