

Agenda Item	7
Report No	HCW-15-24

The Highland Council

Committee: Health Social Care and Wellbeing

Date: 29 August 2024

Report Title: Keeping The Promise in Highland

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report begins with an introduction of our report, ***Keeping the Promise in Highland***. It adopts the approach of self-evaluation and reflection on what we are doing that is working well, while understanding what we need to do better. This is central to our continuous improvement journey across Children's Services. The introduction report gives an overview, which is followed by our first main report, ***Keeping the Promise in Highland (appendix 1)***, which was submitted in January 2024, to the Independent Strategic Advisor for the promise, Fiona Duncan, as she requested information from local authorities across Scotland, in preparation for her second plan, Plan 24-30, which sets out a route map of, *WHO needs to do WHAT by WHEN to #KeepThePromise* (published 20th June 2024). There is also a shorter Addendum report (**appendix 2**) offering a further update on the main report, to give as full a picture as possible to the committee, noting this is a dynamic whole system process of change and improvement, aiming over the course of ten years (2020-2030) to achieve the transformation of the care system across Scotland.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the report.
- ii. Scrutinise, challenge and comment.
- iii. Support services to #KeepThePromise.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** – None.

3.2 **Legal** – None.

3.3 Risk

The Promise has well documented evidence of the risks, nationally and locally, of the failure associated with maintaining the status quo of the care system. This has been extensively researched in the detailed economic work of the Human & Economic Cost

Modelling (HECM) analysis, which powerfully brings together the human and economic factors of the care system. HECM provides a strong evidence base that the human cost to children, families and communities does have a lifelong, often traumatic, high risk, inter-generational impact, and the economic cost, is totally unsustainable in the delivery of public services across Scotland. Children entering the care system, is the biggest exponential budget pressure and crisis across local government in the UK.

3.4 **Health and Safety** (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) – None.

3.5 **Gaelic** – None.

4. Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children’s Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 31/07/24. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are only positive impacts in addressing the first four Impact Assessment Areas with no impact on the remaining 3 areas. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 3** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
(1) Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People – <i>Positive</i> • Children affected by disability – <i>Positive</i> Older adults – <i>no impact</i>
(2) Socio-economic	<i>Positive</i>
(3) Human Rights	<i>Positive</i>
(4) Children’s Rights and Well-being	<i>Positive</i>
(5) Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No Impact</i>
(6) Climate Change	<i>No Impact</i>
(7) Data Rights	<i>No Impact</i>

5. Introduction

5.1 I am delighted to introduce our first self-evaluation report – ***Keeping the Promise in Highland***. This report captures the breadth and depth of development and improvement work across a broad range of networks and partnerships. The report shines a light on our journey with supporters, ambassadors and committed colleagues working with children and their families across the Highlands; noting that no report can capture the totality of all of the developments in Highland across a broad range of services and partnerships.

5.2 The report emphasises that no one service can achieve the 80+ calls for action to achieve the transformative system change to #KeepThePromise. Drawing on the evidence of the Independent Care Review, which captured the lived experience of over 5,500 collective voices, seven output reports were launched - with the Promise at the centre. These reports evidenced the human and economic costs of a system that had somehow lost its human core. The Promise stated that the care system is a *complex fragmented system*, further stating:

we must not aim to fix a 'broken' system... we need to set a higher collective ambition that enables loving, supportive relationships as a basis on which to thrive.

5.3 The foundations of the Promise are at the heart of this report, which has a strong improvement lens that seeks to understand impact and outcomes. The Promise is clear that we *'need to do data differently'* moving away from *system data* to what actually matters to the care experienced community. At the root of the Promise is the focus that we are working within a *human system* that has not always prioritised the importance of *human relationships*. These are qualities and principles that cannot simply be measured. What we do know, however, is that much of the research evidencing high quality services, with good outcomes, links back to organisations that nurture human relationships across their systems. The report highlights how we engage with workforce, children and families by for example:

- Respecting and protecting children's rights.
- Meaningfully listening to the voices of children and families.
- Reflecting and understanding that the language we use can 'create realities' which can be stigmatising; noting that we need to *reframe* how we speak and write about children and their families, as we, **Mind our Ps & Qs**.
- The extensive collaboration and co-production to produce the **Better Meetings Framework** and the **My Journey Journal** are testament to our commitment in Highland.

5.4 This report shines a light on how we are collectively trying to raise awareness, mobilise, accelerate and lean into our commitment to #KeepThePromise. The report recognises that it is people who have the collective capability to deliver on The Promise. Communication, listening and engaging with workforce, through e.g. **Conversation Cafes** and the **Promise Newsletter**, leading to the development of our passionate **Promise Ambassadors** - who champion the values to #KeepThePromise. The Promise does capture hearts and minds and we know these factors can mobilise an army of Promise Keepers across Highland. Additionally, the development of a staff **Multi-Agency Induction Package** signals that if you join

Highland Council, in whatever role you do, there will be an expectation you are aware of, and do what you can, in your role, to #KeepThePromise.

- 5.5 As our Promise journey unfolds, we have and will continue to pause and take stock. The Promise Oversight Board Report 2 (2023) identified Education as a priority, noting that schools, *need to be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive*. This resulted in focused, supportive activity across Education with key collaborators. The outcomes and experiences for our care experienced children in Education, must remain a priority, as we take the opportunity to move forward as part of our new Health, Social Care and Education integrated, People structure.
- 5.6 Our ambition to be a **Trauma Informed** Organisation underpins the Promise. The report is unequivocal in stating - ***workforce cannot demonstrate a trauma informed approach under systems that are not***. To this end there will remain a strong emphasis on trauma informed leadership across organisations. Trauma informed systems leaders are crucial in helping us to #KeepThe Promise. The Promise Programme Manager (PPM) is a passionate Trauma Champion, who sees The Promise, and Trauma, as two sides of the same coin. The work being led by the PPM, has been acknowledged locally and nationally.
- 5.7 We are excited to confirm that the first **Highland Trauma Summit** is scheduled for **3rd September 2024**.
- 5.8 The report describes a period of reflection and self-evaluation, with our care experienced community, supported by our national Promise Scotland Partner, and Who Cares? Scotland, to help us transition from what was previously the Corporate Parenting Board, pivoting to **The Promise Board**. Members will recall that the video, ***My Promise Board Member***, was played at Committee in May 2024, as a precursor to this report. This video was co-produced by young people and Who Cares? Scotland. The Head of Service, Children's Social Work & Justice Services, Chairs the Board, with a Vice Chair, previously Inspiring Young Voices, now a Programme Lead Officer for **Whole Family Wellbeing (WFWB)**, which is essential to the work of The Promise, under the foundation of **Family**. The importance of this strategic 'join' cannot be overstated. Subsequently, the Programme Manager, WFWB, was recently appointed as the Chair of the **Family Delivery Group** (sub-group of the Promise Board). She will work closely with the Chair of the **Care Delivery Group** who is the Strategic Lead for Corporate Parenting in Highland. The Vice Chair (WFWB) has been instrumental in facilitating, collaborating and leading on the co-production of Highland's first **Participation Strategy**. Members will be aware that the implementation of the Participation Strategy is a significant improvement action from the Highland Strategic Inspection of Children's Services (2022).
- 5.9 In June 2023, COSLA published its 3rd Promise annual report – ***The Promise Progress Challenges & What's Needed to Succeed***. The COSLA report also detailed the Improvement Services research into the progress by Local Government on The Promise. Six areas of progress and also challenges were identified; a key priority finding was that ***'evidence of senior officers demonstrating leadership on The Promise, corresponded with more visible progress'*** of The Promise. The Chair of the Promise Board and the PPM were delighted that Highland's Chief Executive, Derek Brown, with Assistant Chief Executive, Kate Lackie, hosted a **Promise Senior Leadership** event (April 2024) that clearly signalled strong leadership to #KeepThePromise in Highland. The Chief Executive of Promise Scotland, Fraser McKinlay, gave a keynote speech at the leadership event. This

event is precursor to an ambitious **Highland Promise Conference**, currently in the planning.

- 5.10 Members are also aware of Children's Social Work Services **Families 1st Strategy**, presented to committee through the first report (February 2023). Families' 1st is our local strategy aligned with The Promise's 5 Foundations (Family, Care, People, Scaffolding & Voice). It is important to acknowledge that Highland Council, in 2023, committed 1 million to develop strength-based approaches that are family focused, rights respecting, and trauma informed with an overarching aim to safely maintain Highland children within their families and communities. To this end we have created new services and approaches by implementing **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)** the **Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)** and the newly developing **Children's Rights & Participation Service**. Additionally, 1.3 million of additional funding was released in 2023, to increase allowances of kinship and foster carers to support and grow family-based care across Highland. In 2024, Highland Council, confirmed that an additional 2 million will be invested to sustain and further develop Families 1st (2024/25 to 2025/26). This is testament to the commitment to #KeepThePromise by Highland.
- 5.11 The COSLA annual Promise Report (2024) report, previously referenced, does highlight national data noting a decreasing 20% trend of the total number of 'Looked After Children' across Scotland. This trend is reflected in Highland, but we want to go deeper. This is much more than statistics: this is peoples' lives. The balance of care, specifically, where children are being cared (e.g. family, kinship, foster, residential and secure care) is significant and we want children to be safe in families. This ties directly to the human and economic cost of care. The Family 1st strategy aims to shift the balance of care to support, invest and sustain all types of family-based care, with only *the critical few* requiring more intensive residential care, which, of course, must be of the highest quality. Members know through committee reporting of our improvement journey in residential care and that the work of **Home 2 Highland (H2H)** is also an important part of the Families 1st Strategy. All of this does evidence that Highland is focused on the Human and Economic Cost Modelling (HECM) of the care system.
- 5.12 The report highlights our local challenges, which cannot be separated from the broader national challenges. Workforce recruitment and retention remains a high risk in Highland, which is a more complex challenge to tackle in remote and rural communities. The local government budget settlement, and the consequential financial challenges, are forcing some very difficult local decisions. The expectation that local government can keep *doing more with less* is unsustainable. Doing *less with less*, and *doing things differently*, is the reality. Other challenges compound these structural complexities. National and local foster care recruitment difficulties, even with our investment, continues to compromise aspirations to grow family-based care in Highland. Structural reform, through the National Care Service, with no evidential base that such large-scale reform will actually improve outcomes, will undoubtably create instability and uncertainty, within a health and social care system that is buckling under demographic and workforce pressures. Additionally, the sheer volume and pace of policy and legislative changes, while mostly positive and progressive, but not necessarily joined across Scottish Government Directorates, places further pressures and risks, including implementation gaps from policy aspiration to actual delivery.
- 5.13 The report rightly shines a light on the 'work' that people are doing across systems in Highland to #KeepThePromise. Achieving radical transformation of this scale is a

journey, with aspirations that The Promise will be kept by 2030. And while commentators will have views as to the feasibility of this, within the extremely challenging context, in Highland, we are committed to being part of the journey, as we continue to build and accelerate momentum for meaningful change.

