

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES – 23 OCTOBER 2023

REPORT ON: OUR PROMISE 2021-23 ANNUAL UPDATE AND 2023-25 PLAN

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 295-2023

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides the Children, Families and Communities Committee with the third annual update on the implementation of Our Promise to Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers 2021-23 (Appendix 1). The report follows Elected Member approval of Our Promise on 8 March 2021 (report number 93-201, article IV refers) and the first and second annual updates on 25 October 2021 (report number 289-2021, article VI refers) and 31 October 2022 (report number 276-2022, article VI refers). It outlines key developments in the final year of the current plan and provides details of a further 3-year plan for the period 2023-25 (Appendix 2). It also includes details of the Children's Service Planning Partnership allocation of Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Elected Members:

- a Note progress made in the implementation of Our Promise and improved outcomes for care experienced children, young people and care leavers.
- b Approve 'Our Promise' action plan for the period 2023-25
- c Note the allocation of Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Funding by the Children's Service Planning Partnership and next steps.
- d Instruct the Executive Director to provide a further update on Our Promise in 12 months, including details of the WFWF allocation and activities.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, the cost of implementing the plan will be met from the Children & Families Revenue Budget. Further details of the current projections are included in paragraph 4.4 of this report.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to develop what it refers to as a 'Corporate Parenting Plan' to outline how it will meet the needs of 'Looked After Children'. The Independent Care Review published in February 2020 was critical of this stigmatising language and promoted a collective ambition to promote transformational improvements in the way we provide support across the informal and formal care systems. The review published 7 reports, including The Promise, The Money and Follow the Money. They each placed an emphasis on prevention, keeping families together and ensuring that, where alternative care is necessary, all children and young people grow up feeling loved, safe and respected.

4.2 In response, the Council built on key approaches and collaborated with partners to develop Our Promise to Care Experienced Children, Young People and Families 2021-23. Under each of the 5 foundations of The Promise of Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding, the plan outlines a range of actions designed to improve universal, targeted and specialist support to all vulnerable children, young people and parents/carers. The plan is implemented by a multi-agency partnership, which links with other key partnerships such as the Child Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Violence Against Women Partnership and Alliance to ensure work is appropriately aligned and consistent.

- 4.3 In 2022-23, the Children's Social Work Service experienced significant budget pressures because of a combination of factors which changed the profile and cost of care arrangements for children, young people and care leavers. This included reduced internal foster care capacity; delays in implementing a waking nights rota and releasing an additional bedroom in each Young Person's House; a spike in the use of secure care; and more young people in external residential care remaining there in Continuing Care, up to the age of 21 years.
- 4.4 The service is addressing these cost pressures through a range of measures which are coming to fruition and having a positive effect on the capacity, balance and cost of care arrangements. For context, the current forecasted overspend in third party payments after applying reserves of £4.3m is £3.8m. Further planned movements in external placements are expected before the end of the year that will reduce this by £0.9m. In addition, the service will implement a reduction of continuing care rates from 1 October 2023 that will save a further £0.3m this financial year. The adjusted net overspends in third party payments of £2.6m is reflected within the latest revenue monitoring report (Report 278-2023 to City Governance Committee 23 October refers).
- 4.5 Additional income including grant funding for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will reduce above projected overspend by a further £0.7m. This area is under ongoing review to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to bring overall spend in line with the approved budget level before the end of the financial year
- 4.6 Further information on these measures and the positive impact of the growing range of supports being provided is contained in the body of this report.

5 DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1 Over the 3-year period of the plan, a total of 26 out of 34 actions (76%) have been fully implemented. Out of the other 8 actions, 3 focus on enhanced support in transitions into adulthood for care leavers, including training and employment which is currently being progressed via a Youth Participation Working Group; 2 involve a parenting strategy and parenting training which has been targeted at 2 teams and will be scaled to others; 2 focus on brothers and sisters remaining together, having contact or knowing of each other's care arrangements and is a key priority in the next 3-year plan; and 1 focuses on increasing internal Foster Care capacity and remains a key priority in the new plan. Specifically, in the last 12 months, actions have included:

5.2 People

- 5.2.1 A broad range of generic and bespoke training has been provided across universal, targeted and specialist services to build the capacity, confidence and competence of the workforce when providing support to families. This has included Level 1 and 2 Trauma Informed Practice training now across all nurseries, schools and Social Work teams and Level 3 training to all specialist teams. In partnership with the Scottish Mental Health Foundation and NHS Tayside, a Together to Thrive (TTT) initiative, involving bespoke coaching to key staff who are supporting primary school age children with emotional wellbeing concerns, also started to be implemented. This has included initial training to the 2 Fostering and Adoption Social Work Teams and some Foster Carers.
- 5.2.2 For the Social Work teams and partners supporting adolescents at risk of harm from or to others, including those at risk of secure care, core risk assessment training has been delivered alongside training in some specialist risk assessment tools. In recognition of one of the primary causes of children and young people being placed on the Child Protection Register or provided with alternative care, a designated Domestic Abuse Senior Officer has coordinated Safe and Together training and facilitated Practice Forums to support professionals in their assessments of and responses to risks to women and children. The 2023-25 plan now outlines new priority areas to enhance workforce knowledge and skills, including welfare rights and further parenting training.

