



REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: THE PROMISE

BY: INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of The Promise and the expectations of the Independent Care Review

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) review and understand the scope and scale of The Promise; and**
- (ii) give consideration to the implications for keeping the Promise.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 5 February 2020, the Independent Care Review published seven reports, with 'The Promise' narrating a vision for Scotland, built on five foundations. With cross-party support and broad commitment to #KeepThePromise, Scotland, its statutory agencies, local authorities, third sector and thousands of children and families knew that much needed to change to make sure that all Scotland's children grow up 'loved, safe and respected.' Work has now commenced to make that vision become a reality.
- 3.2 **The Promise** reflected what over 5,500 care experienced children and adults, families and the paid and unpaid workforce told the Care Review in the hope that Scotland was listening.
- 3.3 It told Scotland what it must do to make sure its most vulnerable children feel loved and have the childhood they deserve. **The Pinky Promise'** made sure that Scotland's children could understand The Promise that had been made to them **The Plan** explains how this change must happen.
- 3.4 The Money and Follow the Money explain how Scotland can invest better in its children and families.

- 3.5 The Rules demonstrates the current legislative framework and how it must change to achieve The Promise.
- 3.6 The THANK YOU acknowledges the thousands of people who contributed to the Care Review.
<https://www.carereview.scot/conclusions/independent-care-review-reports/>
- 3.7 Key matters relevant to the recommendation

The Promise report is built on Five Foundations

These foundations must be at the heart of a reorganisation of how Scotland thinks, plans and prioritises for children and their families.

Voice

Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.

Family

Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

Care

Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

People

The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

Scaffolding

Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability.

- 3.8 The Care Review concluded that the current care system is failing to provide this foundation for too many children and young people. The Promise is not about tinkering with the current system but is an ambitious call to recalibrate whole systems and culture to ensure children have nurturing relationships in which to thrive. These relationships have to characterise by care and love by all those caring and working with children. Such a change to the way we support families will not be achieved by a partial disjointed and piecemeal approach. The partnership must work together to create an environment where love is possible. This means the purpose of the system must re-orientate from a protection focus (protecting from risk of harm) to one that focuses on reduces the risks to children of not having stable long term relationships. It is not that child protection is not important; rather it is about shifting the balance.

- 3.9 The Promise aligns with the priorities and ambition statements in the Moray Local Outcomes Improvement Plan to reduce inequality and improve quality of life. However The Promise demands a radical re-design of services and approaches around relationships and love and requires children, young people and their families to be involved in their design. As leaders across the partnership we have to live out the values of the Promise, shift culture to one orientated to relationships and care and mobilise resources across the partnership to achieve the aims of the Promise.
- 3.10 The Local Outcome Improvement plan and Children's Services Plan provides an enabling environment in which to take decisive steps under the ambitions for prevention, collaboration and service re-design. Designing services around need in way that normalises support through the clusters and universal services and de-stigmatise the ask for support
- 3.11 Family and nurturing family relationships are at the centre of the Promise. To achieve this, The Promise calls for an upscaling of universal support to de-stigmatise the ask for support which is so often a barrier to prevention. Collectively we need to lead action to strengthen families through preventative approaches by integrating family support within local communities. There is the need to be bolder about involving families through strengths based approaches, sharing resources and maximising capacity to deliver local support around need. This is central to the whole of The Promise and it will be the first priority of The Promise Team currently being established.
- 3.12 Care Experienced Young People told the Care Review they felt abandoned. The Promise calls for services for care experienced young people for as long they need them; an end to cliff edges and unnecessary transitions. In Moray we have some good initiatives and do very well by some children but not consistent and holistic enough. In Moray we are at the early stages of developing a holistic response to care experienced young people. Much stronger strategic action is required to bring housing; health and education and social work support to care experienced young people, addressing system barriers. We need to be reflecting on how we are meeting our corporate parenting responsibilities and further attention and commitment may be required here.
- 3.13 Based on listening to care experienced young people, The Promise states that brothers and sisters must stay together unless this is unsafe. We need to increase support to kinship placements and increase foster care capacity to make this happen.
- 3.14 The Promise recognises the importance of schools in the lives of our children. The Promise calls for criteria free community based access to therapies and family therapy for all types of family; birth, adoptive, and kinship.
- 3.15 #Keep the Promise was published in October 2020, and describes the work that will be undertaken at a National level to This document sets out The Promise's key priorities until 2024 (in line with the phasing outlined in 'the plan') and how The Promise intends to operate, the support it will offer and the work it will lead to ensure Scotland does #KeepThePromise. There is a programme of work over the coming months to devise The Plan set up to ensure, wholesale understanding of the work of change.

- 3.16 This document invites organisations to consider how they can #KeepThePromise to infants, children and young people and their families over the first three years of change, and then the subsequent six. This will inform The Plan.
- 3.17 Each local authority was contacted in September by the Promise implementation lead, whilst the national team is being recruited to, to ascertain the level of support that may be required in local areas.
- 3.18 Additionally a workshop is scheduled for 16th November 2020, to consider the Plan and create a local plan for action, hosted by the Corporate Parenting strategic group, twice delayed, April and July, because of Covid. This session will focus on three of the 5 foundations: Voice; family and relationships and on what meaningful data should be reported. As part of this development session, the current governance processes and where corporate parenting is within those will also be considered, given, for example, there has been no clear link with the Local outcome Improvement Plan reporting to date and the membership of the strategic group should be reconsidered. Keeping the Promise seeks to ensure opportunities, that extent beyond the needs of children who need care and protection, to those who need earlier support and intervention. The group welcome the opportunity to deliver further development sessions on The Promise to the Board.
- 3.17 The following link is the webinar used to prepare participants for the event.
<https://thepromise.scot/assets/UPLOADS/VIDEOS/2020/10/KeepThePromise-Webinar-October-2020.mp4>

4 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Promise calls for a radical rethink of the complex and at times contradictory “care system” which is “complex, fragmented, multi- purposed and multifaceted entity which does not lend itself to easy definition” (pg 112, The Promise”. It is underpinned by 44 pieces of legislation, 19 pieces of secondary legislation, 3 international conventions, and straddles across 6 our of the 9 Scottish policy areas.
- 4.2 If we are to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable families and their children, we need to ensure that in Moray we are working in a way that fundamentally reflects the call to action of The Promise at all levels, from front line practitioners to strategic leadership.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 **The Promise represents the most significant report on how Scotland cares for its most vulnerable children and families. It identifies significant shortcomings in the current care system and approach to supporting families. The rationale for change is a compelling one which challenges every element of how services need to be designed and how they need to respond, to improve lifelong outcomes. This will be done nationally and locally.**

5.2 The Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 recognises The Promise and its ambitions, and is embraced locally. There will be support from the Promise Team to embark on the whole systems change required over the next ten years. However, we can expect to be challenged by them too: ten years is a long time in the lives of children.

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Background Papers:

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