- 5.14 As we look forward, we will continue to learn, to listen and to focus on people - be that children, families and communities, as well as our people, across our workforce; restating and reclaiming that its people who will collectively deliver the foundations of The Promise. We shall also focus on the recently published second plan, **Plan 24-30** as a dynamic route map within our local Highland context, building on our strengths, while recognising, collectively, we still have much to do. Members will also be aware that on the 16th of July 2024, the UNCRC Scotland Act, came into force. The scale of change can feel monumental, but if we focus on the human dimension, leaning into the Promise's five foundations, we will be within reach, especially if we focus on creating:

An environment and culture where finding and maintaining safe, loving, respectful relationships is the norm. That will involve fundamentally shifting the primary purpose of the whole of Scotland's care system from protecting against harm to protecting all safe, loving respectful relationships (The Promise, p8).

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care

Date: 23 July 2024

Authors: Margaret McIntyre, Head of Social Work (Children and Justice)
and Carrie McLaughan, Promise Programme Manager

Background Papers:

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Keeping the Promise in Highland
Appendix 2 - Addendum Report
Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Screening

Keeping The Promise in Highland



Evaluation Report

Reporting Period: January 2022 – January 2024

Author: Programme Manager (The Promise)

Health & Social Care, The Highland Council

Introduction

This report aims to capture the activity of work related to #KeepingThePromise in Highland. Whilst the ambitions of The Promise are far beyond just Health & Social Care this evaluation report will focus on the work undertaken by the Programme Manager (The Promise), Health & Social Care. Where progress and achievements have been made through partnership working, it will be stated.

Limitations: Given the extent of The Promise and its 84 + calls to action this report will not adequately capture all of the work undertaken to date across Highland Council to 'Keep The Promise'. Addition, supplementary reports that highlight data and work programmes that support Highland Council to 'Keep The Promise' are referenced.

This report will, where possible apply a Quality Improvement lens to Highland Council's journey in #KeepingThePromise.

Context & Background

In 2016, the First Minister at the time commissioned the [Independent Care Review](#) with an aim to deliver lasting change in Scotland's 'care system'. The Care Review listened to over 5,500 experiences of those living and working in and around the 'care system' to properly understand what needs to change and concluded on 5th February 2020 with the publication of [seven reports](#), one of which was [The Promise](#). In Scottish Parliament,

the First Minister pledged to **#KeepThePromise**, a commitment that received support of all political parties. Organisations, institutions, bodies, communities, and groups across Scotland pledged to **#KeepThePromise**, including the Highland Council.

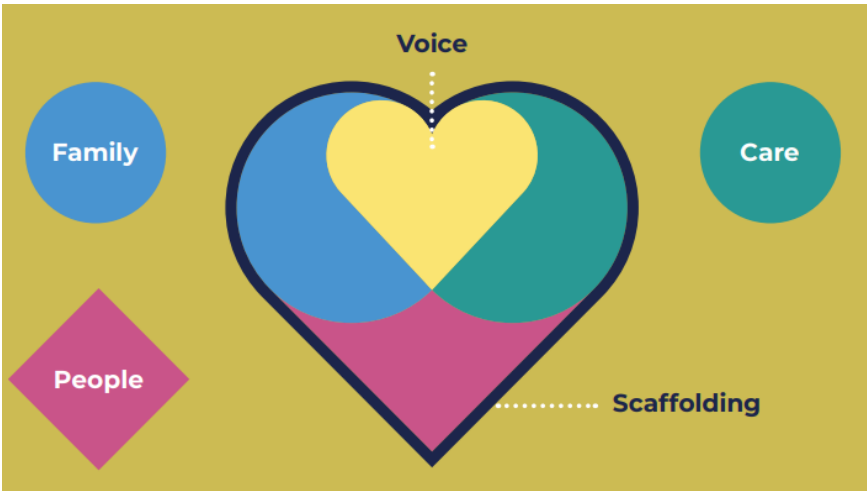
To support the implementation of The Promise in Highland Council, a Programme Manager (The Promise) was appointed and took up post in January 2022. Several key national drivers continue to influence the work required to #KeepthePromise.

- The Promise (Independent Care review)
- Plan 21 – 24
- Scottish Government’s keeping the Promise Implementation Plan
- Whole Family Wellbeing Fund from Scottish Government
- COSLA and Scottish Government’s vision for Scotland to be a ‘Trauma Informed Nation’
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Promise Oversight Board Report 1 and Report 2

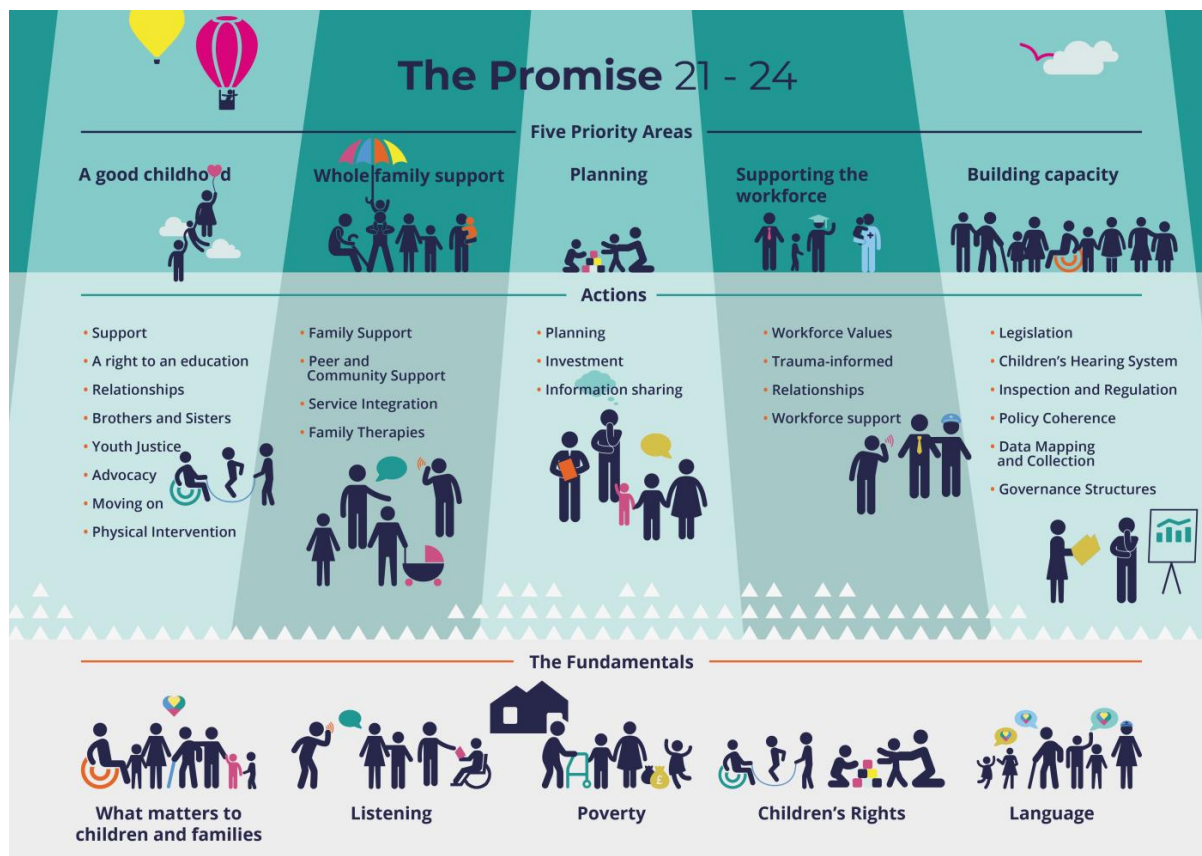
In addition, Highland Council needs to:

- deliver on its commitments to ‘Keep The Promise’ which includes evidencing it actively listens to children about decisions that affect their lives
- Deliver on its Integrated Children’s Service Plan
- Respond to the 2022 Care Inspectorate findings and evidence improvement.

Where possible, progress and developments will be captured against the 5 foundations of the Promise with reference to Plan 21- 24 and its 5 key priorities whilst recognising that progress, developments and ongoing actions do not sit in distinct foundations, with cross cutting themes and inter-dependencies across all 5 foundations.



Graphic 1: The Promise 5 foundations



Graphic 2: Plan 21 – 24 of The Promise

People

Promoting Highland's Vision of The Promise

The Promise is a 10-year transformational change programme and to achieve the vision of the Promise, a change of hearts and minds across services and communities is needed. The first stage of a Quality Improvement journey is: '**Creating Conditions for change**' and requires the building of will and the conditions for the change to happen. Therefore, collaboration and engagement in Highland's ambition to #KeepThePromise with its workforce began at the early stages of the Programme Manager coming into post.

Highland's Child Protection Committee (CPC) staff survey (June 2023) highlighted 50% of the workforce knew '*very little*' about the Promise. The vision of the Promise therefore must continue to be shared, promoted and serve as a reference as change moves forward.

The following details work undertaken to promote and engage the workforce in The Promise (See Appendix 1: Driver Diagram for reference to improvement activity) with an aim that

'by October 22, Health & Social Care services will have attended engagement sessions, and be aware of and confident in The Promise.'