- 5.2.3 This range of training delivered alongside routine internal audits of Social Work practice is demonstrably improving the quality of support provided to vulnerable children and young people on the edge of care or in care and their parents/carers. As part of a programme of improvement commented on positively by the Care Inspectorate in the Joint Inspection of Services to Children and Young People at Risk of Harm published in January 2022, core practice in the Social Work teams has continued to improve over the last 12 months. The most recent case file audit carried out in June 2023 showed the following foundational elements as rated Good or better, with a focus on the child or young person’s voice also now to be included in future audits:

Core Practice	2021 Audit Findings	2023 Audit Findings
Assessments	68%	96%
Child’s Plans	42%	85%
Chronologies	50%	78%
Overall	58%	93%

5.3 Family

- 5.3.1 Over the period, enhanced support in schools included counselling services for pupils with any identified emotional health and wellbeing concerns and a wide range of other services to provide support to specific groups. In total, school counsellors have supported 786 pupils over last 12 months. Other services, such as LGBT Youth Services, Clinical Psychology services for pupils experiencing trauma, bereavement services, dramatherapy and family mediation, have supported a further 329 pupils. More broadly, the Fast-Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system coordinated 894 referrals for additional support. Whilst not all of this was focused on children and young people at risk of being provided alternative care, it does illustrate the range of universal support provided to prevent concerns escalating.
- 5.3.2 To enhance targeted support, the Planet Youth initiative has identified improved communication between schools and local communities, a review of school relationship policies, the development of a newsletter on vaping and enhanced sport and leisure activities as key priorities in the 2 participating schools. These priorities are now being addressed and the initiative will roll out to a further 2 schools, with 2 Development Workers enhancing connections between families, schools and communities. The What Matters 2 U initiative is adopting a similar approach initially in 2 locality areas, with weekly activity sessions with families, teams responding to their needs and Columba 1400 Values Based Leadership Academies for them and professionals. Feedback indicates this is helping to address social isolation, emotional health and family relationships, whilst also enabling parents/carers to engage with wider supports.
- 5.3.3 The Social Work teams also worked with partners to support 600 infants, children, young people and parents/carers on a voluntary basis or through statutory measures such as Compulsory Supervision Orders, before alternative care was considered necessary. This included support from the New Beginnings Team to vulnerable pregnant women, where 90% of babies remained with their parents or extended families without requirement for continued Social Work support. It also included co-located Social Work/DDARS team support to older children’s parents who had substance use concerns, where outcomes included commencing treatment, achieving stability, completing detoxification programmes and either avoiding children being removed from their care or enabling their return.

5.3.4 A targeted approach specifically towards adolescents at risk of entering care was also strengthened and is showing positive results. A total of 26 families have now successfully completed the Functional Family Therapy programme, with 10 working towards completion. Comparing the 18 months before FFT was introduced with the more recent 18 months afterwards, the number of young people aged over 11 years who were provided with alternative care reduced from 31 to 20. Where young people did enter care, it typically followed earlier attempts through FFT and other supports to avoid family breakdown. In the 3-year period of the plan, the number of care experienced children and young people gradually reduced by:

Care Experienced Population	2021 - 442	2022 - 435	2023 - 429
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5.3.5 However, the city continues to have a higher proportion of care experienced children and young people than the national average at 1.6% versus 1.2% and currently sits 26th out of 32 local authorities. This emphasises the importance of continuing to coordinate a range of support to vulnerable children, young people and families, from early years through to adolescence and adulthood. In addition to further workforce development and support, the 2023-25 plan therefore also includes continued coordination of the WFWF funding, the development of a clear and transparent 'edge of care offer' to families and further strengthening of approaches towards adolescents at risk, including through contextual safeguarding.

5.4 Voice

5.4.1 Following the introduction of new Team Around the Child (TATC), Practice Profile Guidance and other initiatives, the voice of children, young people and families is becoming increasingly central to practice across the informal and formal care system. The Practice Guidance expects the voice of the child or young person to be heard first in meetings, either directly or via a buddy. This is followed by the voice of the parents/carers, so they can also be involved in the development of a support plan. Plans are then co-written whilst in the meeting, with clear actions and copies provided to those present. It fundamentally changes the focus and style of meetings, with families empowered, their strengths recognised and their voices placed at the centre of decisions affecting their lives.

5.4.2 In an evaluation of this practice, 71% of pupils in sites where the Practice Guidance was being implemented had their views heard, compared to 35% across other sites. All parents who completed questionnaires after their TATC Meeting said they felt listened to during the meeting and were clear on what happen next. Almost 90% of parents who filled in the questionnaire felt that the meeting was helpful to them and their family. One parent said: 'It felt good that I got to say my views first. A big weight was lifted. Before I never got a chance to because workers were always butting in and having their say. It felt good not to be interrupted'. There is a clear sense that the 5 principles of Trauma Informed Practice are being applied.

5.4.3 In the formal care system, a new Champions Board model was introduced involving smaller Champions Boards coordinated by Pupil Support Workers in each of the Secondary Schools. Between August 2022 and June 2023 four schools hosted meetings and themes included presence at school, participation in class and self-worth. One group also worked directly with the Child Protection Committee to contribute towards the development of a new city-wide Charter which again mirrors the 5 Trauma Informed Practice principles. All young people involved achieved a Saltire Award for their work. The extent to which the Charter is applied in practice before, during and after key meetings will be considered as part of the routine case file audits.

- 5.4.4 At their request, a group of 12 care experienced young people also attended a 3-day Columba 1400 Young Person's Leadership Academy. It was a profound experience of personal insight and development for both the group of young people and the team providing support. One facilitator said: 'Your hopes for this week were to become a better leader, become better at communication and to make friendships. From what we have seen we believe you have worked very hard at these hopes and that you have achieved them with flying colours! Congratulations on an amazing week!' The young people said they liked being listened to, respected and offered hope. The same model is being extended to other Champions Boards.
- 5.4.5 During the year, the Social Work teams also introduced Mind of My Own (MOMO). This digital app empowers care experienced children and young people to provide comments in their own time on the support they receive, including in advance of their own care planning meetings so their voice informs decisions. One Social Worker said: 'It's been a good tool and the main child I use it with enjoyed it – she is 6 and liked the pictures and getting to choose her own answers on screen'. In 2023-24, the tool will also be used to carry out surveys with care experienced children and young people on key themes, to inform further improvements in the way teams provide support. For instance, questions on whether they believe their relationships with brothers and sisters have been appropriately respected and supported.
- 5.4.6 In 2023-25, actions to extend this work will include the implementation of Infant Pledge with NHS Tayside and the University of Dundee. This promotes a more structured approach towards listening to the 'voice' of babies and infants. The plan also includes an action to conduct a survey of care experienced children and young people and parents/carers on the extent to which they consider knowledge of, contact with and/or shared living arrangements with their brothers and sisters was adequately addressed whilst they were provided with alternative care. The findings of this survey will inform any improvements, including how the service mitigates any constraints such as large family groups entering care at the same time, brothers and sisters having different fathers each with Parental Rights and Responsibilities or young people being placed in secure care.

