

**East Renfrewshire Council****23 October 2024****Report by HSCP Head of Children's Services and Criminal Justice****The new East Renfrewshire Promise Board and Delivering Our Corporate Parenting Responsibilities****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. In 2020 Scotland made a promise to care experienced children and young people: "*You will grow up loved, safe and respected. And by 2030, that promise must be kept*". The Promise was made following the Independent Care Review, which found that the current "care system" in Scotland isn't working. The Promise and its accompanying 10 Year Plan, launched in 2020, is underpinned by [5 foundations](#) – *Voice, Family, Care, People, and Scaffolding* (see appendix).
2. To ensure that at the highest level children and young people are heard and engaged, and that they and their families are at the centre of everything that we do, this report recommends the development of a new East Renfrewshire Promise Board and outlines the composition of the Board, its purpose, and how it will function. Crucially, the Promise Board and overall approach of the Promise work encompasses all departments of the council and not just those of children's services, social work and education.
3. To accompany the creation of the Board a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme has been devised in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and the wider Corporate Parents network locally. This will ensure fuller commitment from all Corporate Parents as well as an increase in the skills and knowledge of the workforce.

**RECOMMENDATION**

4. Council are asked to :
  - approve the proposed East Renfrewshire Promise Board model;
  - delegate authority to the Chief Social Work officer as set out in paragraph thirteen to determine Board membership in the event of a surplus of nominations from the Council's elected members; and
  - agree to the new three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme and promote attendance and engagement across the partnership in East Renfrewshire.

## BACKGROUND

### The Promise

5. On 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 a promise was made to the infants, children, young people, adults and families who have experience of the care system in Scotland. The Promise and its commitments were clear that by 2030 the following would be delivered:
  - Love will no longer be the casualty of the ‘care system,’ but the value around which it operates.
  - Wherever safe to do so, Scotland will make sure children stay with their families and families will be actively supported to stay together.
  - Children, young people, and their families will be listened to, respected, involved and heard in every decision that affects them.
6. The Scottish Government and the national Promise Team reinforced that this work is “**immediate and urgent work - what can change now must change now**” and that implementation of The Promise must not be delayed. In East Renfrewshire we have made the same commitment to our current looked after children and young people, those who we previously looked after, and for those who will experience care in the future. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic we sought opportunities to drive forward The Promise believing that during this extraordinarily challenging time children and young people in our care needed to be loved, safe, and listened to more than ever.

### Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

7. Over this time local Corporate Parents have demonstrated a commitment to improving the life chances of our looked after and care experienced children and young people but all are aware that individually and collectively more has to be done in East Renfrewshire to enable us to achieve our goal of being the best possible parent we can be in line with The Promise.
8. It is now more understood that when a child or young person becomes looked after – at home or away from home - the local authority, health board, and a number of other public bodies take on the role of Corporate Parent. Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and the other key partner agencies, to provide the best possible care and protection for our looked after children. This also means that each specified public body has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that every parent wants to act.
9. In East Renfrewshire this has meant we want the best for our children, to see them flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well in education and enjoy healthy relationships with family, carers and friends. Similarly, we want them to make the most of the available cultural and leisure opportunities, and to develop towards adulthood fully prepared to lead independent lives. Importantly, we want young people to progress into a positive post school destination, whether this be further or higher education, or employment, and to be financially secure.
10. The key to delivering on these aspirations is for all Corporate Parents to commit themselves to full implementation of all aspects of **The Promise 10 Year Plan** and the foundations of **Voice, Family, Care, People, Scaffolding**, which underpin it.

## Context

### **Promise Plan 2020-2030**

11. We are now over four years into the Promise's ten-year plan with the period from 2020 until 2024 having just ended. On 21st December 2023 the Chair of The Promise, Fiona Duncan, wrote to local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships requesting a progress update on implementation, as well as plans going forward over the next period. The content of the new national Promise Plan for 2024-2030 recently published in June 2024, has been informed by the responses to Ms Duncan's letter.
12. The five priority areas of the Promise and the actions contained within are reflected in the new East Renfrewshire's Children's Services Plan 2023-2026 titled "*At Our Heart – The Next Steps*". Progress with implementation is reported through the Children's Plan annual review process, which is a statutory duty. The Promise also indicates five foundations to drive systems and cultural change across Scotland. The foundations will be important to the creation and purpose of the new Promise Board as they will support us to evaluate the impact of this important development.