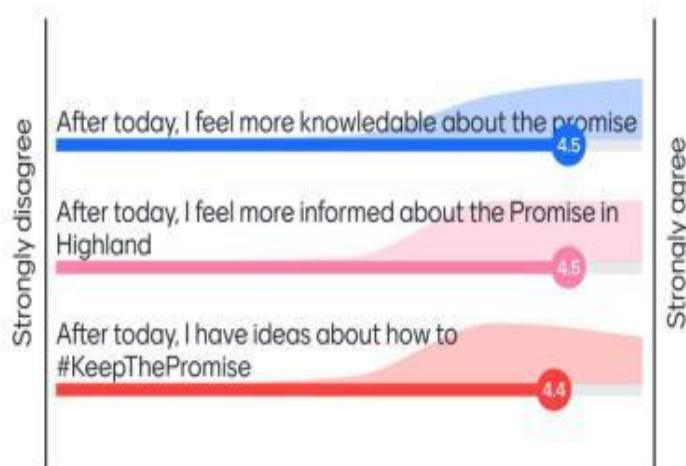
From June until November 2022:

The Programme Manager & Lead officer of CPC delivered 9 engagement sessions to over 150 staff

From early 2022 to Dec 2023:

The Programme Manager delivered over 23 Inputs on the Promise to 18 agencies & services across Highland Partnerships

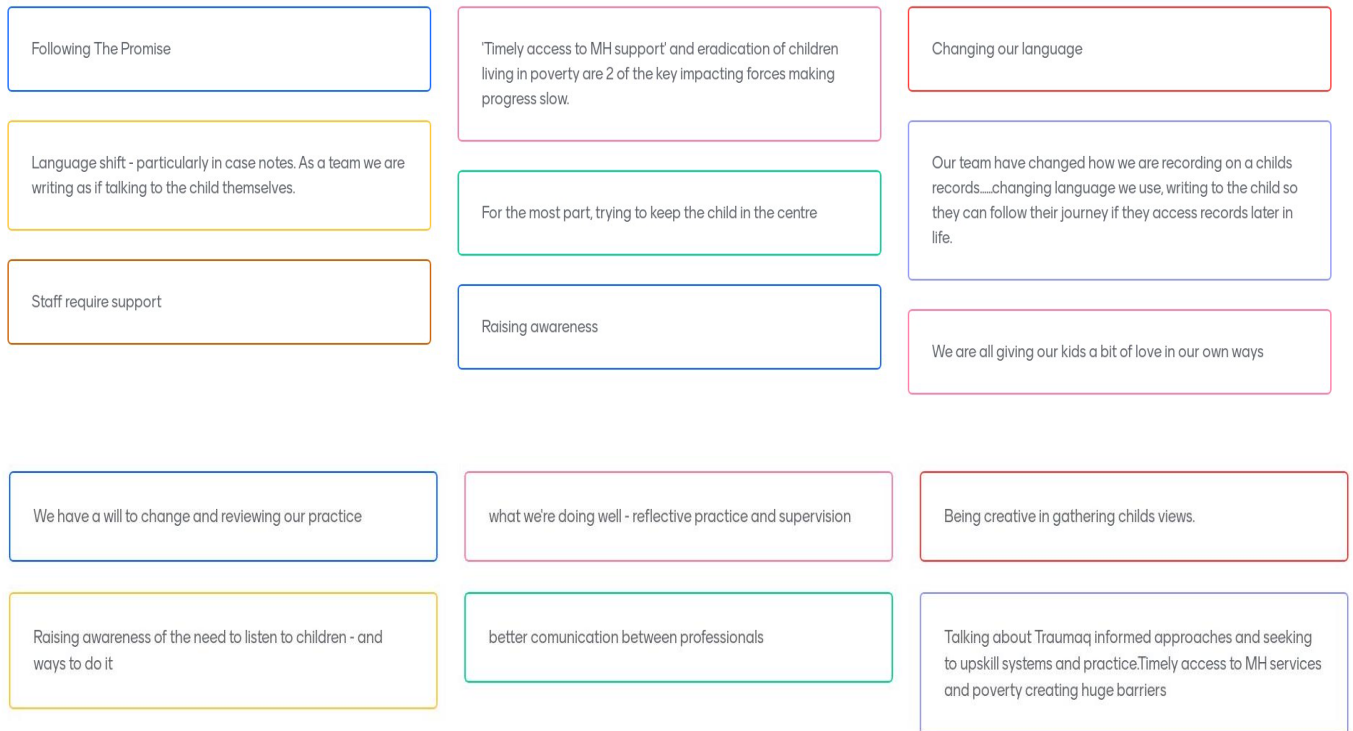
Pre and Post measures were undertaken, in addition to the initial CPC staff survey to gauge confidence and awareness of the Promise and to allow staff to share their views on barriers and opportunities for Highland to #Keepthepromise.



Graphic 3: Feedback from Engagement sessions June – Nov 22

As captured in Graphic 3 above, there was a marked improvement in staffs reported knowledge and how informed they felt on Promise activity within Highland.

What are we doing well?



Graphic 4: Responses from Engagement sessions June – Nov 22

The above graphic highlights the feedback from staff about how well they felt Highland were doing in Keeping the Promise. One key message from the engagement sessions was staff interest in staying engaged and informed of Highland’s journey. Therefore, to support this and to optimise ownership, both the Promise Newsletter and the Promise Conversation Café were developed.

From January 23:

The Programme Manager has facilitated **4 Promise Conversation Cafés** with **63** attendees



Conversation Cafe



Programme Manager has produced 4 *Keeping The Promise in Highland* 'newsletters' with over 110 views*



Graphic 5: Promise Newsletter header

**external partners cannot view through SWAY therefore total views will be higher*

Promoting Highland's vision to #KeepthePromise requires collaboration and a partnership approach. Engagement with staff, managers and our communities has been necessary to ensure **the system** in which they work and live **is understood**. (Stage 2 of Quality Improvement Journey).

For the workforce to take ownership of the Promise, they must feel connected to and feedback into the improvement journey (see also **Promise Ambassadors** section below). Findings and themes from these engagement activities pointed towards the 'change idea' to develop 'induction' sessions on The Promise for all staff working in the Highlands. To avoid perpetuating the myth that #KeepingthePromise is the responsibility of Social Care, it was agreed to develop a multi-agency 'Raising Awareness of The Promise in Highland'. This multi-agency induction package is currently being developed by a short-term working group with the support of our Promise Scotland Delivery Partner and our Child Protection Committee.

Collaboration within Highland Council

Whilst the Programme Manager of The Promise sits within Health & Social Care, the Promise will not be met if services do not work together. As referred to in the [Promise Oversight Board Report One](#):

'there is an urgent need to declutter the accountability landscape and there must be greater respect in the relationships between different parts of the 'care system'. A collaborative approach is needed, with peer accountability and better communication'

The Promise Oversight Board Report One, pg 41

The [Promise Oversight Board Report Two](#) identified three priority areas where change was emerging but where further change was needed. Education was one such priority.

'Schools in Scotland must be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.'

The Promise, p71

To that end, discussions with several Education colleagues continued over 2022-23, most significantly collaboration with the (then) Promise lead in Education and Highland's Virtual Head teacher.. These discussions and related activity were agreed and supported by Head of Education & Learning, Secondary and included:

- Input to raise awareness of The Promise to 2 x off site education provisions
- Input to share Promise ambitions and links to Trauma Informed practice to 1 x Primary School
- Input to Highland Secondary Headteachers Association (HSHA) on The Promise
- Input to Designated Child Protection Co-ordinators on The Promise, led by the Strategic Manager Safeguarding and CLD
- Input to Educational Psychology Whole Service Meeting on The Promise and Highland's journey so far

In 2023 changes in portfolios in Education & Learning meant those with responsibility for delivering on The Promise shifted. The Head of Service, Lifelong Learning & Gaelic Services currently has lead role for The Promise within Education and they now represent Education on Highland's Promise Board. Ongoing collaboration continues with several key projects in early stages of development:

- Education Scotland have introduced the 'Keep the Promise Award' and have delivered initial Train the Trainer sessions. The Programme Manager has completed this training and will support the delivery in 2024 to education colleagues when required. The Keep the Promise Award will raise awareness of the Promise to education colleagues, and it should form part of a programme of activity related to Highland's Schools improvement plans.
- An initial pilot project, in conjunction with Who Cares? Scotland's Communities that Care Whole School Approach is currently being explored with the aim to:
 - o Train staff and children in schools to be 'care aware' – that they understand what care experience is and the impact it can have on a child or young person.

The above projects are supported by an Improvement Project Co-ordinator and an Educational Psychologist with a remit for Care Experienced children and young people.

Supporting the Workforce

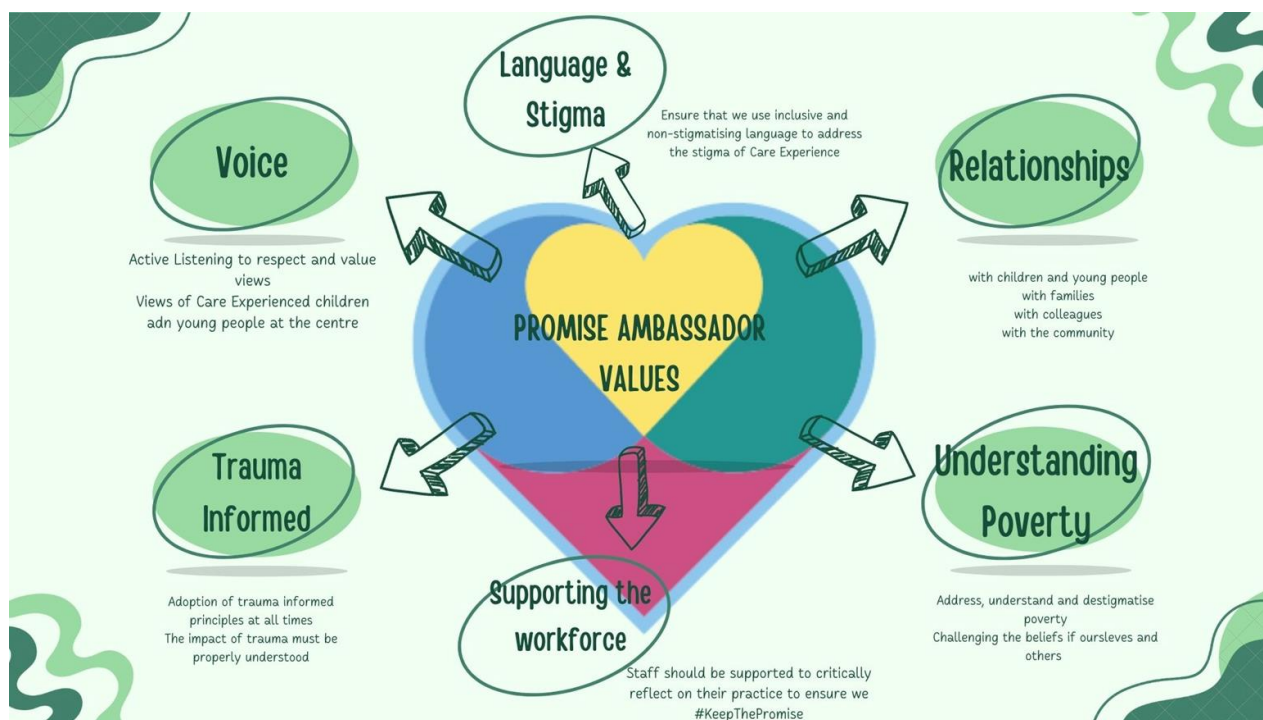
'The workforce need support, time and care to develop and maintain relationships. Scotland must hold the hands of those who hold the hand of the child'

The Promise, page 21

As reported above, feedback from staff demonstrated their commitment and enthusiasm for The Promise and that they wanted to stay engaged and know what they could do to drive change. Therefore, through further consultation, and learning from other local authorities, the Promise Ambassador initiative was launched. This in part was in response to the growing appetite for The Promise, but also in response to and in recognition of Highland's geography: Keeping the Promise in Caithness may not look the same as Keeping the Promise in Lochaber; what Easter Ross might need to support families may not look the same for families in Skye. The development of The Promise Ambassador initiative aimed to act as a feedback loop from and back into local areas, by recruiting Promise Ambassadors from across the whole of Highland.