5.5 Care

- 5.5.1 A similar range of developments have continued to strengthen support to children, young people and care leavers in different care settings. In Kinship Care, the newly established team reported on in last year's report now undertakes assessments for all prospective carers and either coordinates or directly provides support. There has been an improvement in timescales for assessments, ensuring that where children and young people can live with family members they do so without delay. As children and young people in Kinship Care typically have lower school attendance levels than other care experienced children and young people, Pupil Support Workers are now targeting additional support. The team has recently been successful in an application to the Corra Foundation to provide enhanced therapeutic support to kinship families. It is significant that over the same period, the number of care experienced children and young people in Kinship Care have increased from:

Children and Young People in Kinship Care	2022 - 108	2023 - 125
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- 5.5.2 In internal Foster Care, the number of approved carers declined nationally by 4.8% between 2021 and 2022 and most areas report difficulties in recruiting households that will care for family groups. As noted in Section 3 of this report, these trends are mirrored locally and have placed a greater reliance on the use of external Foster Carers or residential care. The importance of building capacity and developing a high-quality Fostering Service was further reinforced by the findings of an externally commissioned Association of Fostering, Kinship and Adoption (AFKA) review of approaches and a disappointing Care Inspectorate inspection report published in December 2022. The service is making good progress in implementing an improvement plan and a full report will be provided to the City Governance Committee after inspectors return in November 2023. The service is also currently working with The Lens on an 'ideas to action programme' designed to enhance the recruitment and retention of foster carers, with an implementation plan due in November 2023.

Foster Carer Placements	2022	2023
Internal Foster Care	100	84
External Foster Care	98	93

5.5.3 In the Young Person's Houses, Millview Cottage and The Junction received Care Inspectorate inspection grades of Very Good; Gillburn Cottage received a grade of Good; and Drummond/Forrester House was inspected over a range of categories with grades from Adequate to Very Good. It received a Very Good for supporting young people with compassion, dignity and respect. At Fairbairn House, the team was not inspected but they have now moved to the newly opened Craigie Cottage, which will support a younger group of children aged 6 to 12 years. The accommodation at Fairbairn House is also being retained and reprovisioned as a supported housing facility for young people seeking to leave care and requiring structured support.

5.5.4 Collectively, these measures in Kinship Care, internal Foster Care and across the Young People's Houses are enhancing and intended to further enhance the capacity and quality of local care arrangements. They are also altering the balance of local community versus external residential care and thereby reducing costs noted in Section 3 of this report. In 2023-24, the number of children and young people in external residential or secure care have reduced from 43 to 32. The overall balance of family-based versus residential placements is currently 89.1%, slightly below the most recent Local Government Benchmark Framework (LGBF) data on the national average of 89.8%.

5.5.5 These developments provide a supportive environment from which children and young people can be present, participate and perform in schools, where they also receive additional support. The MCR Mentoring initiative had supported 267 care experienced children and young people and other pupils by June 2023. Feedback is invariably positive and one young person said: 'My mentor goes to great lengths to support me with what I need, he helps me with my career pathways, supports me with studying techniques and helps with applications. I am looking forward to having another full year with my mentor to see what other talents he can bring out in me.' The nature of this support at home, school and/or community appears to be directly contributing towards improved attainment:

Attainment	2020-21	2021-22
SCQF Level 4 or above	70.3%	76.2%
SCQF Level 5 or above	32.4%	52.4%

5.5.6 However, care experienced young people continue to fall behind their peers, with an overall population average of 92.9% achieving SCQF Level 4 or above in 2021-22 and 80.6% achieving SCQF Level 5 or above in 2021-22. It is also noteworthy that this gap widens considerably as academic levels rise, with only 14.3% of care experienced pupils achieving SCQF Level 6 in 2021-22 compared with 54.1% of their peers. It confirms that the service needs to explore and address barriers to care experienced young people remaining in formal education and progressing to SCQF Level 6. The plan for 2023-25 illustrates a specific focus on children and young people in Kinship Care, who typically experience lower school attendance levels than others.

5.5.7 The support to enhance emotional health and wellbeing and improve attainment levels extended to support to move into positive destinations. Last year, a designated Youth Employability Service worker supported 72 care experienced young people and 53 progressed into further education, training, employment or voluntary work. This was reinforced by the Aftercare Social Work Team, which continued to work with Dundee and Angus College to support attendance and address barriers to learning, whilst prioritising more intense holistic support to those not currently in a positive destination. Overall, the team supported 78% of eligible care leavers, slightly higher than the national average. A current Council review of Youth

Participation includes a specific focus on exploring Modern Apprenticeship opportunities across City Partners for care experienced school leavers and is included in the 2023-25 plan.

Positive Destinations	2019-20 – 71.4%	2020-21 – 100%	2021-22 – 83.3%
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5.6 Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

5.6.1 As noted in the Annual Report last year, the Scottish Government has announced the national allocation of £32m to Children’s Service Planning Partnerships as part of its commitment to the implementation of The Promise up to March 2026. The criteria for the funding is that it must support the transformative re-design and improvement of whole family support, with an emphasis on innovation, prevention and sustainability. The Scottish Government viewed the first year 2022-23 as a preparatory period allowing for strategic assessments or consultation, laying the groundwork for developments in the subsequent 3 years. The funding is not to be used to maintain existing initiatives.

