
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

13th June 2023

Cabinet

Title: Corporate Parenting Plan and The Promise 3 Years On

Purpose: To update Cabinet on the ongoing work within North Ayrshire to develop the Corporate Parenting Plan and to deliver “The Promise” to our Children and Young People.

Recommendation:

1. Note the progress in North Ayrshire to lay the foundations in Phase 1 of The Promise delivery plan which will then enable us to deliver on the ambitions 10 year change plan to 2030.
2. Note North Ayrshire’s The Promise: Three Years on Progress Report (2020-2023), our achievements to date and next steps.
3. Note North Ayrshire’s first Promise Conference report and key actions to be progressed.
4. Note the Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-26 co-designed by Care Experienced Young People

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 North Ayrshire has welcomed the findings of the Independent Care review and subsequent publication of the “The Promise” and the call to action that lies within. We are committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and families in our North Ayrshire communities and recognise that, whilst progress has been made in the first three years, there are many areas we will continue to develop and improve over the next 7 years of this 10 year ambitious change plan.
- 1.2 Substantial work has been undertaken to lay the foundations to deliver on The Promise. The Promise: Three Years On Summary Report (2020-2023), included as Appendix 1, provides an update on the progress that has been made both locally and nationally and the areas of focus between now and March 2024 and beyond. The calls for action in The Promise are significant and involve whole system and culture change with an agreed timeframe of no later than 2030.
- 1.3 The progress report sets out how the foundations have been laid in North Ayrshire for the delivery of The Promise including governance and oversight arrangements,

engagement activities across services with young people and the workforce, capacity and resources to support engagement and practice change.

1.4 Key achievements and progress in North Ayrshire are measured against the five priority areas of:

- A Good Childhood
- Whole Family Support
- Supporting the Workforce
- Planning
- Building Capacity

1.5 The funding available to realise the full ambitions of The Promise is unclear at this stage. To date funding has been allocated via the Children's Services Planning Partnership through the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF). North Ayrshire's allocation is £959k, which is multi-year funding for the lifetime of the parliament. Whilst this funding is welcome, there remains a risk that the scale and pace of change locally could be constrained by resources being made available to deliver, for example, the transfer of resources to early intervention services and approaches rather than crisis intervention.

1.6 Every three years the Scottish Government requires a report on our activities surrounding Corporate Parenting and based on our Corporate Parenting Plan. Our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) has been co-designed by Care Experienced Young People and addresses their priorities and commitments we have made to them. All the priorities and actions lead to the fulfilment of the Promise.

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Government announced in 2016 that an independent, root and branch review of Scotland's care system would be undertaken, following extensive lobbying from care experienced people and advocacy organisations. Commencing in 2017, the review examined the underpinning legislation, practices, culture and ethos of the care system. The Care Review concluded at the end of March 2020 with the publication of "The Promise".

2.2 The National Independent Care Review heard that Scotland needed to change how it cares for children, young people and their families and concluded that the care system required a radical overhaul. "[The Promise](#)" was subsequently developed; consisting of 80 changes to support the whole system redesign required and narrating a vision for Scotland. Built on five foundations of Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding, it made a promise that all children in Scotland will grow up loved, safe and respected. The calls for action in The Promise are significant and involve whole system change with an agreed timeframe of no later than by 2030.

2.3 The Promise is a large-scale, complex, 10-year change programme with multiple objectives and interlinked activities across multiple partners. As we know, building for the future takes time. To maximise impact and ensure sustainability of approach, a firm foundation needed to be built to give assurance of governance and accountability; to allow all partners to be clear of their own, and collective, roles and responsibilities which will enable a solid platform to build all future developments.

2.4 The timeline below provides a high-level illustration of the implementation of the plan by 2030 and the expectations at each phase of delivery:

Years Two to Four: Bedding Down (April 2021 to March 2024)

- Early intervention and prevention will become standard with obsolescence of crisis services commenced.
- The necessary legislative reform will be underway to make sure The Rules are enabling.
- A practice and culture change programme will be embedded.

Years Five to Seven: Consolidation (April 2024–March 2027)

- A midpoint review of The Plan will be carried out to ensure pace and performance is on track.
- The Promise will be being realised and the impact felt by children and families.

Years Eight to Ten: Continuous improvement (April 2027–March 2030)

- All targets will be achieved.
- The majority of crisis services will have become obsolete.
- The Promise will be delivered across Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding.
- The independent oversight body will cease to exist, giving way to a new standard of care.

2.5 The National Promise Team has published a [National Plan for 2021-2024](#) and the Promise '[Change One Programme](#)' highlighting the expectations around what should be accomplished by 2024 which is illustrated below:



- 2.6 Building this foundation and the subsequent scaffolding around the change programme has been the major focus for North Ayrshire in the last three years. It must be recognised that the first 16 months of implementing Phase 1 of The Promise actions coincided with the global Covid pandemic, therefore opportunities to progress change during this time were limited. That being said, North Ayrshire had a good foundation on which to build given our multi-agency commitment to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) over a number of years. To make sure we 'get it right' for North Ayrshire's care experienced community, we need to be clear of the linkages between different parts of the system, the intended and unintended impact of introducing new ways of working, and making sure the child, young person and their families are central to this.
- 2.7 The Promise sets out a clear commitment for all corporate parents to have an enhanced understanding of the experiences of those who have spent time in care and to drive forward the findings and recommendations. Moreover, delivery of The Promise sits alongside the commitment to incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), North Ayrshire's Child Poverty Strategy, the Children Services Plan and work in relation to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Delivery and progress with all these plans require multi-agency working across a number of partners and there are further reports presented to the Council which contribute to the delivery of the Council's commitment to The Promise, for example the annual report presented to Cabinet in relation to Educational Attainment for care experienced children and the Child Poverty Action Plan.
- 2.8 Every three years the Scottish Government requires a report on our activities surrounding Corporate Parenting and based on our Corporate Parenting Plan. The Scottish Government does not receive the Corporate Parenting Plan and it is used to guide our work locally.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026), included as Appendix 2, has been co-designed by Care Experienced Young People and addresses their priorities and commitments we have made to them. All the priorities and actions lead to the fulfilment of the Promise. The actions associated with the plan are highlighted in The Promise Three Year On report under Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding.

