

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: Thursday 24 August 2023

Report by: Chief Social Work Officer

Heading: The Promise: Progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise)

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper summarises the progress on delivering on Renfrewshire's Promise (#KeepThePromise) by Education and Children's Services.
 - 1.2 This paper also highlights the publication of The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report, published on 22nd June and the consultation work taking place in relation to The Promise Plan 24-30.
 - 1.3 We are in year 3 of this 10-year programme of change and there is good evidence of progress in Renfrewshire to #KeepThePromise with significant developments underway and more planned.
 - 1.4 The delivery of The Promise in Renfrewshire requires a strongly committed multi-agency partnership working approach and demonstration of a collective understanding, commitment, and activity in relation to The Promise across all the partners.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
 - [a] note the progress and update by Education and Children's Services to #KeepThePromise
 - [b] note the publication and key messages contained in The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board report and the consultation activity taking place for The Promise Plan 24-30
 - [c] consider becoming a "**Promise Keeper**" and joining Renfrewshire's network of champions and experts in their own field to #KeepThePromise

- [d] note that regular update reports will be brought to Board to ensure elected members are sighted on implications for policy and practice as our Promise work progresses.
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3. Background

- 3.1. Renfrewshire Council and partners are committed to delivering on The Promise to the Care Experienced community, that by 2030, Scotland is "the best place in the world to grow up in" and that all our children are "loved, safe, and respected and realise their full potential".
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Council and partners are Keeping The Promise to:
- Children and their families on the edges of the care system who we want to support to avoid compulsory supervision away from home. We want to keep children at home where that is safe.
 - There will be children who require to be in the care system living away from home for their safety – they should have a childhood in care which is loving, caring and compassionate.
 - Children in care should be supported to successfully transition to the adult world.
- 3.3 We are committed to better outcomes for our Care Experienced Community:
- By keeping more families together, the number of children and young people on compulsory measures of supervision away from home be reduced by 2030 – leading to significant reduction in Care Experienced population over time.
 - For those who need to be part of the care system, the system will give them love, compassion and consistency.
 - Children and their families will be better supported through whole family support.
 - The balance of our spend between prevention and more intensive intervention switched. Families that need help get it early - before crisis point.
 - Reduction in Care Experienced-related poor outcomes including poverty, homelessness, substance misuse, poor health including mental health, offending, school exclusion, educational attainment and low employability.
 - Increased consistency in service provision across the country and the workforce will be valued, informed, respected and supported.
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4. Progress and Update – High Level

- 4.1. Renfrewshire Promise Keepers: The roll out of Promise Keeper role has progressed significantly since its inception, and we have ambitious plans to grow this network in 2023/24. There are currently over 180 Promise Keepers across Renfrewshire. A Promise Keeper can be an elected representative, a senior leader, middle manager, or member of frontline staff. Promise Keepers are responsible for championing The Promise within their own expertise/staff teams/professions ensuring that their colleagues are aware of their responsibility to #KeepThePromise.

- 4.2. Promise Keepers are central to ensuring The Promise remains at the forefront of service design and delivery. Promise Keeper values have been developed and recruitment to the role is ongoing. All Promise Keepers undergo training to ensure that they have a good understanding of The Promise and are being supported to fulfil this role.

All Renfrewshire Education and Children's Services Policy Board Members are invited to become a Promise Keeper. Please contact samantha.macrae@renfrewshire.gov.uk for further information