5.6.2 Locally, the CSPP received £894k per year and carried forward funding to allocate £1.2m per year from 2023-24 to 2025-26. The Children and Families Executive Board commissioned DVVA to coordinate a process of community engagement to raise awareness of the funding and support stakeholders to make bids in accordance with the criteria and local priorities. This process was concluded in May 2023 with a timescale for final bids of July 2023. In total, 44 bids were received and the Executive Board has awarded funding to 6. Whilst the remaining bids had substantial merit, they were not considered to adequately meet the funding criteria, particularly in relation to promoting sustainable longer-term transformational change. The successful bids are:

1. **Early years** – 2 bids with one supporting expectant mothers with emotional health and wellbeing concerns and the other support women with more than 1 child removed from their care. This mirrors the local priority of supporting vulnerable women and 0–5-year-olds.
2. **Summer activities** – 2 bids with one coordinating summer and other school holiday play activities, with a particular focus on the 6 Child Poverty priority groups. The other has a focus on providing support to families with a child with a disability. This mirrors the local priorities of child poverty and disability.
3. **Emotional health and wellbeing** – 1 bid focused on capacity building in key universal services and task-sharing with CAMHS to provide enhanced support to children and young people with identified concerns. This mirrors the local priority to improve early emotional health and wellbeing support.
4. **Literacy** – one bid focused on whole family support to improve literacy in both parents/carers and children and young people, including formal learning and support to overcome barriers to engagement. This mirrors the local priority to improve school attendance and enhance literacy levels.

5.6.3 The Board concluded that each of these initiatives met WFWF criteria and should complement the range of activity described in this report and the next 3-year plan. As the total amount allocated so far is £1.6m, there is an underspend of £2m which will be subject to a rapid tendering process involving a required focus on key local priorities not adequately addressed in the first stage. They are school attendance including transitions from primary to secondary school; adolescents at risk of harm including transitions to employability; child healthy weight including parental capacity building and sustainability; advocacy including capacity building in the context of anticipated Human Rights legislation; and volunteering.

6 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The very broad range of activity described in this report is having a positive impact across the informal and formal care systems. This includes measures to build the capacity, confidence and competence of the workforce and a range of initiatives to enhance universal, targeted and specialist support to families at home, in schools and in the community. There is a growing focus on family voice and ensuring that children, young people and parents/carers are at the centre of decision making. The number of care experienced children and young people are reducing, educational outcomes are improving and following challenges in the balance of community versus residential care in 2022-23, the overall profile is shifting towards family-based support. The plan for 2023-25 outlines how this work will continue over the next 3 years.

7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The content of this report was previously considered in report (93-2021) and remains valid. The original report was not subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. For follow-ups relating to initial reports agreed prior to 22/8/22 a copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment is available (where applicable) on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/ia

8 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

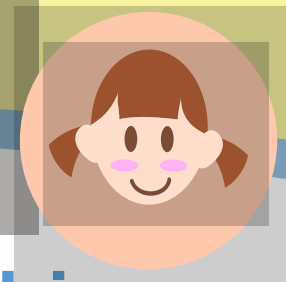
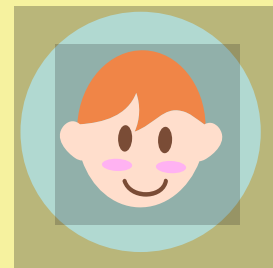
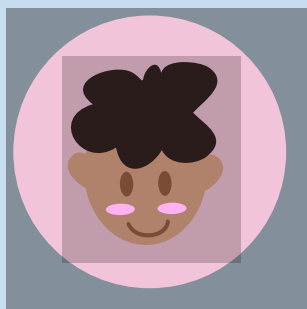
9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

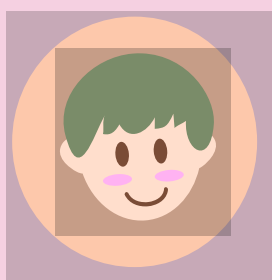
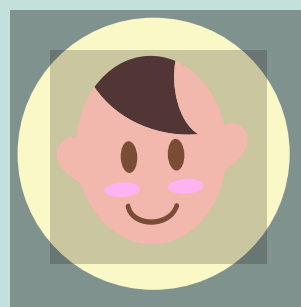
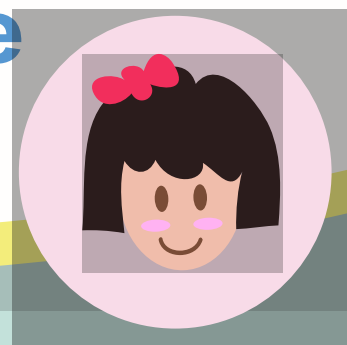
Audrey May
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October 2023



The Dundee Partnership Promise to our Care Experienced Children and Young People



Our Promise

This Promise outlines the Dundee Partnership intention to ensure that Care Experienced Children and Young People have the very best support, life chances and opportunities possible so they can lead loving, settled and fulfilled lives well into adulthood.

As a partnership, we are committed to promoting the wellbeing and rights of all vulnerable and looked after children, young people and care leavers as one of our most important responsibilities. In doing so, we will provide the highest quality care, support and protection which:

- Helps all vulnerable children, young people and parents/carers to flourish
- Enables care experienced children and young people to thrive at home
- Improves educational attainment levels and all transitions into adulthood
- Listens to family voices and continually adapts and improves our support

We know that although care experienced children and young people can have particular needs associated with their health and wellbeing, they also have enormous strengths which can grow even more with the right support. We intend to work with and for them to overcome any barriers to them realising their full potential.

This Promise outlines our commitment to a range of actions which build on and accelerate how we have developed this support over the last 3 years. We believe that, in doing so, we will continue to transform our approach to engaging with and improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people in our city.