3. Proposals

The Promise: Three Years on Report Impact and Highlights

- 3.1 The Promise – Three Years On Summary Report 2020-23, included as Appendix 1, provides Cabinet with an update on specific pieces of work completed and planned to further take forward the Promise as set out by the 5 priority areas. Services are proud of the work taken forward, despite the challenges faced, in the last three years. Key highlights include:
- There has been a 15% decrease in the number of Looked After and Accommodated children and young people in North Ayrshire across all care settings.
 - Health and Social Care are implementing the Signs of Safety approach, taking a rights-based approach to fully align with the principles and shift in culture and practice required to deliver on the ambitions of The Promise. 'Signs of Safety' being

a relationship-based model working within the context of child welfare and protection. The approach develops a shared and explicit understanding between professionals and families of where the risk from harm lies, in what set of circumstances it may arise and how these risks will be mitigated through effective safety planning.

- There has been a significant increase in the number of young people requesting Continuing Care and we have a significant increase in the number of care experienced young people in college, university and training/employment and sustaining these places.
- We have extended our Family Wellbeing Service to compliment the work already in place from the Rosemount Project. This has had a positive impact on the numbers of children and young people being received into care.
- A number of sporting support, engagement and mentoring events have removed any barriers to care experienced young people accessing sport and physical activity.
- We have employed a 'Dad's Worker' to improve the visibility and voice of dads in our early year's service.
- A Welfare Rights Officer has been appointed to work with families to deliver welfare rights services and signpost to other support services in 7 of North Ayrshire Council's Secondary Schools, more than £468k has been secured for families in the past year.
- Education have employed a Home Tutor to provide one to one tuition for care experienced young people.
- A care experienced housing officer is in place to be a single point of contact for Care Experienced Young People, improving the housing service and minimising their need to repeat their story to multiple people.
- Planning is well underway for our first care experienced Joint Cabinet in June.
- Health and Social Care have developed and implemented their 'Keeping Sisters and Brothers Together' policy (a key focus of the Promise). 73% of Sibling Groups are together in the same living environment.
- There has been a 10.7% increase in young people in kinship care placements which firmly aligns with our 'family first' approach.
- A Communications Plan continues to ensure key messages and progress related to The Promise are shared across wide-ranging partners. Over 150 workshops and presentations have already been delivered by the Corporate Parenting Team to over 100 strategic and practice groups within the Community Planning Partnership, Promise Champions, third sector partners and individual agencies.

3.2 Chapter 5 in the Promise Report outlines proposed actions for 2023-2026, highlighting those which we specifically want to achieve during 2023 and those which are for future years. The actions and outcomes are set against the National Call to Action and the Voices of our Young People and have also been informed by the feedback from the Annual Promise Conference.

Annual Promise Conference

3.3 In November 2022 we held our first Annual Promise Conference with Care Experienced Young People, Senior Leaders from across the Community Planning Partnership, Government officials including the Minister for Children and Young People and the

CEO's of the Promise Scotland and Children's First. This was the first conference of this kind in Scotland and the voices of the Care Experienced community were heard and actions from the conference will support the development of our future plans.

- 3.4 Of the 130 delegates 23 were carers and care experienced young people. The conference focused on relationships, voice and the UNCRC, and family support. The full report from the Conference, which can be accessed in the Promise 3 Years On report, captures the views of our Care Experienced young people, in addition there were over 300 comments from Senior Leaders that on the whole chimed with the views of our Young People.
- 3.5 The feedback from the conference highlighted important suggestions from our delegates, including:
- Relationships – Sustainable relationships are critical to wellbeing, and this should be encouraged by providing time, safe spaces, and workers with the attributes they highlighted. Relationships should be sustained even if a worker moves and through transitions, whether at school, living arrangements, or to adult services.
 - Voice and the UNCRC – Children, Young People and families' voices are important in their individual journeys and collectively to effect change. The delegates called for young people's forums and groups to plan and comment on new policy and practice changes. They want more awareness around the UNCRC and to tackle stigma for the care experienced community.
 - Family Support – Delivered at an earlier stage and is community based so that relationships can be strengthened. Services should do be more open to sharing resources and responsibilities, with collaboration at an earlier stage.
- 3.6 In May 2023 we had our first Practitioners Promise Conference with front line staff from across the Community Planning Partnership.

Governance

- 3.7 Our Corporate Parenting Steering Group and Promise Operational Group (PrOG) continue to ensure consistency and involvement across partners at a strategic and operational level. These forums include all key strategic partners, frontline staff and care experienced individuals and have met regularly throughout the last three years. The Corporate Parenting Steering Group meets once every three months and is attended by Senior Managers.
- 3.8 The PrOG meets every six weeks and is attended by front line managers, front line staff and six care experienced young people; one of whom co-chairs the meetings. It has four sub-groups and we continue to progress work around:
- Language and Communications
 - Alternative Care
 - Trauma Informed Practice, and
 - Data and Discovery Mapping

Each of these sub-groups have agreed their own priorities.

- 3.9 To ensure we listen and engage our workforce, a Promise Champion's Group has been established. They are linked together by our SharePoint site and through a number of face to face activities. Each Team and service area has been asked to nominate a Champion from their team to join this support and consultation network. At present we have 25 Promise Champions across wide-ranging partners.

Summary

- 3.10 There has been positive progress made in relation delivering Phase 1 of The Promise over the past three years. The foundations have been laid for progressing the change required to 2030 which will radically redesign the whole care system. Our data, both qualitative and quantitative, shows we are making a positive impact and we will continue to drive changes in line with what our needs are at a local level and the 10 year change plan. Local activity has focused on putting strong foundations in place regarding our partnership approaches, hosting the first of our annual conferences and securing multi-agency and multi-disciplinary commitment to key actions and outcomes. A number of service and practice developments are underway and links have been made with other major projects and programmes which are related to care experienced children and young people both locally and nationally.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 The report details specific funding received to date. Further financial implications are likely and expected as services undergo various stages of re-design to meet our commitment to The Promise. Financial implications will be identified at the earliest stage in planning and development processes as our work towards achieving The Promise actions are progressed. There is a significant risk of realising the full ambitions of The Promise if the system is not sufficiently resourced or funded to respond and change.

Human Resources

- 4.2 There will be an impact on staff as we reframe how some of our services support care experienced children and young people, for example changes required to professional practice. The specifics of this will be clarified as more detailed plans emerge.