- 4.3. Renfrewshire's Promise strategic planning and Governance Structure, incorporating The Promise Oversight Group and four workstreams, have been revisited and clearly aligned to Children's Services Partnership Plan and to the Council Plan.
- 4.4. The Promise is a high-level aim for Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership and the partnership has agreed that "There must be an urgency and demonstratable evidence of a collective understanding, commitment and activity in relation to The Promise."
- 4.5. The Promise Manager, started in post October 2022, manages the Children's Services Partnerships response to the implementation of The Promise in Renfrewshire. The Promise Manager is monitoring the effectiveness of the Oversight Group and workstreams and our response to #KeepThePromise will be informed by emerging themes/priorities around The Promise Plan 21-24 and Plan24-30.
- 4.6. Renfrewshire's Promise Manager and Promise Ambassador are well connected to the Promise delivery mechanisms at COSLA, Promise Scotland and Scottish Government.
- 4.7. Renfrewshire Promise delivery mapping and planning tool is informing delivery of the Promise Plan 21-24 and activity around identification of Key Indicators/measures of success has taken place. This mapping tool was developed in conjunction with Promise Scotland Delivery Partners. The Promise Manager has been sharing this mapping and planning tool approach with Local Authorities from across Scotland.
- 4.8. The mapping tool is capturing Promise related activity in Renfrewshire including but not limited to Education, Social Work, Employability, Mental Health, Youth Justice, Family Support, Workforce, Children's Hearings, GIRFEC, UNCRC, Brothers & Sisters, Police, Fire & Rescue Service and Health.
- 4.9. A Promise Self-Evaluation Tool has been developed to assess progress and areas for development in key areas across different services in Renfrewshire. The self-evaluation tool has been circulated to a wide range of services in the local authority and to partner agencies. The analysis of this evaluation will be available by September 2023 and will inform our future plans.
- 4.10. Renfrewshire Language Policy has been produced and shared. This guidelines for how practitioners should speak about and describe Care Experience and Care Experienced children and young people. This policy was co-designed with Care Experienced young people and staff from across Renfrewshire.

- 4.11. The 'Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together' policy, co-designed by Care Experienced young people from the Renfrewshire Champions Board, reduces the separation of Brothers and Sisters entering care unless there is a clear safeguarding reason to do so is worthy of note and has been shared with our partners widely as accepted best practice and is an approach that is being adopted by other local authorities.
 - 4.12. Considerable activity has begun in 2023 on a Supportive School Structure - Right to Education Project. Renfrewshire has been successful in a funding application to the Corra Foundation for an investment of £150,000 to support us to think differently and challenge ways of working around Supportive School Structure (Right to Education). This funding is for two years and will allow us to conduct targeted work to highlight the need to ensure that all Care Experienced (CE) children and young people have a key person who is their advocate/supporter.
 - 4.13. This key person, a Principal Teacher The Promise, will ensure their attendance, participation and achievement are being supported and monitored effectively. This resource will provide focus tracking, and a genuine response to building positive relationships to ensure that school and life outside school is supported appropriately.
 - 4.14. Communities That Care Curriculum Resource Schools programme is entering its third and final year. Renfrewshire Council fund this programme, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland creating inclusive school environments for Care Experienced pupils through a curriculum delivery programme. The goal of the programme is to create more caring and inclusive school environments for Care Experienced pupils.
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5. The Promise Scotland Oversight Board Report

- 5.1. The Promise Scotland Oversight Board (PSOB) published their second report on 22nd of June on Scotland's progress in relation to The Promise. PSOB is responsible for holding Scotland to account by checking that The Promise is being kept. The board monitors tracks and reports Scotland's progress to #KeepThePromise.
- 5.2. The report strikes a balance between the progress made, across sectors, while bringing attention to the areas where Scotland must do more to keep the promise by 2030.
- 5.3. This report recognises the complex context the country has been in since The Promise was made in 2020; not least the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the "cost-of-living crisis" and the impacts around central funding. The Oversight Board celebrates and thanks the workforce who are striving to #KeepThePromise.
- 5.4. Over the next year the board has asked for: "• Explicit leadership and drive from the Scottish Government and scrutiny bodies to articulate a clear set of principles, outcomes and milestones that will guarantee the promise. • A strategic investment plan to deliver the required change."