## **REPORT**

13. In order to ensure we meet our obligations as outlined in The Promise we will establish an East Renfrewshire Promise Board. The proposed model for the Board attached as appendix 1 to the report will aid discussion among senior officers and builds on the previous work of the Champions Board. The Young Champions will continue to meet as an established group representing the views of Care Experienced Young People and will feed in directly to the Promise Board. The Promise Board will be an expansion of the Champions Board model and will strive to include the voices of wider participation groups. This proposal attempts to describe a way of working that is meaningful and accessible for both children, their families and those in receipt of services. It will be reviewed during the first year to ensure it is fit for purpose and is having the desired impact. Board membership includes a number of Council elected members. It is proposed that the Chief Social Work Officer will liaise with group leaders and independent members to seek nominations to fill these positions by 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024. It is important that the make up of the board is proportional across all relevant groups and if it is felt there is a surplus of members, further discussion would take place with group leaders and members who have intimated an interest.
14. To accompany this a three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme has been devised to support the Promise Champions, their workforce and all Corporate Parents to understand purpose and intent. This programme is also attached.

## **CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

15. Implementation of the Promise takes place within the wider context of Children's Services Planning in East Renfrewshire. As such the production of this model and learning programme has over the last six months involved a process of extensive collaborative working between children's services partners as well as the important wider engagement that has taken place with children, young people, and families / carers.
16. The Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership is the principal multi agency group that has responsibility for The Promise in East Renfrewshire. The

partnership fulfils this role through oversight of the statutory Children's Services Plan. The Partnership oversees the work of the four multi agency thematic planning sub-groups in relation to the plan itself and its annual reports. These are Additional Support Needs Group, Early Years Group, Corporate Parenting Group, and Young People's Group.

17. All children's services and most of the related services are represented on the strategic high level partnership including East Renfrewshire Council, the Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Police Scotland, and a range of other agencies including East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Skills Development Scotland, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, and partners in local and national voluntary organisations. A recent review of membership took place to ensure the necessary partners are represented on the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young Partnership and that the representation is sufficiently senior in grade to participate fully.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

### Finance

18. There will be running costs associated with the Board meetings and fun events. A dedicated Promise Rights and Participation Officer is in post to support the functioning of the Promise Board and to ensure the Mini Champs, Champions Board, and families are engaged and supported to participate at a range of different levels and ways. This post is funded via The Promise Whole Family Wellbeing fund.

### Workforce

19. None

### Equalities

20. An Equalities, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment of the new model will be undertaken and the report will be issued once complete. This will be considered by the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People's Partnership and Corporate Parenting Sub-group.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

21. The Promise is required to be delivered throughout Scotland by 2030. In order to meet this timescale East Renfrewshire Council, HSCP and the wider Corporate Parenting family must listen to children, young people and families about what works for them and what needs to change. To do this in a meaningful way we will set up a Promise Board and use a co-production approach to listening and acting.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

22. Council are asked that:
  - approve the proposed East Renfrewshire Promise Board model;

- delegate authority to the Chief Social Work officer as set out in paragraph thirteen to determine Board membership in the event of a surplus of nominations from the Council's elected members; and
- agree to the new three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme and promote attendance and engagement across the partnership in East Renfrewshire.