Legal

- 4.3 Unknown at this time however it is likely that legislation will follow as The Promise contains the commitment to legislative reform.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 The vision of The Promise seeks to address the inequality of outcome experienced by our children and young people who have been or are in the care system. If the ambitions of The Promise are realised, not only will there be improved outcomes but also a reduction, and ideally, an elimination of the inequity that exists between care experienced children and young people and children and young people with no experience of care.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 Implementation of The Promise aligns to the following priorities:

- North Ayrshire's vision that Children and young people experience the best start in life.
- North Ayrshire's residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing ensuring our communities are inclusive for all.
- Community Planning Partnership strategic vision of: Working together to improve well-being, prosperity and equity in North Ayrshire, through Aspiring Communities and Inspiring Place.
- Implementation of The Promise is a key ambition of the HSCP Tackling Inequalities Strategic Commissioning Plan 2022-2030: Caring Together.
- The Promise features heavily as part of North Ayrshire's work to tackle poverty.
- The Promise is a key aspect of the work of NHS Ayrshire and Arran's Corporate Parenting Steering Group, Corporate Parenting Taskforce, Infant Children and Young People's Board and Poverty Taskforce.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 As evidenced within this paper and throughout North Ayrshire's The Promise - Three Years On report, ensuring the voices of care experienced children, young people and their families is integral to the delivery of The Promise in North Ayrshire. We have described many examples of where young people have been at the heart of decision making, including through the governance arrangements locally, and also in service developments such as recruitment processes. This will continue and be an integral part of delivery of North Ayrshire's commitment to The Promise. The delivery of The Promise does not sit in isolation and also cannot be delivered by North Ayrshire Council alone, delivery and progress with plans requires multi-agency working across a number of partners, who have been involved in taking forward the work and progress to date.

Caroline Cameron
Director HSCP

For further information please contact **Elizabeth Stewart, Interim Head of Service, Children, Families and Justice**, on **01294 317727**.

Background Papers

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Appendices

1. North Ayrshire's The Promise Three Years on Report (2020-2023)
2. Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-2026

North Ayrshire

The Promise - Three Years On

Summary Report on Progress 2020-2023



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Three years ago, the National Independent Care Review heard that Scotland needed to change how it cares for children, young people, and their families, and concluded that the care system required a radical overhaul:

“The Promise” was subsequently developed consisting of 80 changes to support a whole system redesign. Since then, the National Promise Team have published a National Plan for 2021-2024 and the Promise ‘Change One Programme’, highlighting their expectations around what should be accomplished by 2024.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership (NA CPP) has welcomed The Promise. We are committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and families in our North Ayrshire communities and recognise that, whilst progress has been made in the first three years, there are many areas we will continue to develop, evolve, and improve in the years to come.

Underpinning all our work are the five foundations on which The Promise must be built:

Voice – Family – Care – People – Scaffolding

As well as considering progress around scaffolding and governance, we will describe some of the work that has been taken forward locally.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

Prior to and upon the publication of The Promise North Ayrshire has made considerable progress in improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people and their families. We are confident that:

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles and values are embedded in all that we do; our workforce recognises our children and young people are the most important people in our communities.

Partnership working is embedded in our operational and strategic efforts through our Corporate Parenting Steering Group. This is not just across the Corporate Partnership but also in partnership with young people and our care experienced networks.

Our dedicated Corporate Parenting Team was established to support the participation of young people but has widened its remit to the implementation of The Promise, taking forward policy developments and to ensure collaboration between Corporate Parents.

We have strong partnership working across all public services, including Community Planning Partners and third sector (highlighted as a strength in our recent Children's Services Inspection).

Our partnership strengths have resulted in –

- **A focus on prevention and early intervention programmes.**
- **Co-locating the workforce from different disciplines to reduce silo working.**
- **Listening and responding to parents at a pace that is right for them.**

This has contributed to a reduced use of external living arrangements, and we have developed policies that provide better housing and financial support to care experienced young adults in North Ayrshire.

The Promise is a large-scale, complex, 10-year change programme with multiple objectives across multiple partners. For North Ayrshire to realise the asks of The Promise, all our partners need to be clear on respective roles and responsibilities as a foundation for future development. Building this foundation alongside our key partners and strengthening the scaffolding around the change programme has been the major focus for North Ayrshire in the last three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted our ability to progress our ambitions as originally planned. There were reduced opportunities to work alongside children and young people. Despite this, we have included them when it was safe to do so, and our partners have remained strongly committed to progressing The Promise and have sought out creative and innovative ways to overcome some of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

It is also important to highlight The Promise does not sit in isolation: it sits alongside North Ayrshire's commitment to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); our Children's Services Plan; core elements of our 2017-2020 Corporate Parenting Plan and our planned Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-2026; (Appendix 1), North Ayrshire's Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan; and work in relation to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

Corporate Parenting Plan 2023 -2026

Every three years the Scottish Government requires a report on our activities surrounding Corporate Parenting and based on our Corporate Parenting Plan. The Scottish Government does not receive the Corporate Parenting Plan and it is used to guide our work locally.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan (2023-2026) has been co-designed by Care Experienced Young People and addresses their priorities and commitments we have made to them. All the priorities and actions lead to the fulfilment of the Promise. The actions associated with the plan are highlighted in this report under Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding and are documented on a separate document that will be used for monitoring actions.

CHAPTER 3: SCAFFOLDING AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The support that young people and families need to ensure they prosper and thrive is identified by The Promise as Scaffolding and is one of The Promise's Foundation Principles. We have accomplished the following:

- Engaged with children and young people and involved them in discussions.
- Employed a full time Participation and Engagement Lead
- Employed a full time Corporate Parenting Youth Worker
- Appointed a Part time Temporary Participation Assistant
- Agreed the Governance arrangements to ensure partnership approach and accountability internally and with our partners.
- Developed a Promise Operational Group (PrOG) and sub-groups to drive priorities.

A Steering Group and Promise Operational Group (PrOG) have been established to ensure consistency and involvement across the Partnership at a strategic and operational level.