To date **18 Promise Ambassadors** have been recruited over the last year, across Health, Social Care and Education with future plans to widen this initiative to partners including Highlife Highland. The ambassadors have met 3 times over the last year and agreed collaboratively their remit:

- To act as ambassadors for The Promise in Highland
- To support Highland Council's pledge to #KeepthePromise
- To champion The Promise and its calls to action in their local areas, within their professional networks and with their communities
 - Through promoting the ambitions of the Promise
 - Through modelling the core values and ethos of The Promise as a whole
- To ensure The Promise is at the forefront of service delivery
- To reflect the core values of an Ambassador (see below)



Graphic 10: Highland Promise Ambassador's Values

The success and potential impact of this initiative forms part of improvement activity captured within the ICSP priorities and will be measured and scrutinised by Highland's Promise Board as it develops its delivery plan.

Trauma Informed Workforce

Supporting the workforce to deliver Trauma Informed practice within their organisation is a shared ambition of COSLA and the Scottish Government. The Promise, within Plan 21-24 states those organisations with responsibilities towards care experienced children and families, and those on the edges of care must be able to demonstrate they are embedding trauma informed practice across their work.

The Programme Manager continues to drive this work through her Trauma Champion role: a position others hold across the partnership and where governance sits within the Mental Health Delivery Group. The development of a Trauma Lead officer to progress and lead on this work has been approved following funding from the Scottish Government, demonstrating partnership support for this national agenda, which will be central to Highland delivering on its ambition to #Keepthepromise.

National work and evidence ([Enablers and barriers to trauma-informed systems, organisations and workforces: evidence review](#)) is clear: the focus on supporting the workforce cannot solely focus on training the workforce. Practitioners cannot demonstrate a Trauma Informed approach if they sit under systems and processes that

are not. Therefore, as a collective group within the Trauma Champion network, energies have focused on promoting trauma informed leadership.

The work undertaken to date has been recognised nationally, with the Programme Manager presenting at the National Trauma Champion workshop and most recently, at the Scottish Trauma Informed Leadership Training programme as part of the leadership section (along with a colleague in Highland Council's Housing service).

Scaffolding

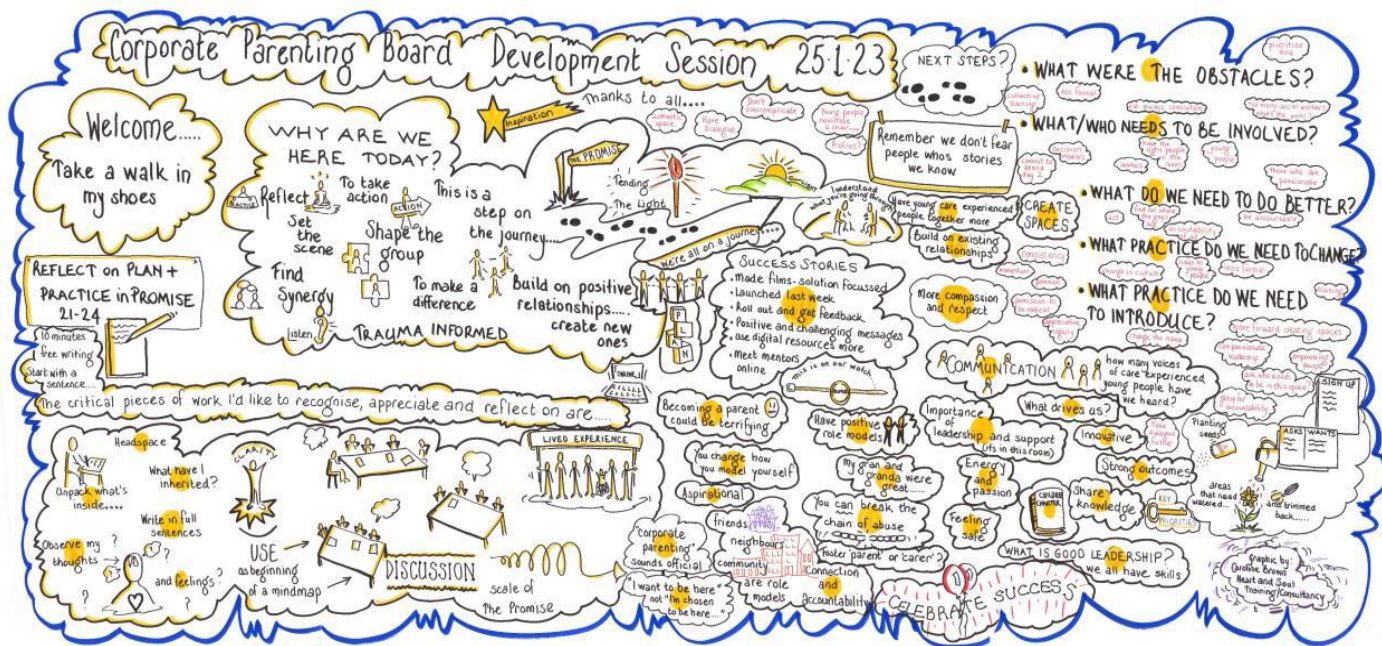
Monitoring and Scrutiny

The Programme Manager (The Promise) reports directly to the Head of Children & Justice Services, Health & Social Care and meets monthly with them and the Head of Improvement.

As it matures and develops its reporting structures, improvement activity related to The Promise will be reported through the newly reformed Highland Promise Board. The Programme Manager also provides updates to the Council's PRMS system in relation to Promise related Performance Indicators as well as reporting to COSLA's Promise Leads network.

The Promise Board

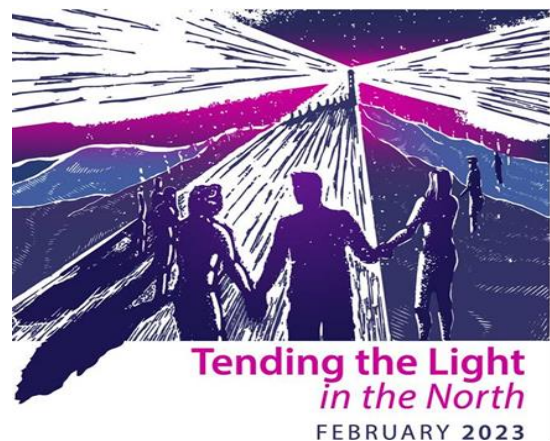
In response to COVID-19 and the findings of The Promise, the previously known Highlands Corporate Parenting Board underwent a period of reflection and development. This journey was supported and facilitated by Highland's Promise Delivery Partner and Who Cares? Scotland's Training & Development team alongside a graphic designer who was able to visually capture the content of the initial day (*see Graphic 6 below*).



Graphic 6: Graphic designer's capture of January's development session 1.

Three development sessions were held from January to May 23 where Corporate Parents, care experienced adults, children and young people came together to reset and refocus their ambitions and reflect on the messages heard from 'Tending the Light Festival of Care'.

Key priorities were agreed collaboratively and these now form part of Highlands Integrated Children's Services Plan [Highland's Integrated Children's Services Plan](#) under the Promise Board.



In response to the collaborative sessions, and as a first step for the newly formed Board, Who Cares? Scotland supported the delivery of 2 events (1 x online, 1 x in person), which included a video produced by care experienced children in Highland and where they shared 'What a Corporate Parent should be' (You can watch the video [here](#).)



My Promise Board member - Highland Council



Graphic 6: Screen grab of video produced by Highland's care experienced young people

Further areas of improvement identified through the development sessions included:

- Further training for Corporate Parents to support their knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities as a Board.
- Developing the Boards commitment to embracing a true 50/50 co-design approach.
- The production of a Promise Board Plan that captures how it will deliver its statutory Corporate Parent responsibilities, and details the delivery mechanism to #KeepThePromise

Following the development sessions, the Board renamed itself The Promise Board (voted for by care experienced children and young people) and to date has:

- pledged its commitment to deliver on The Promise and commitment to a 50/50 approach
- refined its Terms of Reference
- invited to and attended events organised by and for care experienced children and young people, including events over Care Week and Christmas.
- responded to the Independent Strategic Advisor to The Promise on Plan 24 – 30.

The Promise Board is currently developing its delivery plan, with thematic groups being mapped against the 5 foundations alongside the key priorities in the ICSP. (see Appendix 2 for high level graphic).

Voice

'Listening to and meaningfully and appropriately involving children in decision-making about their care..'

The Promise advocates that VOICE must be at the heart of reorganisation, in how we must think, plan and prioritise for children and their families. Whilst the newly reformed Promise Board engaged to some extent with its care experienced community; and commits to a 50/50 co-design approach, further areas of work have been developing across various aspects of system design in Highland where VOICE is central.

Child Rights & Participation

The Programme Manager sits on and feeds into several workstreams related to Children's Rights and Participation including the Child's Rights & Participation subgroup of the ICSP, the Participation Strategy Steering Group, and Highland UNCRC Equalities Network. Attendance and contributions to additional groups (e.g. Highlands Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) Implementation Group, SCIM Strategic Oversight Board, Family Group Decision Making Steering group) provides opportunity to ensure VOICE is central to service delivery.

The development of a Participation Strategy is fundamental to Highland's ambition to develop co-designed services with those with lived experience. The steering group provides leadership and direction with the following remit:


1. To support the preparation, planning, resourcing and writing of the above strategy
2. To ensure a networked approach to the development of the strategy, with proportionate representation from all key stakeholders across the partnership
3. To ensure the participation of children and young people in the development of the strategy
4. To meet regularly in accordance with the timeline to be identified in meeting one of the steering group

Supporting this work under the Families 1st strategy (see below) is the imminent recruitment of Child Rights and Participation Officers. These posts' main purpose will be to:

Uphold the rights of children in Highland, through a Rights & Participation service designed by and for children with lived experience of social care services

These roles will support the Highland Council in its pledge to #KeepThePromise, placing VOICE at the centre. Of note, a joint inspection of children services in Highland by the Care Inspectorate (2022) reported that children and young people were not always involved in their care planning and/or their view were not always included. These posts will therefore support and improve the quality of how children are listened to, heard and included in their care planning and improve how they are involved in decisions about their lives. They will also support enhancement to how the council systematically gathers children and young people's views to influence wider children service planning and be key in the implementation of the Participation Strategy.

Language



Language
Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and young people will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work.