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1 October 2024

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

<https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/foundations>

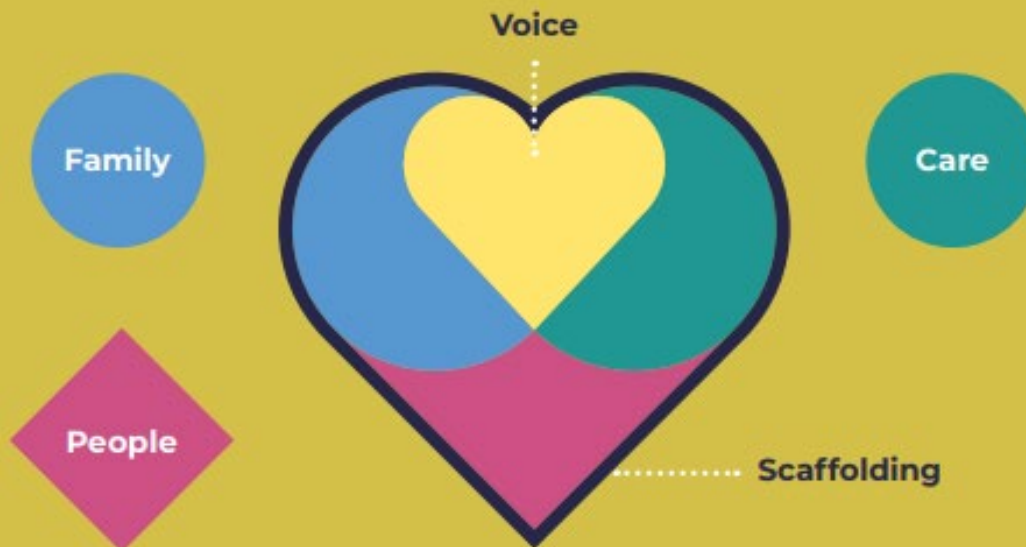
<https://thepromise.scot/what-must-change/plan-21-24>

[Welcome to Plan 24-30, Scotland's route map to keeping the promise by 2030 \(plan2430.scot\)](#)

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## The Promise will be built on these 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 must be ready and responsive when it is required.

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**East Renfrewshire's Promise Board**  
**Proposed Model**

## **East Renfrewshire's Promise Board Model**

This paper outlines who will be involved, why the Board is to be established, what purpose it will fulfil, and when, where and how often it will meet.

- 1) Who  
The Promise Board Composition
- 2) Why  
Purpose, Remit, and Strategic Links
- 3) When  
Nature of Engagement, How Often and Where

## 1.) Who

### The Promise Board Composition

1. Expert Co Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with Lived Experience
2. Council Membership– Chief Officers, Community Planning Partners, and Elected Members

#### 1. Expert Co-Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with lived experience

##### Lived Experience Promise Champions

- Young Person(s) from Champions Board (**Co Chair alongside Chief Executive**)
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young person
- Parent
- Kinship Carer
- Foster Carer
- Additional representatives with Lived Experience will be invited dependant on agenda.

#### 2. Council Membership

##### A. East Renfrewshire Council and HSCP Promise Champions:

- Chief Executive (East Renfrewshire Council) **Board Co Chair alongside a member of the Champions Board.**
- Chief Officer (East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership)
- Director of Education (East Renfrewshire Council)
- Director Of Environment (East Renfrewshire Council)
- Chief Social Work Officer (East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership)
- Other members of the Leadership Team will be invited dependant on agenda.

##### B. East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership Promise Champions:

- Chief Executive (East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd)
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration - Principal Reporter
- Children's Hearing Scotland – Tribunal Delivery Manager
- Police Scotland – Area Commander
- Chief Executive- Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire

##### C. East Renfrewshire Council Elected Members Promise Champions:

- Elected members with interest and commitment to the Promise Board

### **Support to Children, Young People, and Families to Participate**

East Renfrewshire's Champions Board has been supported by a core group of young people over an 8 year period who have used their lived experience to inform practice and help develop services across East Renfrewshire. The young champions will be an integral part of creating a Promise Board, using their skills and experience to shape its development. A member of the Champions Board would have a role as co-chair of the Promise Board and would link in with the wider group of care experienced young people. As an established group our Champions Board will continue to meet to offer support to each other and develop ideas and themes to take forward to the Promise Board. The intent is that the Promise Board will be the decision making and dynamic forum where young people and their adult champions come together to heed the actions to keep the Promise. The Champions Board young people request that a senior member of staff, such as the Chief Executive, share the chair of the Promise Board to reflect the importance and status of the position.