The Promise Operational Group is attended by operational staff. There are four PrOG sub-groups. These are:

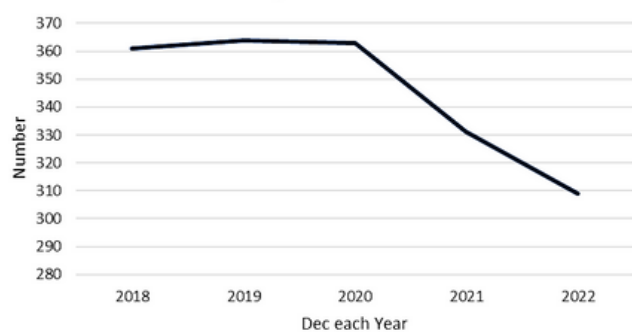
1. Communication and Language
2. Alternatives to Care
3. Trauma Informed
4. Data and Discovery Mapping

Promise Operational Sub-Group Priorities for 2023

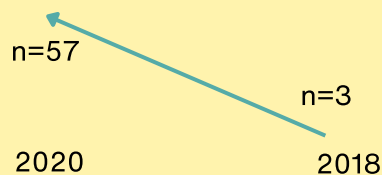
Language and Communication	Alternative Care	Trauma Informed	Data and Discovery Mapping
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Multi-agency, cross partnership Social Media Platform. 2. 'A Talk about Language Day' which will be linked to our Champion Board's 'Anti-Discrimination and Stigma Policy' for Corporate Parents and the associated campaign. 3. Have a greater representation of care experienced young people on the Youth Council and Executive Groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop interactive materials to reduce the anxiety of a child or young person when they are first looked after. 2. Develop a Quality Assurance Framework around the Family Finding activity when a child or young person needs to be looked after away from home. 3. Work with Barnardo's and MCR Pathways to investigate a sustainable mentoring model for those in alternative care. 4. Align more services to prevention and early intervention to prevent children and young people coming into the care system. 5. Look into wrap-around support for families who need it. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the benefits of rolling out a training programme for 'Dyadic Developmental Practice.' 2. Conduct research across the Partnership to ascertain level of knowledge, understanding and training. 3. Roll out of trauma aware and trauma skilled resources, training and consider language and environments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mapping early intervention services and recommending actions. 2. Data Mapping across multi-partnerships.

Trends and Impact

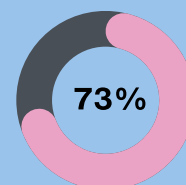
Away from Home



In the last 4 years there has been a significant increase in numbers of young people requesting continuing care.



As of January 2023, 53 of the 73 sibling groups were together at their latest place of residence.

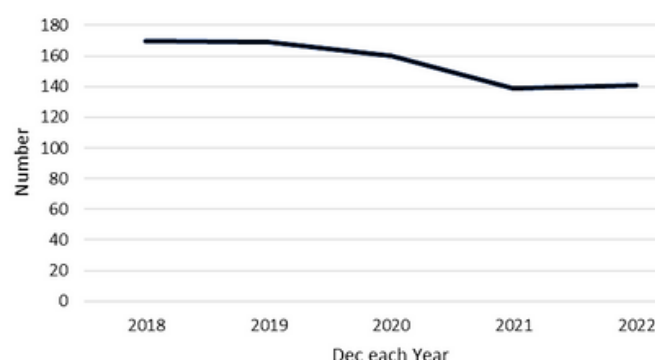


14% (n= 52) reduction in CYP looked after away from home



In the last three years there has been a **10.7%** increase in young people in kinship care placements.

At Home

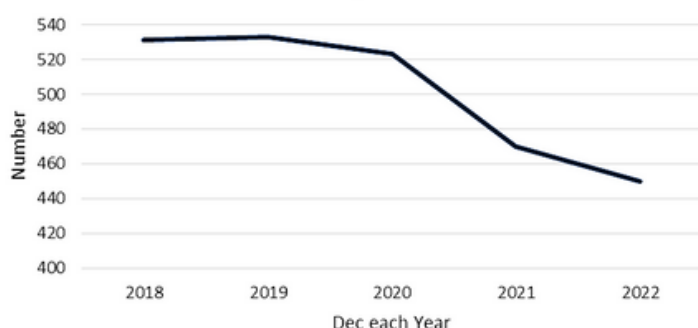


17% (n = 29) reduction in CYP looked after at home

Lowest number of Looked After in 4 years with a positive trend.

15% reduction in Children Looked After over 4 years across all care settings.

Number of Looked After Children and Young People



15% (n = 81) reduction in total numbers of looked after CYP

Family Wellbeing Service:

From November 2021 to the end of June 2022, the FCWS took 69 requests, with 54 of these (78%) being made from the beginning of January 2022.

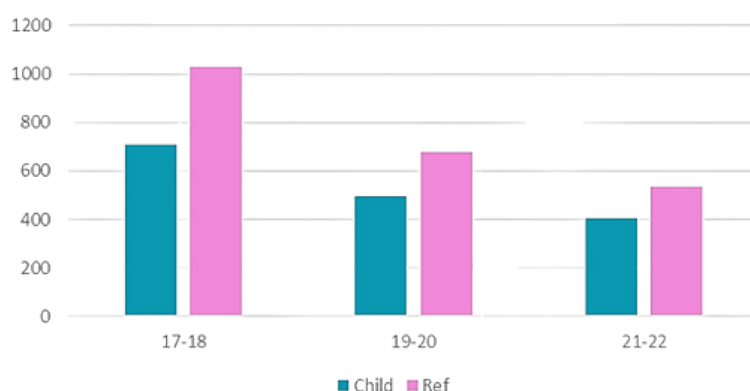
The service currently operates in the Irvine and Three Towns localities, as part of a test for change.

Our new, purpose-built respite facilities for children, young people and adults in North Ayrshire with additional support needs were officially opened in October 2022.

Over the last three years there has been a significant reduction in the number of children being referred to the Children's Reporter. The number of referrals includes where a child has been referred more than once.

Although further analysis is required our early intervention strategy is thought to be having a positive impact.

North Ayrshire Children's Hearing Referrals



CHAPTER 4: ACHIEVEMENTS

Whilst not an exhaustive list some specific examples of achievements and actions to date across delivery partners as part of the bedding down phase are highlighted below:

- Education services continue to focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap and raising the educational attainment and achievement of care experienced children and young people, including through nurture.
- Education have employed an additional Home Tutor to provide one to one tuition for care experienced children and young people.
- The Corporate Parenting Team have provided summer activities and wellbeing days for care experienced children, young people, parents and carers .
- Provision of employability support for care experienced people through group work sessions and one to one support with resilience, interview skills and employability skills.
- All teams and departments have appointed a Promise Champion to be the central point of contact for all consultations, views and to disseminate information and developments to their teams. A 'Promise Champions' network has been established and has 25 Champions as members.
- Offering mental health and wellbeing support for care experienced young people through Mental Health Project workers, this has included full mapping of mental health services and group work/ one to one sessions.
- A Welfare Rights Officer has been appointed to work with families to deliver welfare rights services and signpost to other support services in 7 of North Ayrshire Council's Secondary Schools, more than £468k has been secured for families in the past year with £506k since the project commenced
- The Signs of Safety model and Safe and Together models are currently being implemented across Health and Social Care and wider partners. Both models take a rights-based approach and fully align with the principles and shift in culture and practice required to deliver on the ambitions of The Promise. 'Signs of Safety' being a relationship-based model working within the context of child welfare and protection. The approach develops a shared and explicit understanding between professionals and families of where the risk from harm lies, in what set of circumstances it may arise and how these risks will be mitigated through effective safety planning.
- A care experienced housing officer is in place to be a single point of contact for Care Experienced Young People, improving the housing service and minimising their need to repeat their story to multiple people.
- The Active Schools Team work closely with key school staff to target care experienced young people to access all sport and physical activity opportunities, both in the school environment and their local communities.
- Care experienced young people are embedded within the Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy with the inclusion of young people from the Champions Board as part of our Executive Youth Council, Joint Youth Forum Meetings and other voice and rights structures.
- Our Champions Board* have produced an Anti-Discrimination and Stigma Policy for Corporate Parents.
- The Family Centred Wellbeing Service was introduced in October 2021 and is a collaborative partnership between the Health and Social Care Partnership and Education. The service is predicated on early intervention approaches.