Plan 21-24 pg 19

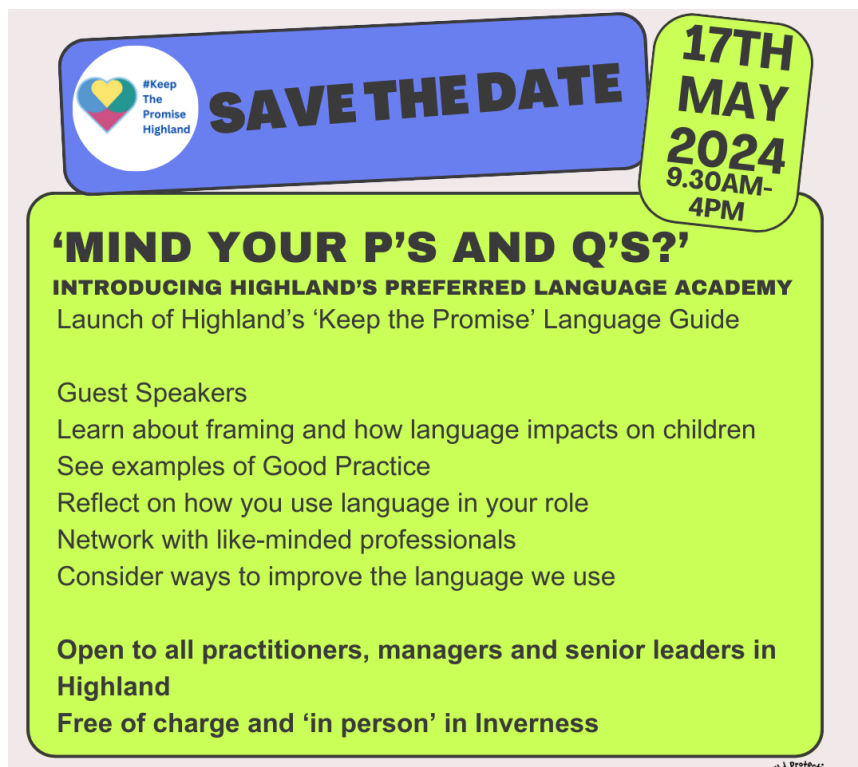
In response to the calls to action in the Promise, and in recognition of the improvement needed across services in relation to the language used about and to children and young people, Highland Council and Partners set up a small working group with the ambition that:

'we will be able to demonstrate destigmatising language and practices across the way we work by the end of plan 24. Improvement across sectors, including both policy and practice is required. Any improvement activity in this area should be informed by lived experience.'

To achieve this several activities were undertaken, or are in progress:

- The production of a 'Language Guide', in the form of an online 'microbite' which was developed through engagement with children and young people with experience of care and professionals working with children services through a 'Language Bin'.
- Training from [Each & Every Child](#) on their framing recommendations (*evidence based framing recommendations to change the public perception of care experience*) to Highland's Child Protection Committee and Promise Board.

- 2 small tests of change with 2 residential homes within Highland, in collaboration with Each & Every Child. These projects are considering their language in terms of daily notes, aiming to create more trauma informed records.
- With the support of a secure care experienced young person living in Highland, producing a letter from the Chief Social Work Officer for any child or young person going into secure care. This also includes a letter from a young person, based on their experience and what they felt would be supportive and helpful for any young person entering secure care from Highland.
- A multi-agency 'Master Class' on Language delivered through the Child Protection Committee) with partnership collaboration from Each & Every Child and the 'Write Right About Me' Aberdeen City Partnership.



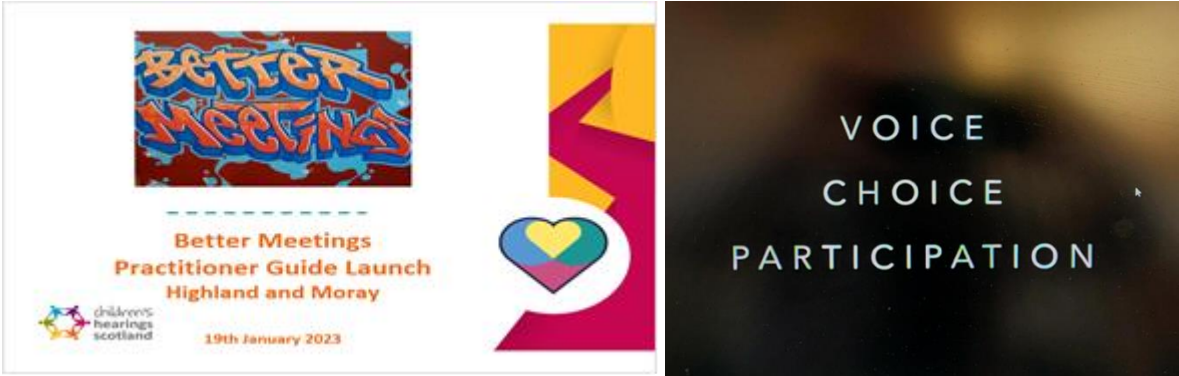
Graphic 7: Poster invite to MasterClass

The above improvement activity is ongoing, and therefore the need to evaluate this work, measuring what (if any) impact it has had will be a focus over the coming months. Critically, the voices of those it affects will form part of such measures.

Better Meetings Practitioners Guide:

In January 2023 the Better Meetings Implementation Group, a partnership comprising of an amazing group of care experienced young people in Moray alongside Who Cares? Scotland, Children’s Hearings Scotland, Moray Council, Highland Council and the

Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration launched four Practitioner Guides. These guides emphasised good practice before, during and after meetings and hearings to ensure that the voice and views of young people are at the heart of everything we do. A great example of co-design work and aimed at helping us all #Keepthepromise.



The use of these guides, any impact they are having on practice and on young people’s experiences in having voice, choice and participation in their meetings and/or hearings is currently being evaluated. Improvement activity will report to the Child Protection Committee under their improvement plan.

Family

In 2023 Highland’s Childrens Services (Health & Social Care directorate) developed its Families 1st strategy ([link to Families 1st report to Health & Social Care Committee found here](#)). The vision is simple and is underpinned by GIRFEC and The Promise:

to safely ensure that children and young people remain with their families within their Highland communities.



Graphic 8: The 'Highland Star': created with thanks by Caroline Brown

Crystallising the vision of the Families 1st strategy is the **Highland Star** which has a focus of protecting and upholding the rights of children and their families in Highland. The Promise is at the **heart** of the Highland star.

Aspirations for our Children and Families are embedded in the star:

S – Safety, Stability & Strengths

T – Thriving, Trauma (informed) & Together (families, brothers and sisters)

A – Achieving & Aspirational

R – Rights

R - Relationships-Respecting

See Appendix 3 for Presentation on delivery aspect of the Families 1st Strategy.

The following sections detail work that sits under the Families 1st strategy, and although the Programme Manager does not lead in these areas of work, they are detailed here due to their contribution in Highland's overall ambition and to highlight the interdependencies across services in keeping The Promise.

Family Group Decision Making

Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM) was introduced to Highland Council's Children Services in June 2023 and is a strengths-based approach designed to empower families to make a safe plan when there are concerns about a child or young person. It is a structured process that leads to a Family Group Meeting; helping families to identify their own strengths and solutions. Family Group decision making sits within the wider overall strategy of Families 1st and is an overarching approach which aims to safely keep Highland's children within their own families and communities. Empowering families to build safety for children and young people is central to the Promise and Highland's commitment to delivering the Promise. FGDM is currently being rolled out as a pilot across 3 family teams in the Inverness areas.

FGDM and its roll out across Highland is a key priority within the ICSP Plan, dependent on findings from the initial pilot. The programme is in its early development and any impact of FGDM is yet to be measured. However, the Programme Manager sits on the FGDM Steering Group and will contribute to evaluation, ensuring the voices of children and families remain central to its development and service design. Highland Council's FGDM service is engaging in a national piece of evaluation work led by Cardiff University which will also contribute to the service's understanding of impact on those families who experience FGDM.

Impact measurements will be shared and scrutinised through the The Promise Board and report into the ICSP Board.

The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWB)

Highland's Whole Family Well-being (WFWB) Programme, funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund from Scottish Government is a cross sector partnership programme within Highland's Integrated Children's Service Board. Its ambition aligns with the aspirations of The Promise:

'Every family that needs support gets the right family support at the right time and for as long as it is needed, to fulfil children's rights to be raised safely in their own families'

In Highland, a locality approach has been taken, led by the WFWB Programme Manager, there are 6 locality co-ordinators linked to the 9 Community Partnerships and Local Voluntary Action Networks. This approach recognises the differing needs and experiences for families across Highland's geography. The Programme will support whole system transformational change to reduce the need for crisis intervention by shifting investment to prevention and early intervention.



Graphic 9: The Four Pillars of the Whole Family Wellbeing Approach

The first phase of the programme included Partner Participation sessions delivered across 12 locations over the whole of the Highlands with over 300 attendees. Early data from these events will be available in due course and will be significant in supporting the development of holistic family support across the Highlands.

More recently, the programme managers of The Promise and WFWB with colleagues in social care are collaborating on a project in relation to creating safe, non-stigmatising

spaces for families to come together, including spaces for **brothers and sisters**. This is in infancy, but with a project plan under development.

Valuing the contribution, voice and experience of Family Support Workers

Prior to the introduction of the Whole Family Wellbeing programme, a focused piece of work was undertaken at the request of the Service Redesign Steering Group.

Over 90 individuals who provide support and / or early intervention to children, young people and families in Highland were interviewed. The aim of the work was to understand the varying roles colleagues were carrying out, identify service gaps and to understand from those working in these roles what was working well and what needed to improve. This work contributes to and aligns with Highland's ambition to strengthen family support across the whole system, from early support right through to intensive support services.

Given the complexities and extent of activity captured under 'Family', it is proposed Highland's Promise Board establishes a Thematic Group '**FAMILY**' (see appendix 2).

Care

Your Voice Matters

In 2022 in conjunction with a commissioned independent review of Highland's children's residential homes, a small working group led by the Promise Programme Manager was tasked to gather the voices of young people who have experienced residential care in Highland from the period of January 2020 until July 2022.

The purpose of this project was to ensure the voices of children residing in Highland's care homes were a key part of the overall review. Initially branded as 'Your Home, Your Say', the project was renamed 'Your Voice Matters' in recognition of the varied definitions of 'home' and in attempt to be sensitive to the complexities of what can constitute as 'home' for care experienced children and young people.

The review found disparate views from children and young people across Highland with areas of strength and positive experiences shared, as well as weaknesses and areas of improvement. The report highlighted that the quality and type of care is not consistent across Highland. A striking finding from this review was the significance of relationships. Generally, where young people described a caring and positive relationship with their care staff, they reported positive experiences across the key areas of exploration: e.g. mental health and wellbeing, education and training. They also were more likely to report feeling informed and supported in knowing their rights and

feeling listened to. Of significance was the link between poor relationships and poor reported mental health.