**#Keep
The
Promise**

Our Journey

Over the last 3 years, our Corporate Parenting Partnership has led on the development and implementation of a Corporate Parenting Plan 2017-2020. The partnership has coordinated or contributed towards an extensive range of initiatives with and for children, young people and young adults at risk of entering care or already in care:

- An Addressing Neglect Enhancing Wellbeing programme
- A What Matters 2 U programme
- A Fast-Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system
- Trauma informed and nurturing practice in all residential and school settings
- Parity of financial support for kinship carers and foster carers
- An initiative designed to accelerate moves to permanence in care
- A Children and Families Service Charter with 19 principles for change
- An Engagement and Participation Strategy
- A Breakthrough Mentoring Programme in all 8 secondary schools and Offsite
- Additional Pupil Support Workers in all cluster areas
- A Champions Board, Young People Participation Group and 4 Change Group
- Signing up to the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant
- Implementation of Continuing Care for young people aged 16-21 years
- A Housing Protocol for care leavers
- A guaranteed interview scheme with the Council for all care leavers
- Improved use of data to inform wider improvement
- Development and implementation of the Better Hearings Agenda

We believe these developments are jointly helping to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. From reductions in the number entering care; increases in the number of local family-based living arrangements; improved stability; better educational attainment; and positive destinations, our data shows real progress:

Number of Looked After Children

Reduced from 585 in 2015 to 517 in July 2020

Family based living

The number living with kinship carers increased from 99 to 147 in 2019-20

The number living with internal foster carers increased from 147 to 162

Stability

The stability of all living arrangements has increased

School exclusions 2016-17 to 2018-19

Reduced from 202 per 1,000 to 110 per 1,000

Attainment 2017-18 to 2018-19

SCQF 5 in literacy and numeracy increased from 19.5% to 27%

Positive destinations

Increased slightly from 86.7% to 87.5% in 12 months

Continuing Care

The number in Continuing Care increased from 18 to 23

Justice

Reduced the number of all young people entering secure care or prison

However, our city still has a very high rate of care experienced children and young people; fewer live at home with their parents; higher proportions have more than 1 placement move when compared with the national average; more could benefit from entering Continuing Care; and positive destinations are not always sustained.

Equally, although we have made progress in engaging with care experienced children and young people and their parents/carers to inform some developments, we believe there is much more we can do to extend approaches and use them to routinely inform how we continually adapt and improve support.

Our Promise therefore expands our approach across the whole partnership and to all communities of our city so we improve all services at pace, with an emphasis on engagement and participation with all vulnerable families, including care experienced children and young people

Some Key Policies and Legislation

As a partnership, our work is strongly informed by policies, legislation and research. This includes the Children and Young Person's (Scotland) Act 2014; Getting it Right for Every Child; the Scottish Attainment Challenge; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and research on child development. Some key themes include:

Children and Young Person Act 2014

Sets out the key responsibilities and duties for relevant public bodies requiring them to be systematic and proactive in their efforts to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers (Appendix 1).

Getting it Right for Every Child

A framework to place families at the centre of decision making and ensure services consistently provide integrated support to children, young people and families as part of their wider community.

Children Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011

Embeds the rights of children in the Children's Hearing system, including the recently enacted right to advocacy. This Act also enshrines the duties of the Local authority to ensure children's rights are upheld in the system.

Scottish Attainment Challenge

Aims to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas, in order to ensure that every child can succeed in school, gain the skills for life and close the equity gap. It recognises that holistic support is essential.

UNCRC

Outlines 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and explain how Governments and adults must work together to make sure all children can enjoy their rights. It has been incorporated into Scottish domestic law.