**Our Champions Board are a group of care experienced young people who come together weekly to affect change in the 'care system'.*

- Dartington Research was commissioned to speak to practitioners in Health and Social Care and Education regarding our current strengths and next steps in achieving the Promise.
- We have increased the number of children and young people involved in strategic and operational groups.

"Being involved in the PrOG has allowed me to feel listened to for the first time by people who make changes that affect my life."

Young Person in one of our Groups

- Bi-monthly staff briefings have been circulated to staff across the Partnership, updating on progress and new developments.
- We have now carried out over 100 awareness raising session that has helped individuals, teams, managers and policy forums to better understand The Promise. We also have a bi-monthly staff newsletter.
- We held a 'Cost of the School Day' conference to look at mitigating the impact the cost of the school day has on families and individuals' finances.
- Care experienced young people have had a crucial part in interviews for new Health and Social Care staff where that role could potentially impact of the lives of the care experienced community.

"It's welcoming to be involved in shaping the future workforce and services while enhancing my own interview skills."

Young Person involved in interviews

- Our Champions Board have drafted a Glossary of preferred terms to be used when describing the 'Care System' to be used in paperwork, meetings, and written material.

"The Champions Board has helped me in a way no other group could. It has made me realise that being care experienced isn't a bad thing that I should be ashamed of. Being part of the board has helped me recover who I am again, and the members have supported me through thick and thin. It's given me opportunities I didn't think I would ever get."

Champions Board member

- Our Champions Board have started to work with developers to create a 'North Ayrshire Care Experienced App', to help inform their community of supports, opportunities and information.
- The Hasta Barista project was launched at the Promise Conference. Hasta Barista is based at Meadowcroft in Irvine and allows young people aged from 14 to 26 to achieve an industry recognised certificate in barista skills that will enable them to seek employment in hospitality settings.
- The voices of the Care Experienced community were heard at our Annual Promise Conference. A Conference report (Appendix 2), has been written with recommendations.

The annual Promise Conference focused on relationships, voice and the UNCRC, and family support. The report from the Conference captures the views of our Care Experienced young people, however there were over 300 comments from Senior Leaders that on the whole chimed with the views of our Young People. The feedback from the conference highlighted important suggestions from our delegates: and summarised here-

- Relationships – Sustainable relationships are critical to wellbeing, and this should be encouraged by providing time, safe spaces, and workers with the attributes they highlighted. Relationships should be sustained even if a worker moves and through transitions, whether at school, living arrangements, or to adult services.
- Voice and the UNCRC – Children, Young People and families' voices are important in their individual journeys and collectively to effect change. The delegates called for young people's forums and groups to plan and comment on new policy and practice changes. They want more awareness around the UNCRC and to tackle stigma for the care experienced community.
- Family Support – Delivered at an earlier stage and is community based so that relationships can be strengthened. Services should do be more open to sharing resources and responsibilities, collaborating at an earlier stage.

CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS

Actions 2023-2026 –We have set a number of outcomes we specifically want to achieve in 2023. (These are indicated beside each action below). All other actions will be initiated in 2023 and will have a target set for coming years. These are set against the National calls for action and our own young people's voices.

Voice:

Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved actively listening and responding to what children want and need.

National Call to Action

- All care experienced children and their families will have access to independent advocacy at all stages of their experience of care.
- Advocacy provision will follow the principles set out in the promise.
- Care experienced children and young people will be able to easily access child centred legal advice and representation.
- There will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation

Local Actions

- Engagement activities and the outcomes of these are included in plans and are reported and evaluated.
- The planning and delivery of the priorities and actions are being taking forward and the co-design of services and supports is in place.
- We gather views and experiences as part of the process to redesign services and supports for care experienced children and young people.
- The tools and resources are developed, applied, and reported on. This includes: • Having your say • Care experienced app. **(2023)**
- The 'Each and Every' child toolkit is used to reframe the care experienced journey.
- We will publish and implement our Anti-Discrimination and Stigma Policy. **(2023)**
- We will increase the number of children, young people, and their families through participation activities.
- Advocacy is available to all children and young people who need it.
- We will ensure Children's Rights are promoted

Our Young People said:

- Review of UNCRC training delivered to a range of partners. i.e the workforce, Care experienced children and young people, carers, and members of the public.
- Explore the concept of having 'Rights Champions' within teams, departments, services etc
- Review 'Children's Rights' training and awareness raising within schools and the use of PSE lessons.
- Explore the idea of Care Experience being a protected characteristic
- Replace the 'Having your say' form.
- We need spaces to be developed and enabled to bring together many voices, either at school, groups, or forums.
- Develop communications to help people to know how to connect with and hear young people activities around separate consultations
- Explore the possibility of streamlining communications, engagements, and consultations

- Explore the idea of having Young People's committees to engage with services. (These forums could be used for services to share their draft policies, give feedback, and take questions to professionals.
- Develop tools that indicate that children and young people have been involved in the co-design of strategies, policy, or practice changes.
- Explore having young people having a role in recruitment and appraisal.

Family:

Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay there – families must be given support to nurture their children and young people to help them overcome any difficulties.