What our data tells us

Whilst improvements around Highland's data collection is required, there is evidence of achieving impact in relation to Care through the data we do have. (See text box 1). Currently Highland Council reports its lowest numbers of children in secure care (0-3) and its lowest numbers out of area (9-14) *see below under Home2Highland*.

Children's Services strategic vision of Families 1st is to safely keep children within their families and communities. The Families 1st strategy is achieving impact with less children coming into the statutory social work system. This is evidenced through our 'Looked After Children' statistics over 4-year trend. From 2020 to 2023 there has been an **18-20%** reduction in Looked After Children from **495** (2020), **469** (2021), **402** (2022) and **405** (2023). Highland's rate of children per 1,000 (population 0-17) that are Looked After is **9.3**, which is less than comparator averages of 13.2 and less than the Scottish average which is 12.3 (Children Looked After Social Work Statistics Scotland 2023).

Text Box 1: Data highlighting reduction of looked after care experienced children

In addition to the above, in 2023 inspections that took place in Highlands residential care homes have begun to evidence **improvement** and progress with houses inspecting *good, very good* and one *excellent*. Committee report presentation summarising this work can be found in Appendix 4.

All improvements are being progressed through the Residential Improvement Group and will feed into the proposed thematic group of **CARE** under the Promise Board (Appendix 2).

Home2Highland

Home to Highland's vision aligns with the Human Economic Cost Model where Highland has reinvested its money differently. The programme aims to return care experienced young people to the Highlands from Out Of Authority (OOA) residential placements, whilst also developing services in-area to avoid needing specialist OAA provisions and to allow children to remain in their communities. The programme evidences a reduction of children coming into the care system as well as reducing how many children are being moved out of Highland. *An evaluation of the Home2Highland programme will be presented at Health & Social Care Committee this month which will be available online.*

Separated children

Further examples of positive partnership working and how this supports children can be seen in the work undertaken by the Highland Strategic Alliance in relation to its responsive humanitarian response to separated children and young people arriving in Scotland in need of refuge and protection. A full committee report can be found [here](#).

My Journey Journal

Through part of the Highland Strategic Partnership's 'Moving On' Subgroup, a partnership with third sector organisations including Aberlour, Barnardo's, Action for Children and Inspiring Young Voices the production of My Journey Journal is a perfect example of partnership collaboration, driven by the voice of children with lived experience of care.

The My Journey Journal was co-designed and written by Care Experience young people in the Highlands. Through consultation they shared their voices and experiences of their care experience journey, sharing what they felt was good and what could be even better. They voiced that sometimes they felt a bit lost with what was happening around them and they didn't feel in control of decisions being made. They would like to change this for other young people to empower them to have a voice and feel in control and this was why 'My Journey' was created.



Graphic 10: My Journey Journal, a partnership co-designed booklet for care-experienced children

Barriers & Challenges to change

Whilst Highland's commitment to #KeepthePromise is evident across the workforce and through all levels of management, both strategic and operational, there are of course barriers and challenges to achieving change.

It is well documented nationally, including COSLA's response to Plan 24-30 and noted in Highland's Promise Board's response to Fiona Duncan's message following the publication of The Oversight Board Report Two, the challenges related to recruitment, retention and resourcing of children and family social work teams. Although Highland Council's Head of Children Services continues to lead initiatives in response to the challenge, including the production of a recruitment video to encourage applicants to Highland, the social work staffing crisis and structural instability across all levels is a significant challenge to Keeping the Promise.

There is commitment to the long-term, transformational strategy of shifting culture and changing practice and the above report hopefully demonstrates the dedication to reducing the number of children who become care experienced and improving children and family's life experiences. However, with the current landscape as is, there is significant pressure, at times overwhelming pressure on the workforce to deliver more with less.

Furthermore, as captured in The Money and Follow The Money, the impact of the care system goes beyond the period of time a person spends in care, and the cost of the care system extends beyond the money spent on the care system. Therefore, there is a need for a wider perspective to be taken across service structures. A challenge to truly Keeping The Promise is the perception that this work is the responsibility of local authorities and in particular, Social Work Services.

Finally, although Highland's Promise Board is committed to embedding the principles of the Human Economic Cost Model, greater clarity on the how this is possible on a national level is welcomed.

Priority areas for improvement

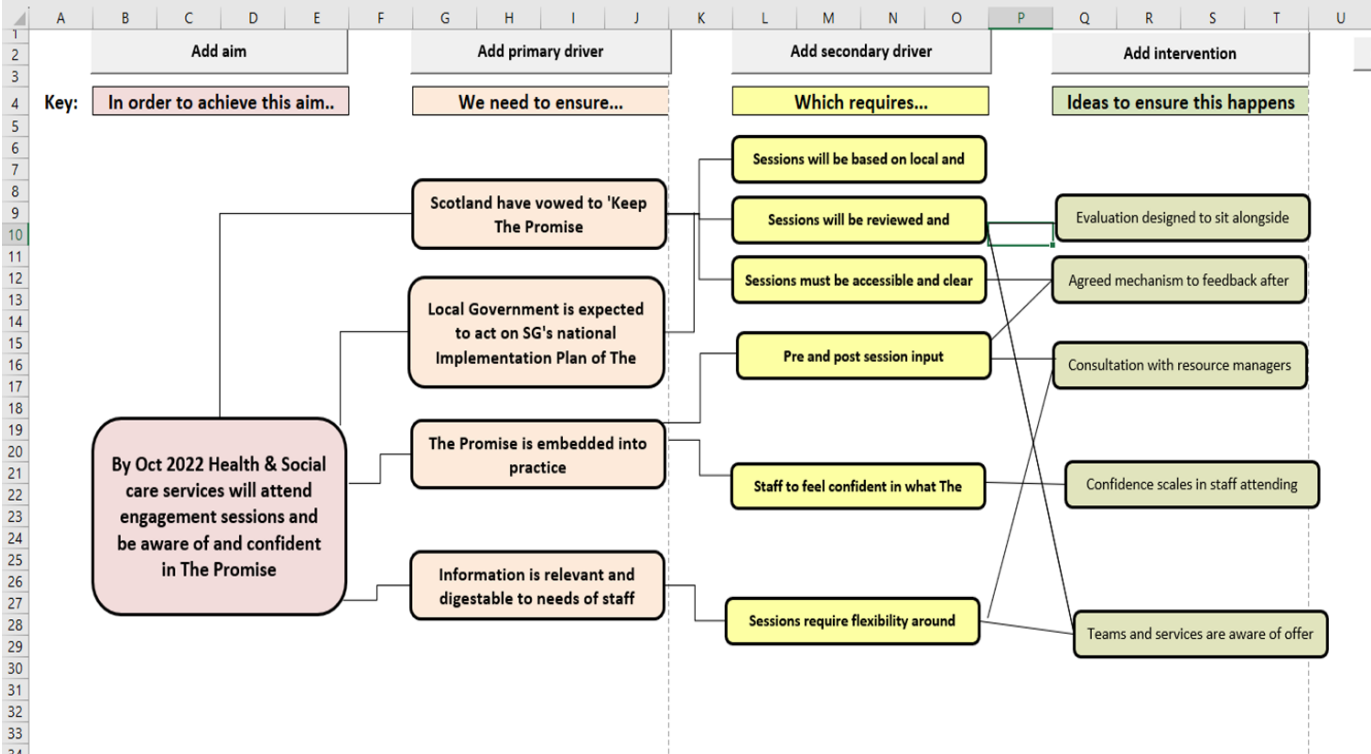
Whilst significant and extensive work has been undertaken across Highland and within Highland Council's Health & Social Care service (of which much of this report focuses on), the focus of 2024 – 26 must be on measuring impact. A proposed National Framework to support local authorities measure change and evidence how they are 'Keeping The Promise' is in development and Highland strategic managers will contribute to discussions with COSLA to support this work.

Fundamental to the Promise, any measurement of impact must be 'What matters to Children and Families'.

2024 focus on Keeping The Promise in Highland:

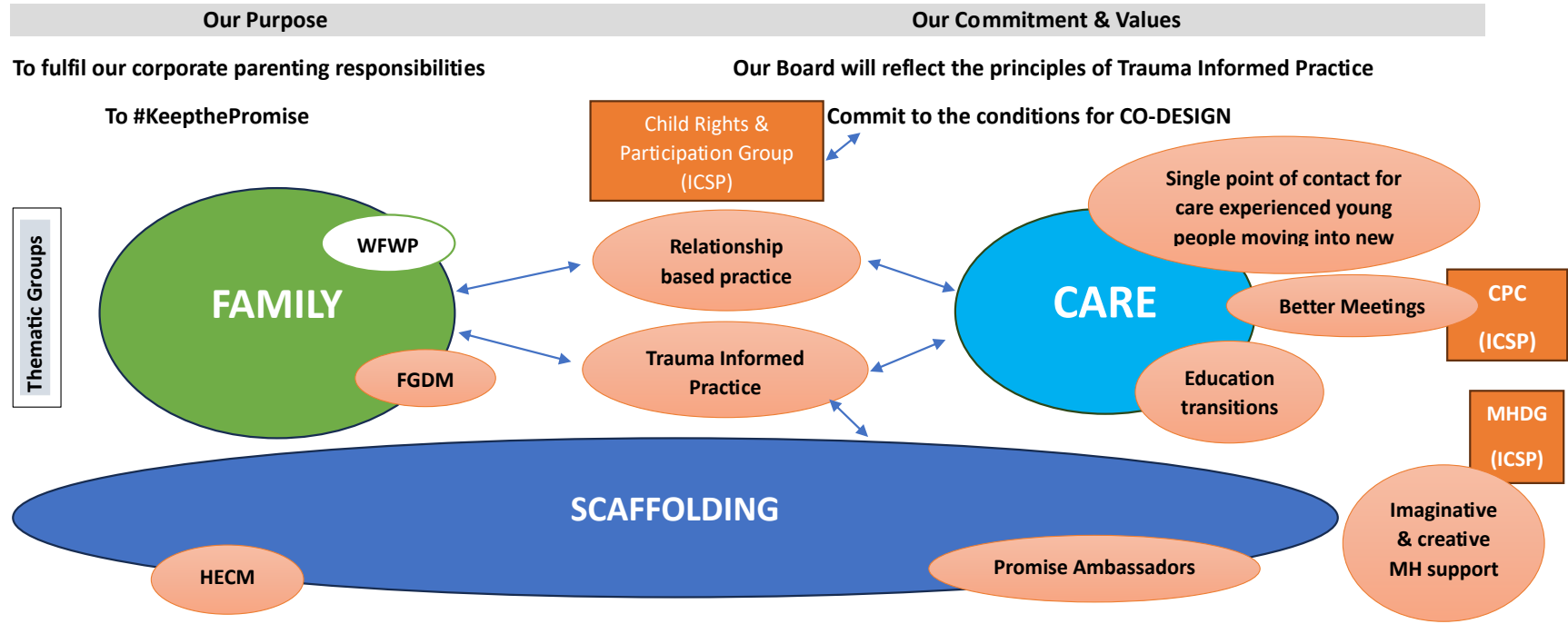
- Production of a Promise Board (Corporate Parenting) Plan, consisting of 'delivery groups' that details 'what better looks like' alongside change theories that captures how this will be achieved. This will be influenced by the publication of Plan 24 -30, expected in Summer 2024 and the proposed development of a National Framework.
- The implementation of the Participation Strategy and to deliver on the commitment to a 50/50 co-design approach.
- The development and evaluation of a Children's Rights & Participation Service
- Engaging Highland Council's Executive Leaders on The Promise to build on the will and conditions for change and support the realisation of Follow The Money.