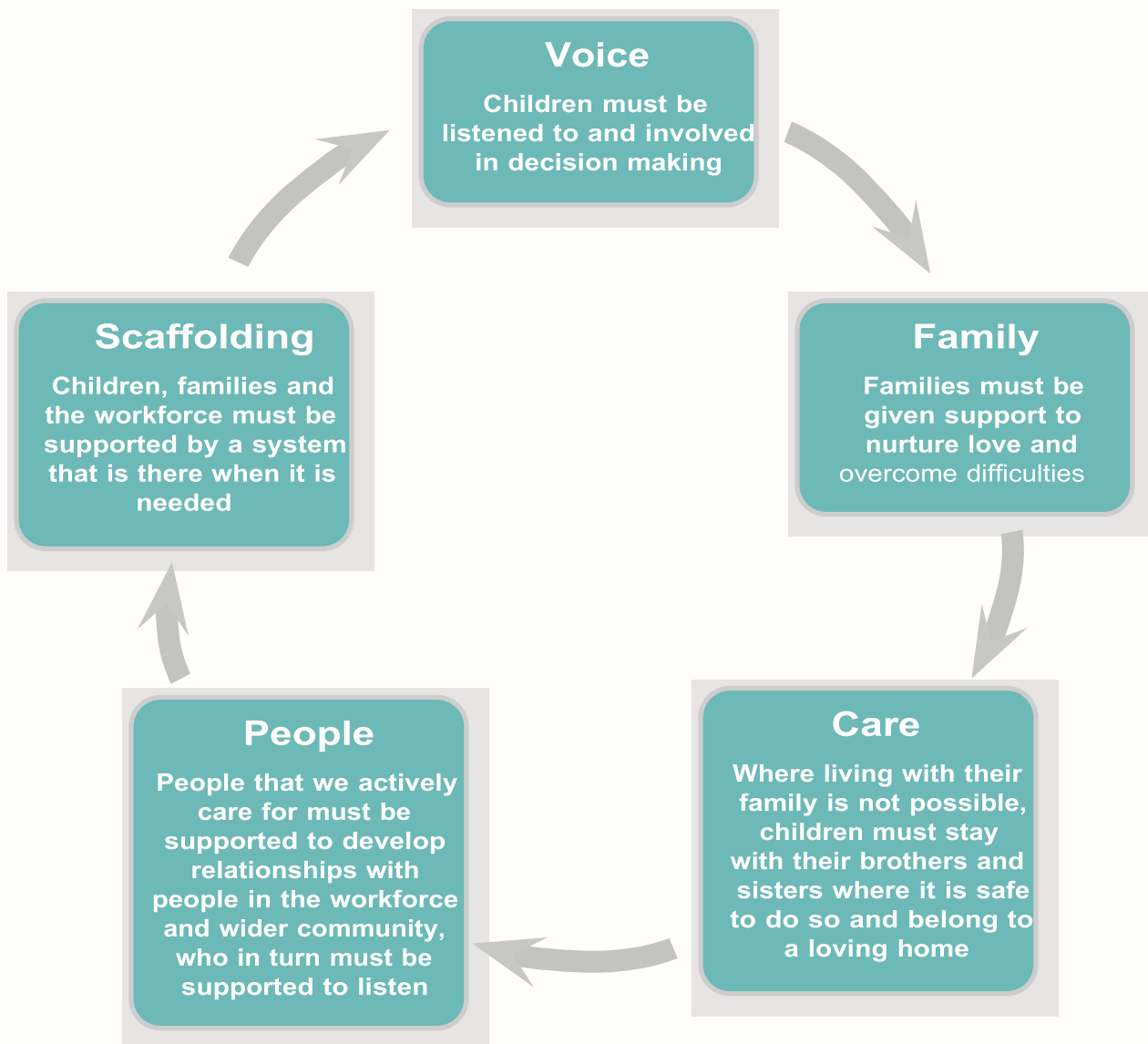
Research on child development

Includes the importance of recognising the pivotal first 1,000 days; stages of development from birth to adolescence; stable, positive attachments with nurturing carers; and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

In addition, there is also strong evidence that social and economic inequalities increase the stressors in families and make parenting more difficult. Our Promise therefore recognises the impact poverty has on families and complements our Fairness Commission Action Plan. Some key themes include:

- Ensuring timely and easy access to support
- Developing flexible and responsive support
- Targeted and adapting support to meet specific needs
- Support in key transitions of early years/primary/secondary school/employment

Crucially, the findings of the Independent Care Review have also informed how we have arrived at Our Promise. This hugely important review sets ‘a higher collective ambition that enables loving, supportive and nurturing relationships as a basis on which to thrive’. It includes 5 foundations which we have used to shape our plan:



Governance and Partnership Arrangements

In this context, over the next 3 years our Corporate Parenting Partnership, which has been re-named as 'Our Promise Partnership' and includes a care experienced young person, will work collaboratively with other partnerships and report to our Children and Families Executive Board, along with other Boards or Committees where relevant.



Developing joint approaches with Protecting People partnerships is a key priority, because they coordinate services to vulnerable adults and children and young people who can present a risk to others and/or themselves. For instance, as a result of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. This relationship is outlined below:



When these issues are so significant and/or persistent they can result in children and young people being at risk of harm if they remain in the family home, requiring alternative care arrangements and becoming Looked After. Our approach therefore includes a key focus on supporting parents and carers.

Consultation

In order to inform the content of Our Promise, all partner services and care experienced children and young people have been consulted. This has ensured that partners have every opportunity to outline their contributions to our Delivery Plan. Comments from children and young people included:

- They like the title, style and content of Our Promise
- They believe the plan is ambitious but we make no apologies for that
- They offered helpful advice on language and the use of acronyms
- They suggested some of the actions could be more specific and clear
- They were particularly interested in being involved in developing their own plans

This feedback has informed the content of the plan, including in relation to the consistent use of the term care experienced instead of looked after children and young people; changing the term respite which has negative connotations to short-breaks; and describing all current and planned methods of engagement and participation.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Article 12

Governments "shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



Scaffolding

Providing support when it is needed

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
Scaffolding Providing support when it is needed	Building the capacity of universal services	We will implement revised arrangements for Named Person's to identify, assess, engage and support	Chief Education Officer, Dundee City Council	January 2022	Number of Health Visitors and Primary Schools delivering ANEW Quality of Child's Plans prepared by universal services
	Listening to families to inform service design/delivery	We will scale a What Matters 2 U initiative to all 8 wards across the city and align it with other initiatives	Head of Children's Service, DCC	January 2022	Number of parents/carers consulted and supported
	Providing accessible and flexible family support	We will develop clear and flexible family support services able to meet all needs with the Third Sector	Assistant Director of Barnardo's	March 2021	Number of families supported and qualitative data on outcomes
		We will ensure support is accessible via the Fast-Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system	Assistant Director of Barnardo's	March 2021	
Supporting vulnerable children in school		We will implement a counselling service in schools	Education Manager, DCC	March 2021	Exclusions, attendance, attainment and destinations
		We will implement our Care Experienced Charter in all schools	Education Manager, DCC	March 2021	
		We will implement revised Team Around the Child arrangements	Education Manager, DCC	March 2021	
		We will provide targeted support to children at risk of exclusion	Education Manager, DCC	March 2021	

Scaffolding

Providing support when it is needed

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
	Supporting vulnerable children in school	<p>We will provide targeted support to children not attending school</p> <p>We will explore the delivery of the Youth in Iceland model</p> <p>Re-establish a monthly multi-agency Employability Support drop-in service for young people and care leavers under the age of 26 alongside Youth Employability.</p> <p>Establish a quarterly multi-agency employability support forum. This will track young people and care leavers who are supported by the Throughcare and Aftercare Team who are not currently in education, employment or training. Contributing partners will identify the most appropriate employability support opportunities to offer individual young people.</p> <p>Re-establish a weekly support and guidance drop-in session at Dundee and Angus College in partnership with Student Services for young people and care leavers under the age of 26.</p>	<p>Education Manager, DCC</p> <p>Education Manager, DCC</p> <p>Senior Manager DCC</p> <p>Senior Manager DCC</p> <p>Senior Manager DCC</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>May 2021</p> <p>April 2021</p> <p>April 2021</p>	Improved outcomes and positive destinations for care leavers