National Call to Action:

- Decisions about transitions for young care experienced people who move onto independent living or need to return to a caring environment, will be made based on individual need.
- Each young care experienced adult will experience their transition as consistent, caring, integrated and focussed on their needs, not on 'age of services' criteria.
- The 10 principles of intensive family support will be embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning, and delivery) of all organisations that support children and their families, directly or indirectly.
- There will be a consistent, national approach to ensure there are places in every community for parents of young children to meet other local parents, to stay and play with children, get support and advice.
- Scotland's family support services will feel and be experienced as integrated to those who use them.
- All families will have direct and clear access to family therapies and specific support across a range of issues, so that accessing support is seen as something that a range of families may need throughout life.
- Scotland will have a national, strategic planning process in place that ensures that children who are cared for away from their family of origin 'belong to a loving home'. The planning process will reflect the needs of Scotland's children and young people whilst operating with the expectation that more children will remain with their families

Local Actions

- Further develop the refreshed GIRFEC early identification processes through multi-agency teams working across local areas.
 - Develop clear options for early intervention family support, based on Family Support Principles and including parenting approaches.
 - Develop an understanding of the association of poverty and neglect and the impact on families.
 - Information surrounding identifiable concerns are securely and appropriately shared between agencies to prevent escalation of concerns.
 - Continued roll out The Family Centred Wellbeing Service.
 - Continued implementation of Signs of Safety and Safe and Together models across the Health and Social Care Partnership and wider partners.
- (2023)**

Our Young People said:

- Review supports that are provided out of normal office hours

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.

National Call to Action

- There will be no barriers to 'contact' and children will be supported to have time with people they care about.
- Scotland will stop the practice of separating brothers and sisters, unless for reasons of safety
- Relationships between brothers and sisters will be cherished and protected across decision making and through the culture and values of the people who care for them.
- Housing pathways for care experienced young people will include a range of affordable options that are specifically tailored to their needs and preferences. Youth homelessness will be eradicated.

Our Young People said:

- Explore decision making in residential houses and the call to let young people to work together on boundaries.

Local Actions

- Ongoing training for all carers focussing on nurture and trauma. **(2023)**
- Targeted support to families when children and young people have been removed from their family with the objective of those children and young people returning to their care.
- North Ayrshire care experienced housing protocol covers all care sectors in line with legislative looked after definitions. **(2023)**
- All eligible young people are offered continuing care, and this is provided in line with current legislation. **(2023)**
- We will increase the number of children and young people coming back to North Ayrshire from external placements (where appropriate). **(2023)**
- The Alternate Care Group will progress their agreed actions These are :-
Develop interactive materials to reduce the anxiety of a child or young person when they are first looked after, Work with Barnardo's and MCR Pathways to investigate a sustainable mentoring model for those in alternative care, Align more services to prevention and early intervention to prevent children and young people coming into the care system, and Develop a Quality Assurance Framework around the Family Finding activity when a child or young person needs to be looked after away from home. **(2023)**

People:

Care for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, supporting all areas of care through listening and compassionate decision making.

National Call to Action

- The disproportionate criminalisation of care experienced children and young people will end.
- 16- and 17-year-olds will no longer be placed in Young Offenders Institutes for sentence or on remand
- There will be sufficient community-based alternatives so that detention is a last resort
- Children who do need to have their liberty restricted will be cared for in small, secure, trauma-informed environments that uphold their rights.
- All care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence, and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation.
- There will be a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework in place and adhered to by all organisations and professions involved in supporting children and their families.
- There will be no blanket policies or guidance that prevent the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them. Settings of care will be able to facilitate the protection of relationships that are important to children and young people
- A new framework of support will be in place to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision and environmental conditions
- Organisations with responsibilities towards children and families will be confident about when, where, why and how to share information with partners. Information sharing will not be a barrier to supporting children and families.

Local Actions

- We will increase the number of young adults with care experience who are connected with a significant adult to support them into a positive destination. **(2023)**
- Implement developing the Young Workforce projects for vulnerable young people, care experienced young people and those in the justice system. **(2023)**
- Promote the importance of maintaining stable, supportive relationships whilst ensuring safety of every person involved. **(2023)**
- Our workforce is supported and trained to support the changing needs of children, young people and their families.
- Our first of our Annual Promise Conferences was held in November 2022. We will organise another one in 2023 along with one mini conference aimed at front-line staff. **(2023)**
- Corporate Parenting induction e-learning module for all staff to be launched in 2023.
- Promote the importance of maintaining stable, supportive relationships whilst ensuring safety of every person involved.

Young People said:

- Explore ways that children and young people can maintain a relationship with a previous trusted adult.
- Review procedures/policy relating to relationships between workers and care experienced children and young people
- Identify 'safe spaces' for children and young people to meet as peers or with others they have a relationship with
- Explore the idea of children and young people choosing their good adult.
- Review of meetings, formal and informal to ensure the child or young persons 'trusted adults' as consistently represented.
- Develop a 'shadowing' or 'getting to know you' activities for all staff at all levels so they can get to know their young people
- Corporate Parenting duties to be included in all partners induction training.

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.

National Call to Action

- Every child that is 'in care' in Scotland will have access to intensive support that ensures their educational and health needs are fully met.
- Local Authorities and Health Boards will take active responsibility towards care experienced children and young people, whatever their setting of care, so they have what they need to thrive.
- Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school. There will be no barriers to their engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.
- Care experienced young people will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools.
- Schools will support and ensure care experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment.
- There will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation.
- The workforce will feel supported to respond to behaviour in a trauma informed way that reflects a deep understanding of the children in their care.

Our Young People said:

- Trauma aware training delivered to all levels of staff.

Local Actions

- Progress and roll out the refresh of GIRFEC Planning Pathways and continue delivery of staff briefings and guidance. **(2023)**
- Develop our practice to better integrate performance and measurement into planning and review of our workstreams.
- Support the workforce to better understand their Corporate Parenting Duties and apply them in their day-to-day activities.
- Children and young people with care experience have all they need to thrive at school and beyond.
- Increasing the numbers of looked after children and young people given opportunities to pursue sports, cultural and leisure activities
- Increasing the number of looked after children remaining in their existing care placements beyond the age of 16 and 18. **(2023)**
- Reducing the number of care experienced young people who experience homelessness. **(2023)**
- Increasing training and employment opportunities for looked after young people and care-experienced young people.
- Improving timely access to assessment and effective health interventions for care experienced young people.
- Continue to target actions to close the poverty-related attainment gap and raise educational attainment and achievement of care experienced children and young people.
- Continue to develop the Promise Operational Groups workstreams.
- We will review and improve current practice in relation to promoting and managing attendance and preventing and managing school exclusions **(2023)**
- We will work towards improving skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations.
- Language is one of the fundamentals of The Promise and all partners will be asked to review their paperwork, processes and use alternative language **(2023)**
- Roll out of trauma aware and trauma skilled resources and training.