Appendix 1: Promise Engagement Driver Diagram



Appendix 2: Highland Promise Board

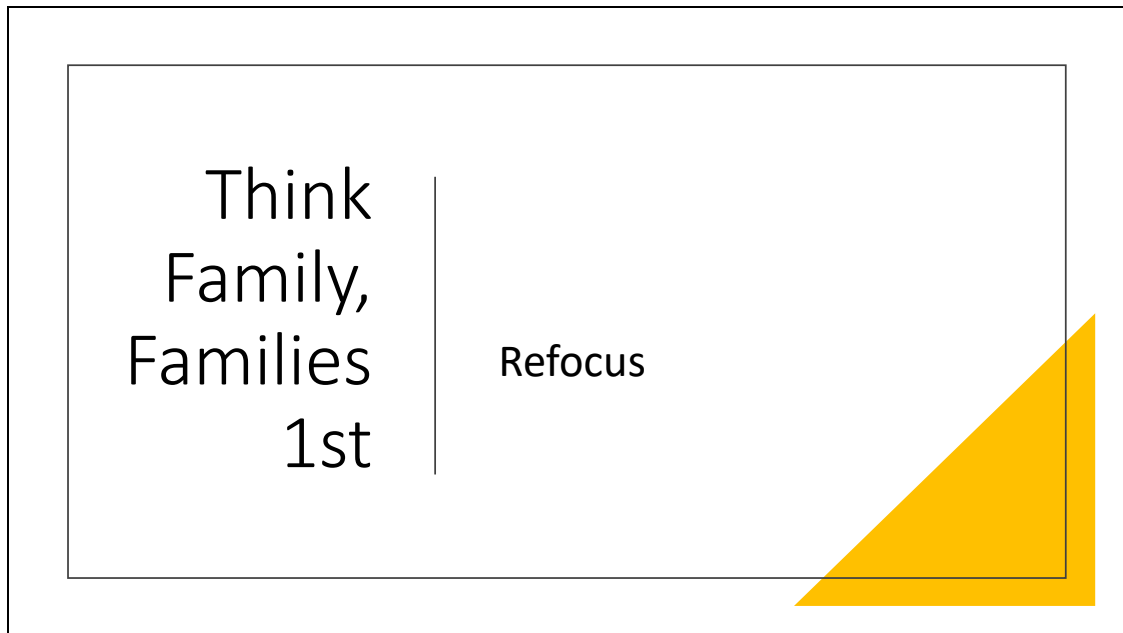
THE PROMISE BOARD

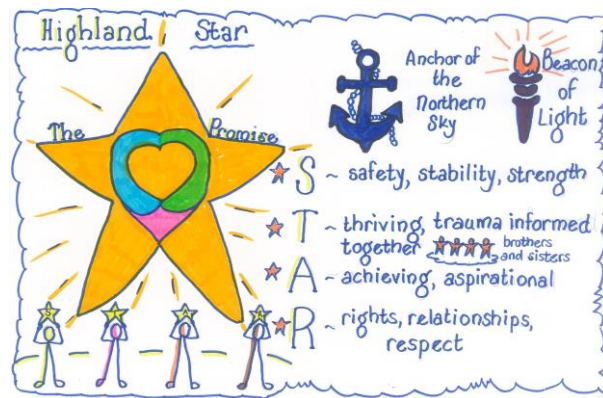


PRIORITIES		
Develop relationships across the partnership between workforce, children, young people and families	Develop a shared Trauma Informed approach across the partnership	Develop single point of contact support for care experienced young moving into their new home
Empower families through family group decision making	Promote, extend and evaluate 'Better Meetings' Practitioner Guide	Improve support at time of transition to further & higher education or employment
Develop imaginative and varied support and prevention for mental health for care experienced infants & families	Develop the Promise ambassador approach across the partnership	Improve partnership working to enable trusted relationships through HECM

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES / INTER-DEPENDENCIES			
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS BASED	VOICE & PARTICIPATION	TRAUMA INFORMED	WHOLE FAMILY SUPPORT

Appendix 3: Families 1st Refocus PP presentation.





Structure

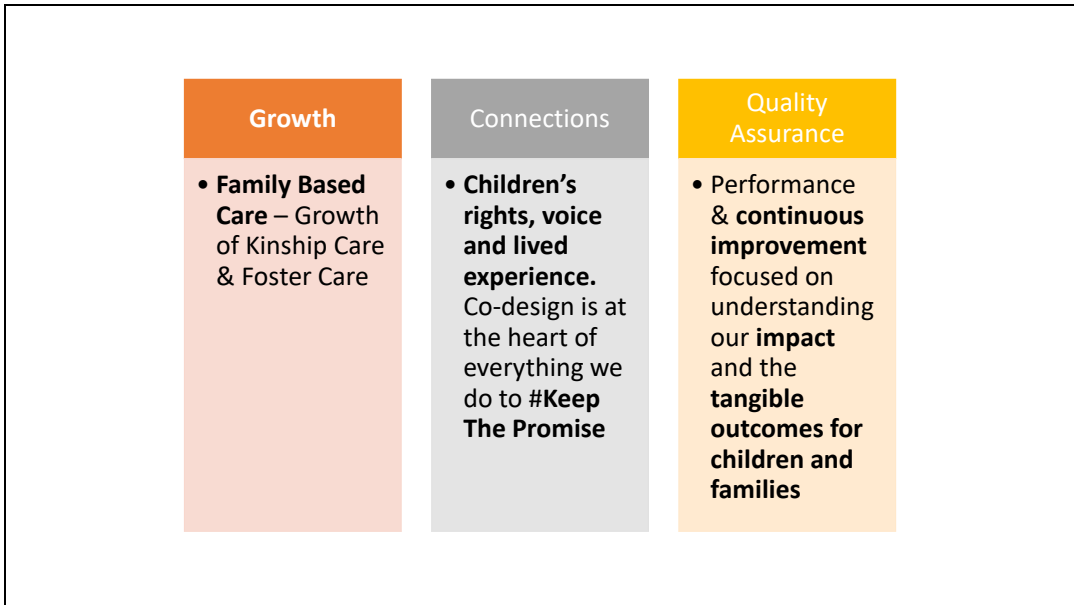
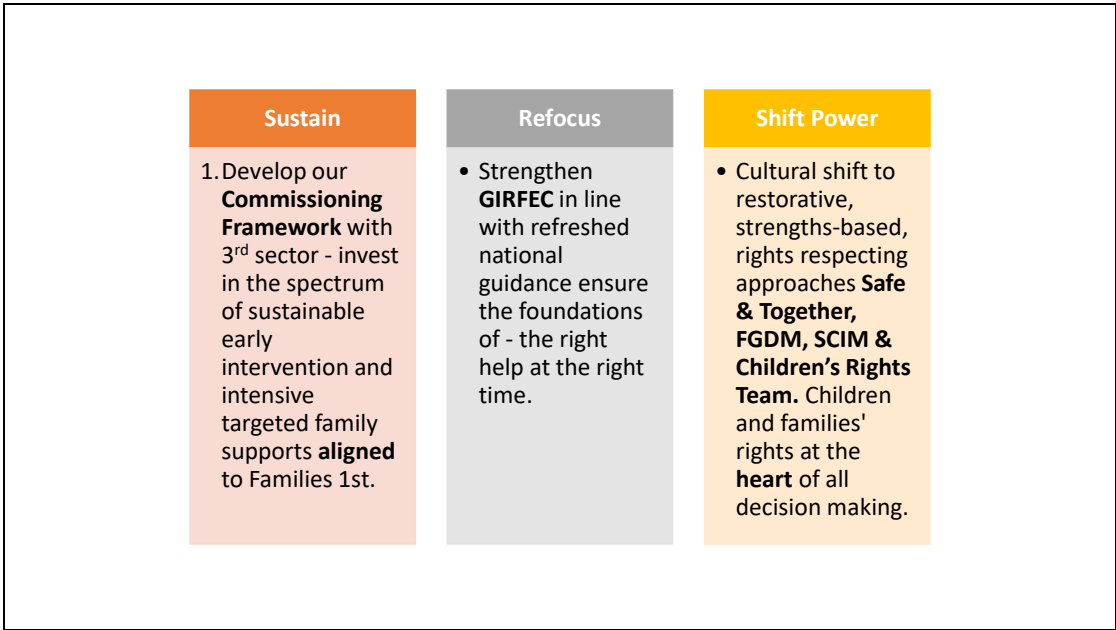
1. Structural design with Families 1st. Multi-disciplinary place-based teams, (family hubs) working collectively, working with, not doing to, to meet the **whole family's needs**.