In line with The Promise, we must ensure that we are inclusive and consider the experiences of younger children, those with additional support needs, parents and carers. Staff across East Renfrewshire Council and the wider partnership support children, young people, and families with lived experience through a variety of successful and inclusive participation groups. We will utilise these existing groups and ensure that their voices are represented by asking a member of each group to be part of the Expert Co Production Reference Group. This would be supported by the Participation and Rights Lead and the Transformation and Redesign Programme Lead. These two posts are the crucial drivers in supporting the work of the Promise Board and members. This will ensure that a wide variety of views and experiences are considered as we take action to ensure we keep The Promise in East Renfrewshire.

### **Preparing the Promise Champions**

The three tier Promise Workforce Learning Programme will be ready prior to the launch of the Board. Tier 1 is available to the general workforce across East Renfrewshire Council via an e learning module. Tier 2 will be available to senior leaders and all elected members and will take place as a full day event in February 2025. Tier 3 will be a bespoke session for members of the Promise Board which will be crucial to ensure members are prepared and understanding of their role as Promise Champions.

## 2.) Why - Purpose, Remit, and Strategic Links

### Board Purpose

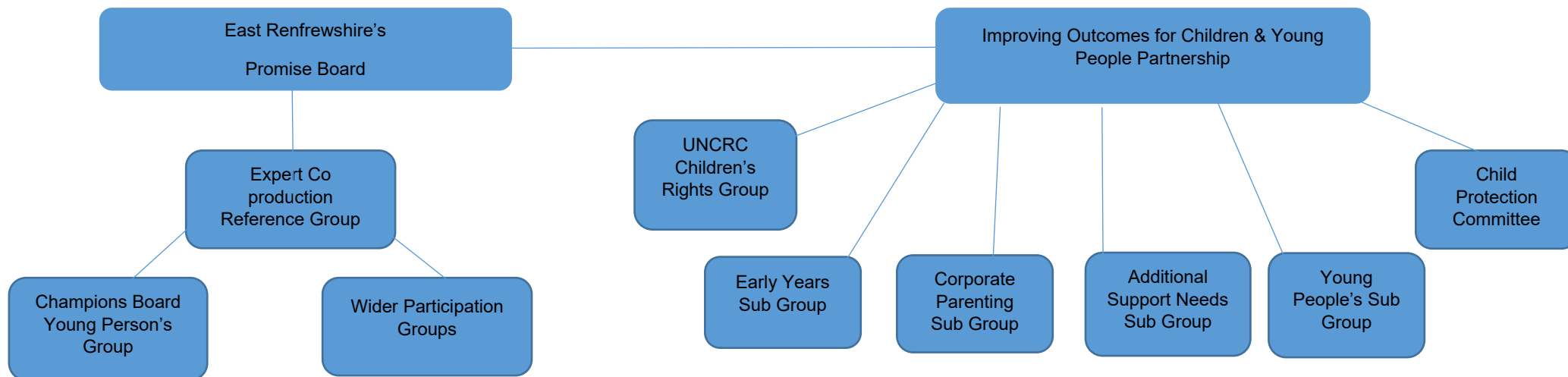
1. Ensure East Renfrewshire keeps The Promise by 2030.
2. Enable the voice of children and young people with lived experience of the care system, to be at the centre of decision-making and service design.
3. To create an environment where those with lived experience can work in partnership with decision makers to progress The Promise in a meaningful and effective way.

### Remit

1. Those with lived experience will represent their peers and work in partnership with Promise Champions to ensure that their voices are integral to the implementation of the Promise.
2. The Promise Board members will steer strategic and operational direction of the Council to deliver on The Promise.

### Strategic Links

The new Board activity will be linked to the overall work of the East Renfrewshire Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership Structure and will report through the East Renfrewshire Children’s Plan statutory Annual Report arrangements.



### **3) When - Nature of Engagement, How Often and Where**

#### **Formal Launch Event**

It is proposed that the new Board be formally launched in early 2025.

#### **Get To Know You Sessions**

The Promise Board *Get to Know You* Development Sessions: The Promise Champions will have an opportunity to meet the Expert Co-Production Reference Group - Children, Young People, and Families with Lived Experience in order to better get to know each other and facilitate understanding.