- 5.5. The report focused on three priority areas – Education, Brothers and Sisters and Homelessness. It outlines the commitments in each area within The Promise, positive examples of practical change and outlines what else the Oversight Board expects to happen by the time the Oversight Board publishes report three.
 - 5.6. The PSOB in this report “does not believe that delivering the original aims of Plan 21- 24 is realistic within its given timeframe.” The report goes on to say 2030 remains the date by which the promise must be kept. However, for this to happen “everyone plays their part over the next seven years, this is still achievable.”
 - 5.7. Renfrewshire Promise planning and activity overseen by Renfrewshire’s Promise Oversight Group, reporting to Renfrewshire’s Childrens Service Partnership, will be informed and take appropriate lessons from this report.
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6. The Promise Plan 24-30 Consultation

- 6.1. We are now in year 3 in all our endeavours to #KeepThePromise and Promise Plan 21- 24 is ending. Plan 21-24, the first of the three intended plans, began on 1st April 2021. Plan 21-24 set out what action needed to be taken, by who and by when. It covered 25 priority actions required to be progressed by the end of March 2024 to ensure the promise was kept, in full, by 2030 at the latest.
 - 6.2. Fiona Duncan, Independent Strategic Advisor on The Promise, will lead the work to co-devise Plan 24-30. The starting point will take account of the impact and effectiveness of the work undertaken within Plan 21-24. Over the summer, Fiona Duncan is consulting on how to co-devise Plan 24-30 with the methodology set out in autumn 2023. Before the methodology for co-devising Plan 24-30 is fully developed and published in September 2023 there will be a consultation exercise.
 - 6.3. The Renfrewshire’s Promise Oversight Group members and partners have been invited to be involved in this consultation activity. The Promise Manager is engaging positively with Promise Scotland around this consultation.
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Implications of this report

1. Financial

It is likely that there will be financial implications as services undergo a redesign process to address the issues identified in The Promise. It is not yet clear what the financial implications will be.

2. HR and Organisational Development

As the plan for the delivery of The Promise becomes clearer the implications for staff and organisational development will also become clearer and there will likely be actions for HR and Organisational Development Teams.

3. Community/Council Planning

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

Providing families and children with support to remain together will ensure our communities are supportive places for children to grow up in.

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Providing families and children with the help they need at the earliest point possible will ensure our communities are inclusive for all.

Working together to improve outcomes

Providing excellent quality care is central to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and families in Renfrewshire are provided with an opportunity to achieve their potential

4. Legal

Corporate Parenting Duties: Renfrewshire Council along with many other public bodies and Organisations in Scotland are Corporate Parents under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Scottish Government has set out a Legislative Programme to Support the Change required to #KeepThePromise. This legislative programme involves introducing legislation between now and 2030 including: The incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law; a Bail and Release from Custody Bill; a Children's Care and Justice Bill; a Housing Bill; a Legal Aid Reform Bill; and a Human Rights Bill. By the end of this parliamentary session, there are plans to bring forward a Promise Bill to make any further legislative changes required to #KeepThePromise. It is likely that there will be legal implications as a result of this legislative programme, and it is not yet clear what those legal implications will be.

5. Property/Assets

None.

6. Information Technology

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health and Safety**
None.
9. **Procurement**
None.
10. **Risk**
None.
11. **Privacy Impact**
None.
12. **COSLA Policy Position**

COSLA Leaders have committed to The Promise and its ambition to ensure that Scotland's children grow up 'loved, safe and respected.' COSLA published '*Delivering The Promise in Local Government*,' a research project with the Improvement Service, in April 2023. COSLA and SOLACE established The Promise Local Government Programme Board in August 2022. The Board is chaired by SOLACE and comprises membership across a range of local government professional associations. The Board was established to monitor and drive the delivery and implementation of the actions required of local government to #KeepThePromise.

13. **Climate Risk**
None.

List of Background Papers

The Promise: [Link](#)

The Promise Plan 21-24: [Link](#)

The Promise Scotland Second Oversight Board Report: [Link](#)

The Promise Plan 24-30 Consultation: [Link](#)

Delivering The Promise in Local Government COSLA report [Link](#)

The Promise Local Government Programme Board: [Link](#)

Children's Services

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