APPENDIX 1: CORPORATE PARENTS

1. The Scottish Ministers
2. 32 Local Authorities
3. The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland
4. Children's Hearings Scotland
5. The Principal Reporter
6. The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
7. A Health Board
8. A board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978
9. Healthcare Improvement Scotland
10. The Scottish Qualifications Authority
11. Skills Development Scotland Co. Ltd (registered number SC 202659)
12. Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland
13. The Scottish Social Services Council
14. The Scottish Sports Council
15. The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland
16. The Scottish Police Authority
17. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
18. The Scottish Legal Aid Board
19. The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
20. The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
21. The Scottish Housing Regulator
22. Bòrd na Gàidhlig
23. Creative Scotland
24. A body which is a "post-16 education body" for the purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2014
25. Independent Living Fund Scotland
26. Care Inspectorate

Corporate Parent Duties – Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

- Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom corporate parenting applies.
- Assess the needs of those children and young people for the services and support they provide.
- Promote the interests of those children and young people.
- Provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people to (i) access the opportunities it provides, and (ii) make use of services, and access support, which it provides.
- Take such action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to the children and young people to whom corporate parenting applies.

NORTH AYRSHIRE'S

**Corporate
Parenting Plan**

2023 - 2026



NORTH AYRSHIRE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

In North Ayrshire, we all believe that ensuring effective support, care, and protection for infants, children and young people who are looked after, is one of the most important responsibilities for agencies, staff, carers and the Care experienced community.

Infants, Children and Young People who are looked after may need extra support, love, time, and positive relationships to help them reach their potential.

We all need to do everything we can to ensure that those that are Care Experienced are safe, nurtured and supported, and that we all work together so that life experiences are positive, and improves life chances.

Over the last few years the term 'Care Experienced' has become prominent in the language to collectively describe those who are or have ever been Looked After. The Care Experienced Attainment Fund National Guidance says this: –

The term 'care experience' is now a widely used term within the sector to describe any person who has experience of being in care, regardless of the placement length, type or age.



Care may have been provided in one of many different settings, such as in residential care, foster care, kinship care or through being looked after at home with a supervision requirement.

"**Corporate parent**" is another term and is used to describe a collection of public bodies that have a duty to work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of looked after infants, children, young people and care leavers.

However, it is all our responsibility to work with and alongside families, children, young people and the services that support them.

We all must approach this parenting role with as much passion and commitment as any family would and ensure that all looked after infants, children and young people are given the best start in life and maintain this throughout their lives .

At the end of this plan there is a graphic that lets you know who are our Corporate Parents.

This plan outlines our collective priorities and has been co-produced by the North Ayrshire Champion's Board. Our action plan (separate document) is based on the 'Promise', and local priorities'.

All organisations and services within North Ayrshire with corporate parenting responsibilities and the care experienced community are essential contributors to ensuring that care experienced infants, children and young people's outcomes are as good as those for any other children.

Delivering positive outcomes for care experienced children and young people is a key priority for the Community Planning Partnership and its partners. We must now make sure that these priorities are put into practice and that the commitment to those who are Care Experienced is delivered through the implementation of this plan and tangible actions

North Ayrshire has committed to #KeepThePromise which provides a benchmark for corporate parents, carers, practitioners, managers, care experienced community, and decision makers in fulfilling the goal to meet the collective and individual needs of all of our Care Experienced infants, children and young people.



In 2017 an Independent Care Review was carried out over a three year period focusing on the Children's Care System in Scotland. The Review not only listened to Care Experienced young people but had them at the centre of their research and enquires. The Review produced a number recommendations on what needs to change in the care system and challenges Corporate Parents to work alongside children, young people and their families to make these changes happen. This plan will incorporate some of these recommendations, so that all care experienced children and young people can have the best start in life and continued success into adulthood. They have developed five foundation principles. These are:-



VOICE



FAMILY



CARE



PEOPLE



SCAFFOLDING

For further explanation on these Five Promise Foundations please see :- Foundations of the promise – The Promise

North Ayrshire



Number of Looked after children and young people

Date	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of CYP Looked After	531	533	523	470	450
At Home	170	169	160	139	141
Away from Home	361	364	363	331	309

In the last 5 years,

17% (n = 29) reduction in CYP looked after at home
 14% (n= 52) reduction in CYP looked after away from home
 15% (n = 81) reduction in total numbers of looked after CYP

Of the 81 CYP no longer under looked after :

57% (n=46) are living with parents
 17% (n=14) are living with friends /relatives
 4% (n=11) remain in continuing care
 4% (n=3) have moved into their own tenancy
 3% (n=2) have moved into supported accommodation and
 5% (n=4) other

