

DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE - UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Elected Members with an update on the work that is going on across Dumfries and Galloway to Deliver on The Promise.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note:-

- 2.1 our commitment to #Keep the Promise as detailed in section 3 of the report;
- 2.2 the positive progress that is going on across Dumfries and Galloway as noted in the **Appendix**; and
- 2.3 an update on progress Delivering on The Promise will be brought to this Committee on a 6-monthly basis for review and scrutiny.

3. Considerations

3.1 In October 2016, the First Minister made a commitment that Scotland would 'come together and love its most vulnerable children to give them a childhood they deserve'. An independent root and branch review of the 'care system' was commissioned – the Independent Care Review.

3.2 The conclusions of the Independent Care Review articulated in The Promise, set out the transformational change required by 2030. The Promise makes clear what those working with children and families in Scotland must do to make sure our children feel loved, safe and have the childhood they deserve. Children and families and most importantly, those with lived experience, must be at the heart of all our work to ensure that the work we do is meaningful, accessible, and impactful.

3.3 The Promise Scotland published Plan 21-24 in March 2021 outlining the priorities for the next 3 years and to set out what must happen between now and 2024 to ensure Scotland stays on track to deliver on The Promise. It outlines Scotland's route map, providing us with key priorities and areas of focus which we will work to achieve. The required change over this period translates into the following five priority areas of change-

1. A Good Childhood
2. Whole Family Support
3. Supporting the Workforce
4. Building Capacity
5. Planning

3.4 Plan 21-24 was intended to cover the period 21-24 as referenced in the Independent Care Review. COVID-19 has radically altered the landscape across Scotland, but the impact of the pandemic does not change the core work programme. It expands on it and creates a greater urgency for change.

3.5 It has been two years since the Care Review published its conclusions and The Promise must be kept by 2030. The rapid changes that have taken place across Dumfries and Galloway over the last year, demonstrate that change can happen at pace, however given the ambition for change set out in the 10-year plan life to #KeepThe Promise there is concern that the scale of ambition and change required may not be fully acknowledged. We recognise the demonstrable progress we have made with examples set out in the **Appendix** and acknowledge we still have a way to go. We are currently developing a route map which will set out our journey to the end of Plan 21-24 and beyond.

3.6 The progress we have made to date is evident through –

- What we have seen in terms of success in our work to date is a significant decrease in the number of children on the child protection register. This is because we are building better, more trusting relationships with our children and families. We are identifying with them local supports within their own family and friends' network, and communities. This does not decrease the amount of work we do with families but does improve outcomes for them. The interventions are more welcome and less stigmatised.
- We have also seen our number of children subject to Compulsory Supervision Orders decrease, the main reason for this being the better relationships that we have built with children and families. Even though "grounds of referral" still exist we are now getting more cooperation from children and families which means compulsion is not required. Again, this does not mean we are doing less work but that we are working differently.
- Our referrals have continued to grow, we believe this is largely due to the impact of the pandemic and that they will continue to do so as the cost of living increases as dramatically as it has.
- We believe that our current approaches are proven and that they need to be embedded into our system. We are hopeful that we can utilise some of the Scottish Governments family support funding to mainstream the family support service and upscale, so that we have better coverage across the region and that we can increase our reach, especially for those currently in the care system and families identified by schools for additional support.
- We believe our changes meet a number of aims of The Promise including early intervention, preventative work, and reducing stigma. We also believe this gives us the opportunity to better bridge the gap between universal support and statutory social work provision.

3.7 One important area of work we are currently progressing is the Bright Spots Programme – this is a programme that listens to our children in care and care leavers, about the things that are important to them with a focus on what children and young people say about their lives together with ensuring that their views and experiences influence our service development. As a Corporate Parent Group, we took part at this years' #WeCareEvent on 23 June as one of our routes for engaging further with our children and young people on the findings from the Bright Spots Programme. The findings will be the driver for our refreshed Promise Plan ensuring we meet the needs of our children, young people, and families, rather than the needs of our systems.

3.8 We recognise the need for ongoing engagement and collaboration in the months and years ahead to ensure that our actions bring the change we need to see, continue to challenge us on where we need to go further and to look to new actions that we need to take.

3.9 The Promise Scotland Partnership offers funding and support to organisations and collaborations to #Keep the Promise and help drive forward change that matters. To date we have been successful in securing funding including £50,000 to adapt our approaches to build staff resilience in response to the increasing impact of COVID on mental health, trauma, and neglect; secured £99,000 in partnership with Children's and Young People's Centre for Justice to support improvement in youth justice; and £5,000 to support the participation of our children and young people in the development of the Bairns Hoose Standards.

3.10 In addition to the above noted funding, Scottish Government have announced £500 million for family support with a pledge that at least 5 per cent of all community-based health and social care spend will be on preventative whole family support together with an initial funding of £50 million in the current year (2022). This should support to promote early intervention and the strategic importance towards implementation on us reaching our 5% milestone locally. We must focus our efforts on what the money can and will achieve locally.

3.11 Support on our transformation journey delivering on Our Promise is supported by The Promise Scotland Team, who are a member of the national Family Support Delivery Group accountable for reporting to the national collective leadership group for our vulnerable children and young people that is jointly chaired by the Scottish Government and Solace.

3.12 We are also working in partnership with Who Cares Scotland on key activities including the development and introduction of awareness and training to key strategic groups on corporate parent responsibilities and E-Learning targeted at practice level staff.

3.13 Our communication of the promise will continue to be delivered designed to inform and engage with our staff, elected members, children, young people, families, our communities, key partners, trade unions and the Promise Team with the work of change required and our transformation activity for us to deliver on Our Promise.

3.14 The Promise Team are actively asking us to think about how we shall work collaboratively. There is an expectation that Councils and Partnerships will join to build collaborative networks across regions building momentum and movement across Scotland. The progress on our collaborative working, transformation activity and communication plan were discussed with Elected Members at the seminar held on 12 November 2021. A further seminar has been arranged to take place on 4 October 2022. Future progress reports will be presented to this committee on a 6 monthly basis.

4. Governance Assurance

The Council Management Team, Social Work Services Strategic Planning Group, Corporate Parent Group and the Head of Finance and Procurement have been consulted as part of the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its terms.

5. Impact Assessment

As this report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

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Appendices - 1

Appendix - #Delivering on our Promise Progress Update

Background Papers

Independent Care Review [Care Review reports – Independent Care Review](#)

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