Change & Innovation

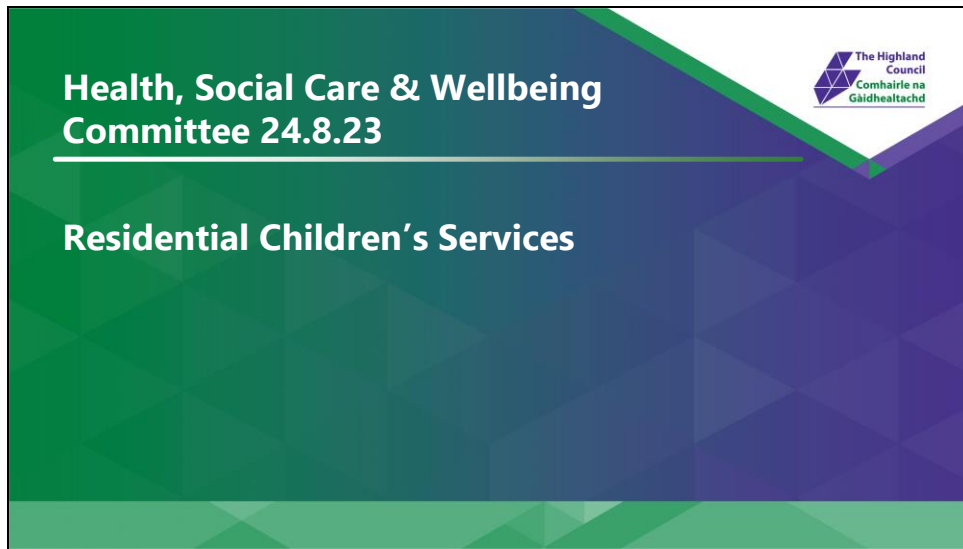
1. Whole Family Wellbeing agreed through the Community Planning Partnership, which shall invest **£2.8** million over 2 years, in the whole family wellbeing

Workforce

1. Our people – get behind the vision, are supported, developed, recruited and retained as the key delivery foundations of achieving Families 1st



Appendix 4: Committee Report Presentation summarising residential improvements



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

**Health, Social Care & Wellbeing
Committee 24.8.23**

Residential Children's Services

Residential Care in Highland

- An essential part of Children's Services
- Has an extremely important role in 1. Keeping the Promise & 2. Families 1st Strategy to:

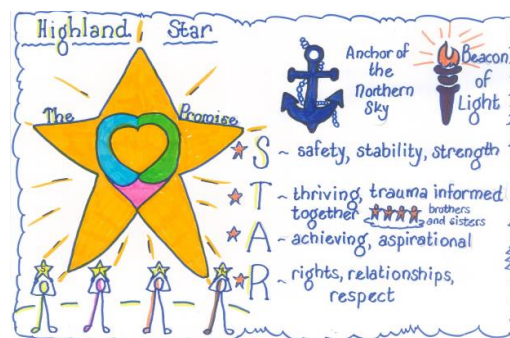
Safely maintain as many Highland children within their families and tin heir Highland communities.

Model & Values

- Voice
- Rights
- Language of care including 'love'
- Co-design of care

6

Highland Star



7

Transforming & Changing

- Promise & Families 1st – the whole system contracting, shifting and pivoting to intensive community family support:
- *Families must be given support together to nurture love and overcome difficulties. It must become much more common for families to be supported to stay together, p15 the Promise.*
- 3rd Sector **Alliance** & HC – wrap around intensive community family support services across the Highlands.

8

Home to Highland

- Bringing Highland children home
- Stopping them going out
- Reducing high cost residential care
- Reducing Secure Care
- Bespoke Highland holistic care including highly individualised education support plans.

9

Challenge, Change & Improvement

- Independent Review of HC Houses (2021-2022).
- Registered Services - Care Inspectorate.
- Significant improvement journey.
- 2 Houses closed. Opportunity...
- Transparency, focused leadership, accountability, support culture and practice.

10

Success & Achievements

- Care Inspection findings getting stronger with Good, Very Good and **Excellent!**
- Reduction of 12 beds + 4 3rd Sector with resources shifting to the community.
- Lowest numbers in Residential.
- Lowest numbers in high cost external provision
- Lowest numbers in Secure Care
- Lowest numbers of Looked After Children

11

Building & Looking Ahead

- Improvement mindset – all houses must have post inspection improvement plans with proactive self evaluation.
- Dig deep into the Promise.
- Dig deep into community family support with evaluation of impact to safely keep Highland children in Highland.
- Review the TC&AC Provision & Continuing Care.
- High quality residential care for the 'critical few'.
- Workforce.
- Best Outcomes, Best Value.

Addendum update to The Promise Evaluation (Feb 24) Report

July 2024

This addendum serves to provide an update to the 'Keeping The Promise in Highland' Evaluation Report (February 2024). Where possible, the addendum continues to report under the five foundations of The Promise, in line with the initial February report.

People

In addition to the development of the 'Raising Awareness of The Promise' Induction sessions (due to be available from Autumn 2024), work continues to promote The Promise and engage colleagues in its vision. This has included a session in April '24 to Executive Leaders including the Council's Chief Executive, the then Executive Chief Offices and other Heads of Service. The session included an input from Fraser Mckinlay, CEO of The Promise Scotland who offered his perspective of The Promise in the context of the Human Economic Cost Model.

In relation to 'developing a Trauma Informed workforce', and in recognition that leadership plays a key role in developing trauma informed workforces, Trauma Champions have collaborated to host a Trauma Summit in September 2024. The Summit takes a steer from [The 2023 Roadmap](#) Guidance for Organisations, Systems and Workforces and is aimed at senior leaders and decision-makers in key organisations across the Highlands.

The intention is to sequence this Summit with a Promise Conference after the Autumn, which will aim to showcase Highland's efforts across the partnerships to Keep The Promise.

Scaffolding

The previous report highlighted the work taking place under the new Highland Promise Board, including proposed delivery (sub) groups. In response to discussions within the Board and in recognition of the work progressing nationally on a Promise Progress Framework, it is anticipated that an additional 'Doing Data Differently' sub group will be set up. This will allow for a more comprehensive and robust reporting mechanism into the Board and will support Highland's scrutiny of its pledge to Keep The Promise.

VOICE

Rights & Participation

As reported previously, under the Family 1st Strategy, recruitment of Child's Rights & Participation Officers was imminent. There are now 2 officers in post who started in June 24 with 1 more officer due to commence next month. They report to the Programme Manager of The Promise and will play a significant role in Highland's improvement journey to meaningfully and appropriately involve children in decisions about their lives. The new service will aim to:

- facilitate and develop participation activities for children, young people and families
- Become more responsive to children and young people's needs
- Build Highland Councils staff confidence and capacity in engagement practice so the voices of children, young people and their families are at the heart of service planning
- Deliver co-designed services with children and families

It will of course further support the upholding of children’s rights, in line with UNCRC.

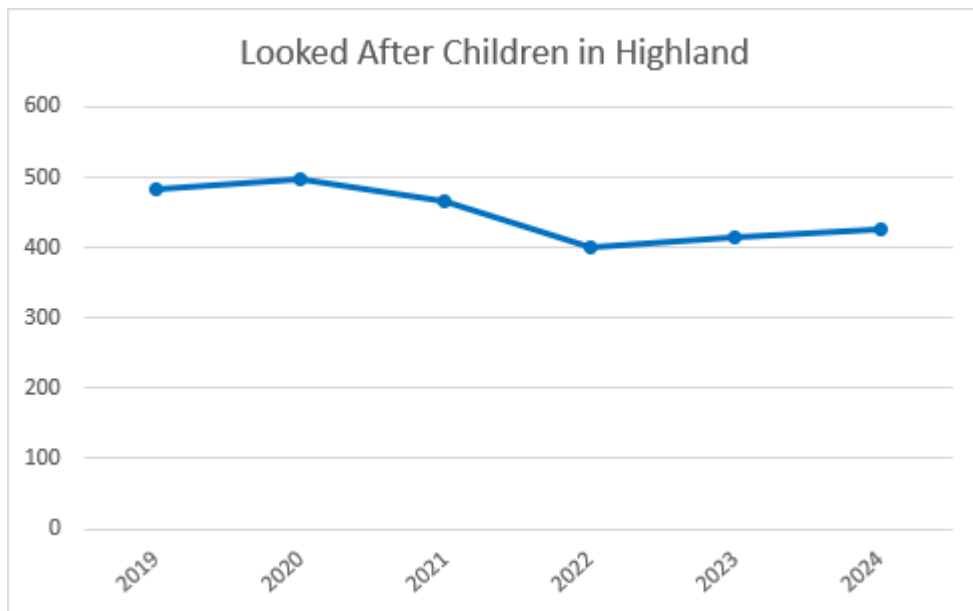
Language

Since the February report, the Highland Language Guide (available through Traineeeasy and to all partnerships) was launched at the Language Master class ‘Mind Your Ps and Qs’. The event was well attended with over 70 candidates from across services and partnerships. This activity received national attention and was captured as a ‘spotlight’ in the Promise Scotland’s newsletter.

Care

Data reported in February highlighted a reduction of ‘looked after’ children. More recent data (from 1.8.23 – 31.7.24) is presented below:

The preliminary results indicate that there has been an increase of 10 compared to the 31st of July last year. The Return is a snapshot of children as of the 31st of July.



Whilst the above graph suggests a decrease from 2020, and then a small upward trajectory in 2024, further analysis into the impact of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) figures, on the overall Looked After figures, indicates the numbers are still actually reducing, albeit more gradually, as our figures are impacted by that fact that most UASC are initially classified as ‘Looked After’ children. Highland has supported 46 UASC transferred through the National Referral Mechanism.

In addition, other activity reported on (e.g. Home To Highland, the Family Centre), the Promise Programme Manager continues to work closely with the Child Protection Committee, to support work around ‘**Reimagining Justice**’. As a result of the 2022 Care Inspection and further discussions with partners, the Older Young People Sub-Group of the Highland Child Protection Committee is working in partnership across statutory and third sector services, and with our youth and community groups, including children and young people. **Reimagining Justice in**

Highland' is supported by the Child and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) and aligns with Highland's Promise Board to commit to a 50/50 co-design approach, guided by the Scottish Approach to Service Design. This work will be significant in Keeping The Promise for children, particularly following the passing of the Children (Care & Justice(Scotland) Bill.

Appendix 3

Keeping the Promise in Highland – Self Evaluation

08b – Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Screening Summary

The IIA Screening at stage 1 identifies very positive impacts with a FIA not required.

Equality, Poverty and Human Rights

Equality. The impacts are positive. The Highlands Promise places a strong emphasis on engaging with some of the most vulnerable groups who have protected characteristics. Moreover, the Promise and our efforts in the Highlands extend to focus on those groups without protected characteristics, such as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Young Carers, and those with Care Experience.

Human Rights. The impacts are positive. 'Keeping The Promise' in Highland outlines the extensive activities undertaken by the council and its partners to uphold and respect human rights. The Families 1st Strategy is a key focus, aiming to safely maintain children with their families and within their communities. This supports various human rights, notably the right to private and family life. Additionally, there is a significant emphasis on actively and constructively confronting the stigmatization, and both direct and indirect discrimination faced by the care-experienced community.

Poverty. The impacts are positive. It is acknowledged that poverty and socio-economic factors can heighten the risk of family breakdown, leading to some children entering child protection and care systems. 'Keeping The Promise' in Highland outlines a comprehensive array of initiatives across services and partnerships aimed at preventing children from entering the care system. When entry into the system is necessary, it ensures that the five foundations of the Promise—Voice, Family, Care, People, and Scaffolding—are meaningfully implemented. This collective effort across the intricate system aims to secure significantly improved outcomes from childhood through to early adulthood and beyond.

Children's Rights

Both direct and indirect impacts have been positive. The "Keeping The Promise Highland Report" offers robust evidence of our commitment to respecting and safeguarding children's rights. Extensive engagement with children has been prioritized to ensure their perspectives are incorporated as we develop approaches and services. Through a wide-ranging stakeholder partnership, we have developed the inaugural Children's Rights & Participation Strategy, which is ready for implementation across Highland.

Island and Rural

No Impact

Climate Change

No Impact

Data Rights

No Impact