10.7% increase in young people in kinship care placements

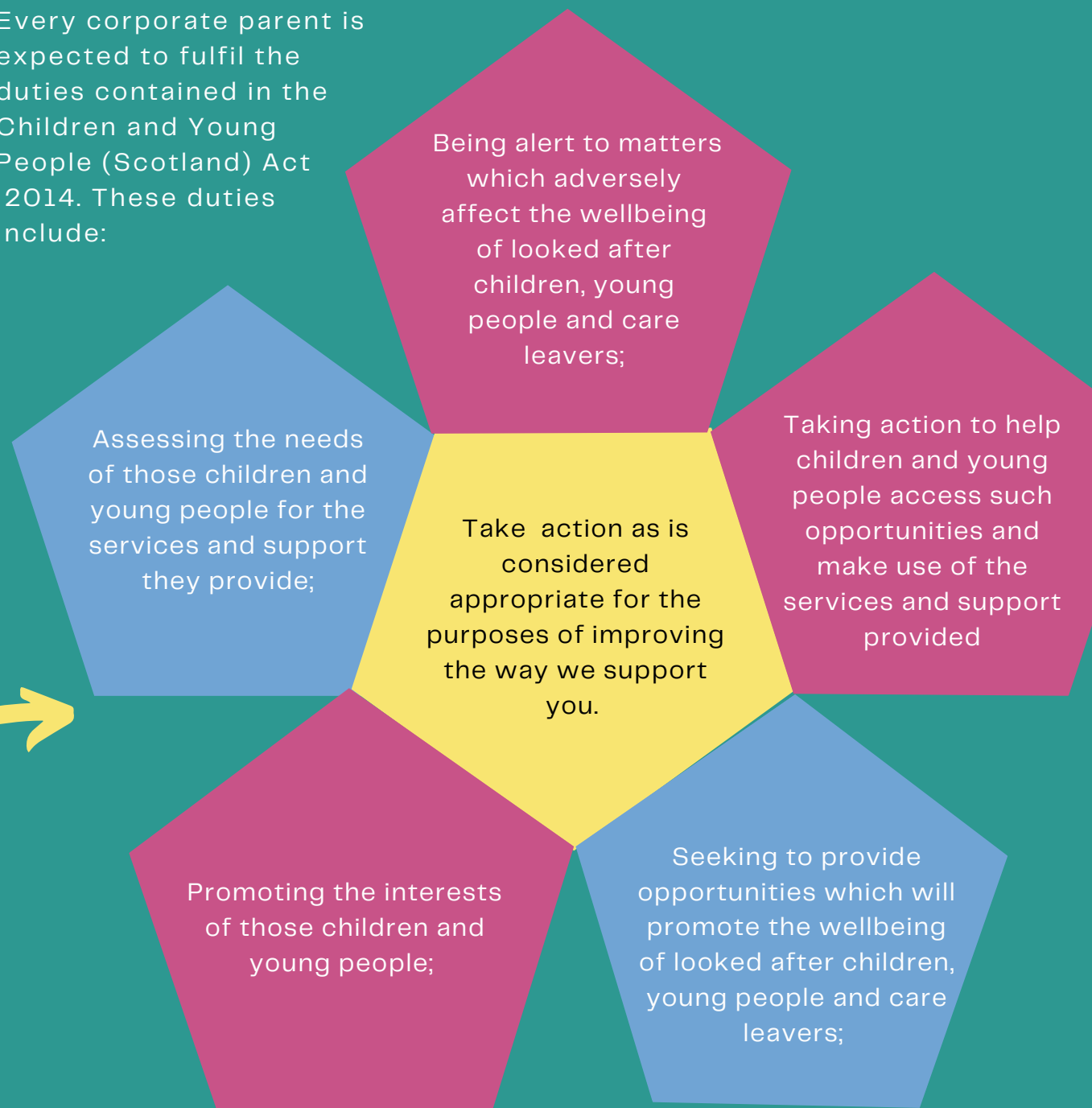
Significant increase in numbers of young people requesting continuing care (n=3 to n= 57) in 4 years



Every corporate parent is expected to fulfil the duties contained in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. These duties include:

Core elements of this Plan

- The rights and views of Looked After Children and Young People will be considered when designing services and interventions
- Partnership working and close collaboration between Corporate Parents.
- Measurable promises made to Looked After children and young people
- Actions to progress the six duties within the 2014 Act.



Vision, Values and High level priorities

Our collective plan focusses on key areas which have been identified by children and young people as being important to them.

Embedded within these priorities is a commitment to supporting looked after infants, children, young people and care leavers to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with those who are important to them.

Together we have set out our priorities for the period April 2023 to March 2026 and identified the actions we will undertake to achieve these and the measures we will use to make sure they have made a difference to infants, children and young people's lives.

Throughout all we do we will ensure that rights are protected and the 4 guiding principles of the the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are the basis for all that we do. These are that Children and Young People:-

- shouldn't be discriminated against (Article 2)
- should have their best interests accounted for as a primary consideration (Article 3)
- have the right to survive and develop (Article 6)
- have the right to have their views heard and taken seriously (Article 12)

High level priorities

Prevention and early help

Focusing on those who need the most support

Commitment to reducing child poverty

Further embedding Getting it Right for Every Child

Listening/voice/use of technology

Consider our children in care who still live at home with their families

Education and Work

Health & Leisure activities

Training (Trauma aware and informed) & raising awareness

Events/activists led by Children and Young People

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Use of intelligence and data to inform practice

Support for care leavers

PROMISE



PR

The Care Experienced community and Corporate Parents make a promise to all Care experienced children, young people and their families. This Promise is that endeavours will be made to involve you in the decisions that affect your life. This will be carried out by giving you the opportunity to:-

- join our 'Champions Board'
- be involved in interviews for staff members
- be involved in operational groups looking at changing practice. e.g The Promise Operational Group (PrOG etc)
- be involved in planning and supporting events
- be involved in groups at school and in the community that are for Care Experienced children, young people and their families.
- have your say on your plan.
- be involved in the redesign of processes, paperwork and what language you want to be used about you.
- join focus groups looking at a particular topic.
- help design our social media communications

Our Corporate Parenting Team and other Corporate Parents will endeavour to reach out to you check if you want to be involved in any of the above. Contact us on corporateparenting@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Our generic promises to you as your Corporate Parents



- ✓ **Involve you in all decisions made about you and in designing new ways of working.**
- ✓ **Take account of your rights when working with you and/or supporting you.**
- ✓ **Support you to have positive family time and with friends.**
- ✓ **Create forums where we can better understand your issues, life experiences and the impact this has had on the care experienced community.**
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for you to come and talk to us, have taster days, shadow workers etc**
- ✓ **Do everything we can to help you achieve your potential within education, employment and having the life skills to lead an independent life**
- ✓ **Identify and promote care leavers needs and achievements by celebrating their achievements.**
- ✓ **Support and provide you with opportunities for you to seek employment, further education or training**
- ✓ **Create stronger links with the North Youth Citizenship and Participation Strategy ensuring your voices are included through structures like the executive Youth Council. MSYPs and Joint Youth Forums**
- ✓ **Allocate spaces identified for care experienced young people to access mental health and wellbeing peer support training, accreditation and form part of the mental health ambassador programme.**

How?

We have already set up an 'Corporate Parenting Steering Group', and a 'Promise Operational Group' (PrOG). Children and Young peoples voices are represented on both these Groups. There are also a number of other ways Care Experienced people can get involved.

This Steering Group and PrOG have been set up to identify the Corporate Parenting Duties and 'Promise' priorities and actions. This will result in developing new ways of working and how we monitor what we said we would all do.

The most important factor is that we all work together, children, young people, parents and carers, and all Corporate Parents

Action Plan

We will have an action plan that sets out what we say we are going to do, when it has to be done by, who is going to do it and how we will know the action has made a difference.



What now?

The Corporate Parenting Steering Group and the PrOG are all meeting regularly and setting out plans to take forward the promises above.

We have a particular focus on the following right now and are progressing all of these



Language and Stigma -

Our Champions Board have written an Anti Discriminatory and stigma policy for all Corporate Parents. We hope to launch a campaign this year.



The PrOG has a Communication and Language sub Group who this year Will develop.

- A New North Ayrshire Will Keep The Promise' Social Media Channel
- Form a Care Experienced Youth Exec Group, and
- Hold a 'Let's Talk About Language Day'



All interviews for posts within the H&SCP that have an impact on Care Experienced people will have Care Experience Young People involved in the interview.

Corporate Parents