#### **Board Meetings**

The Promise Board will meet every six months. The meetings will be at strategically important times of the year that link to higher level strategic reporting across the Council, HSCP, and Community Planning Partnership in order that progress updates on local implementation of The Promise can be considered by the new Board.

The planning, coordination and facilitation of the meetings will be supported by the Participation and Rights Lead.

#### **Fun Participation Events**

Children and young people's fun events spread throughout the year will take place where the corporate parenting family will have a chance to meet a wider groups of people with lived experience.



## East Renfrewshire's Promise Workforce Learning Programme Proposal 2024-2026

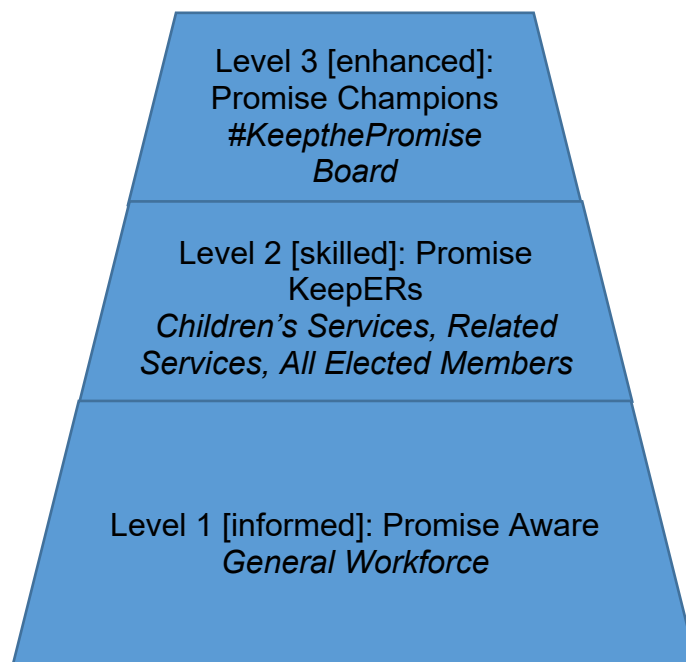
### Objective

As part of East Renfrewshire's commitment to #KeepThePromise we are committed to upskilling the workforce, to understand the role they could play in achieving this ambition by 2030; the date by which the Promise should be implemented by. The Promise requires building capacity in the children's services workforce and other relevant services, to raise awareness of the changes required, to act upon these changes in practice and to champion The Promise in all aspects of our work.

### Tiered Approach to Delivery of the Promise Workforce Learning Programme

Who Cares? Scotland have been funded by the Scottish Government to develop learning opportunities and offer support for corporate parents in their efforts to deliver The Promise. Over recent months we have worked collaboratively with them to do this. They are able to assist with the development of the training materials and intend to use a combination of existing resources and East Renfrewshire specific content to make a bespoke package.

Training opportunities will be targeted as follows:



## **Multi Agency Access and Delivery**

In addition to collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland the programme will be shaped by those with lived experience of the care system who will assist with content and delivery where appropriate. The engagement of young people in this way will be particularly important in terms of the development and understanding of the Promise Champions and their role in leading the new #KeepthePromise Board.

The training that will be made available is not mandatory. However, tier 1 will be regarded as recommended for all and tier 2 recommended for those who work in HSCP Children Services, Adult Services, ERC services including Education, Housing, Employability, Young Persons Services, and HR. The e-learning module will be implemented first and uptake and completion of this tier will be monitored and reviewed. Tiers 2 and 3, to be implemented next with a 'tried and tested' approach, before full implementation and consideration for 'training for trainer' approach. NHSGGC training systems will be utilised to ensure health colleagues can access the e-learning module.

Running parallel ERC Education Services will be introducing the Keeping The Promise Awards programme that will involve the roll out of a bespoke learning programme across early years settings and schools for teachers, support staff and establishment leaders.

## **Evaluation and Future Development**

Feedback from participants and those that deliver will be evaluated to determine how useful the training materials are and ensure that content is current and relevant and the right staff are accessing the levels available to them. As the Promise nationally publish their next plan we will cross check to ensure our learning programme is revised accordingly.

October 2024