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
<h1 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Scaffolding</h1> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Providing support when it is needed</p>		<p>Continue to facilitate bi-monthly review meetings in partnership with Dundee and Angus College student services in order to identify any barriers, support needs and progression routes for young people and care leavers who are supported by the Throughcare and Aftercare Team</p>	<p>Senior Manager DCC</p>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Number and % of care experienced children and young people with a completed employability action plan</p>
	<p>We will Work with Care Leavers to understand their transition and employability needs and develop appropriate and targeted pathways</p>	<p>Youth Employability Service</p>	<p>September 2021</p>	<p>Increase in number of CEYP young people in positive and sustained destinations</p>	
	<p>We will Implement enhanced transition process for care leavers who are leaving school</p>		<p>September 2021</p>	<p>Number and % of care experienced young people in vocational opportunities</p>	
	<p>We will ensure targeted outreach and engagement work with Care Leavers aged 16-19 identified through the national Participation Database as not in a positive learning experience</p>	<p>Youth Employability Service</p>	<p>September 2021</p>	<p>Number and % of care experienced young people in opportunities matched by brokerage service</p>	
	<p>We will develop an integrated vocational training and progression pathway for care leavers</p>	<p>Youth Employability Service</p>	<p>March 2022</p>		

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
<h1>Scaffolding</h1> <p>Providing support when it is needed</p>		<p>We will work with employers to develop an employment brokering facility to match job ready care leavers with career and apprenticeship opportunities</p> <p>We will develop Supported Pathways for Care Leavers with Employers</p>	<p>Youth Employability Service</p> <p>Youth Employability Service</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p>	<p>Number and % of care experienced young people in supported pathways such as kickstart or Youth Guarantee provision</p>
	Supporting vulnerable women and families	We will sustain a Pause Programme for women at risk of pregnancy and repeat admissions into care	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of women supported by Pause; impact on repeat pregnancy; and positive feedback
		We will report on the impact of targeted support to pregnant women whose children are at risk	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of pregnant women supported; % children who become care experienced; and positive feedback
		We will report on targeted gender-informed support to women in the criminal justice system	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of men attending the Caledonian Programme; compliance/successful completion; and feedback from victims
We will report on the impact of Safe and Together to enhance support to victims of domestic abuse		Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Report on Safe and Together	
Consistent and defensible decisions on placements	We will review the terms of reference and resources of a Kinship Panel and Resource Management Group	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021		

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
Family Support to nurture love and overcome difficulties	Promoting the stability of families	We will explore implementation of Safe Families to provide targeted respite support to vulnerable families	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of families receiving respite support and % reporting a positive impact
		We will provide and measure the impact of voluntary support provided by Social Work teams	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of families supported by SW teams where the children do not become care experienced
		We will implement a Kinship Hub providing holistic one-stop-shop support to kinship carers	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of kinship carers accessing support and % reporting a positive impact
		We will report on the impact of targeted support to parents/carers with substance use problems	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of parents/carers receiving support and % reporting a positive impact
		We will increase the capacity of foster carers through recruitment, training and development	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of newly registered foster carers and annual training and development plan
		We will deliver trauma informed training to all professionals and families supporting care experienced children	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number and % of staff/parents/kinship carers receiving training
		We will deliver targeted parenting programmes to vulnerable families, with a focus on early years	Education Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number of parents/carers of care experienced 0-5 year-olds receiving training
		We will progress a test of change with a focus on best practice in supporting families where domestic abuse is problematic. This will draw on the knowledge and experience of a range of staff across the service and partners and will focus on improved outcomes for the whole family.	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Reduce the number of children on Child Protection Register and becoming accommodated due to domestic abuse

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
People Support to develop relationships with people in the wider community	Developing a trauma informed workforce	We will roll out trauma informed training for all staff and carers	Protecting People Team, DCC	May 2021	Number of staff trained in trauma informed practice and feedback
	Improving assessment and engagement	We will deliver bespoke training and enhance staff support	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number trained in assessment and engagement and feedback
		We will ensure all care experienced children and young people have an up-to-date assessment and plan	Senior Manager, DCC	May 2021	% of cases where practice is rated as Good or better
	Developing a culture of reflective practice	We will carry out an annual multi-agency self-evaluation of practice			Monthly and quarterly
We will carry out small monthly and larger quarterly single service self-evaluation					% of cases where practice is rated as Good or better

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
Care Children must stay with their brothers and sisters where it is safe to do so and belong to a loving home	Supporting children to attend early learning and childcare	We will ensure all eligible care experienced 2-5 year-olds are offered a nursery place	Education Manager, DCC	May 2021	Number and % of care experienced 2-5 year olds attending nursery
	Building capacity to allow siblings to remain together	We will scale a PACE initiative to ensure children and young people progress to permanence appropriately	Improvement Manager, DCC	August 2021	Number trained in assessment and engagement and feedback
		We will support family, kinship and foster carers to have sufficient house space to care for sibling groups	Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services, DCC	May 2021	Reduced % of families unable to care for sibling groups due to limited space
		We will remind siblings about their right to family life noting the "ABC" case (2019) and the findings of the court that siblings have rights within the children's hearing system		April 2021	
Ensuring care experienced teenagers remain in family homes	We will implement Functional Family Therapy for vulnerable families with teenagers, including siblings	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of families supported with FFT and % reporting greater stability as a result	

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
<p style="text-align: center;">Care</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children must stay with their brothers and sisters where it is safe to do so and belong to a loving home</p>		We will implement the Tayside Parenting Strategy with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable families	Education Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of families receiving recognised parenting support and % reporting benefits
	Supporting families with children with a disability	We will implement new assessment, planning and respite arrangements for families with children with a disability	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number of families receiving respite and % reporting benefits
	Preventing unnecessary escalation or criminalisation	We will report on Whole Systems Approach for young people in order to support them with their families in the local community	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number / % of young people subject to Early and Effective Intervention, Diversion, Community Payback Orders and custody
		We will carry out a self-evaluation of practice in relation to new Secure Care Standards	Senior Manager, DCC	October 2021	Completed self-evaluation and improvement plan
		We will hold regular multi-agency meetings on identified high risk young people	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Multi-agency plans to support young people in their local community
	We will pro-actively support all young people to remain in Continuing Care	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number and % of care leavers entering Continuing Care	

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
<h1>Care</h1> <p>Children must stay with their brothers and sisters where it is safe to do so and belong to a loving home</p>	Providing high quality residential care to young people	We will ensure all Children's Houses are graded as at least Good in inspections	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number and % of Children's Houses graded Good or better
	Meeting all health needs of Looked After Children	We will ensure all care experienced children and young people have a full health needs assessment	Senior Manager, NHST	March 2021	Number and % of care experienced children and young people with a health needs assessment
		We will provide physical and mental healthcare support to care leavers	Senior Manager, NHST	March 2021	
	Ensuring supported transitions into adulthood	We will develop and implement a new Transitions Pathway	Senior Manager, DCC	March 2021	Number and % of care leavers aged 17-21 in further education, training or employment
	Supporting care leavers well into adulthood	We will ensure all care leavers are exempt from Council Tax until aged 26	Senior Manager, DCC		Number and % of care leavers not paying Council Tax up to age 26 years
We will ensure care leavers are an outright priority for housing options		Senior Manager, DCC		Number of care leavers reporting as homeless	

FOUNDATIONS	PRIORITY	ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALES	SOME KEY INDICATORS
<h1 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Voice</h1> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Listening to care experienced children and young people and involving them in decision making</p>	<p>Meaningful engagement and participation</p>	<p>We will develop a multi-disciplinary Care Experienced Children and Young People's Voice Team</p>	<p>Senior Manager, DCC</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	<p>Engagement action plan leading to demonstrable improvements in relationships and outcomes for care experienced children and young people</p>
		<p>Voice Team will develop an Action Plan</p>	<p>Senior Manager, DCC</p>	<p>February 2021</p>	
		<p>We will ensure care experienced children and young people are included in plans for all engagement and participation opportunities with their peers</p>	<p>Education Manager, DCC</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	
		<p>We will support care experienced children and young people to be active members of Our Promise Partnership</p>	<p>Senior Manager, DCC</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p>Number and % of care experienced children offered and accepting an advocate</p>
		<p>We will ensure all Care Experienced Children and Young People are offered an advocate</p>	<p>Senior Manager, DCC</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	
		<p>We will ensure Care Experienced Young People are involved in recruitment to key posts</p>	<p>Senior Manager, DCC</p>	<p>May 2021</p>	<p>Number of posts where care experienced children participated in recruitment</p>
		<p>We will ensure all care experienced children and young people are involved in and have an understanding of their Care Plan</p>			<p>Number of care experienced children and young people</p>

Appendix 1

Children Children and Young Person's (Scotland) Act 2014 Corporate Parents

- The Scottish Ministers
- A Local Authority
- The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland
- Children's Hearings Scotland
- The Principal Reporter
- The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- A Health Board
- A Board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority
- Skills Development Scotland Co. Ltd SC 202659
- Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (the Care Inspectorate)
- The Scottish Social Services Council
- The Scottish Sports Council
- The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland
- The Scottish Police Authority
- The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- The Scottish Legal Aid Board
- The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
- The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- Bord na Gaidhlig
- Creative Scotland
- A body which is a "post 16 education body" for the purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005



**#Keep
The
Promise**

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Our Promise to Care Experienced Children, Young People and Families 2023-25			
Action Plan			
Foundation	Actions	Leads	Measuring Impact
Voice	Implement Infant Pledge for babies and toddlers in care	SW/NHST	Audit of practice in test sites
	Coordinate Champions Boards to listen and enhance support	SW	Survey Champions Boards
	Improve access to and impact of advocacy	SW	% offered and accessing
	Implement findings of a survey on brother/sister care arrangements	SW	Implementation of plan
	Implement and scale What Matters to You in locality areas	DCC	Formal evaluation
Family	Coordinate targeted deployment of WFWF	CSPP	Develop specific measures
	Develop a clear edge of care offer to all families	SW	Numbers in care
	New working arrangements to provide support at time of need	SW	Family stability/disruption
	Conduct Welfare Rights assessments with all families at risk	SW	Income maximisation
	Implement Contextual Safeguarding for adolescents at risk	SW	Audits of Child's Plans
	Explore and apply models of best practice in family support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family Group Conferencing ➤ Solihull for Kinship Carers and Foster Carers ➤ Mockingbird model for Foster Carers ➤ Multi Systemic Therapy 	SW	Develop specific measures

Care	Develop and implement brothers/sisters practice guidance	SW	Measures inform by survey
	Build capacity to enhance support to kinship carers	SW	Numbers in Kinship Care
	Target school attendance support to pupils in kinship care	SW	Educational outcomes
	Develop and implement new foster carer support strategy	SW	Recruitment and satisfaction
	Complete secure care self-evaluation and implement improvements	SW	Compliance with standards
	Develop and implement new Continuing Care practice guidance	SW	Compliance with standards
	Review Aftercare support to care leavers aged up to 26 years	SW	% supported and outcomes
	Provide supportive post-care housing support	DCC	Homelessness
Implement Youth Participation action plan	DCC	Positive destinations	
People	Implement risk assessment and defensible decision training	SW	Audit of practice
	Implement Signs of Safety training	SW	Audit of practice
	Implement Welfare Rights training	SW	Audit of practice
	Implement an annual foster carer training plan	SW	Attendance and satisfaction
	Ensure high quality Child's Plans for all care experienced children	SW	Audit of practice
Scaffolding	Fully implement GIRFEC Practice Profile in all sites	DCC/NHST	Audit of practice
	Implement new Social Work Practice Standards	SW	Audit of practice
	Revise all Social Work procedures to be Our Promise compatible	SW	Audit and staff survey