Local Government’s Annual Report on The Promise

North Ayrshire

25 March 2022

Purpose

To capture and tell the story about the breadth of work being undertaken, and the progress being made across Local Government to #KeepThePromise in the two years since The Promise was published.

Details & Format

The report (still to be given a name) will feature local and national developments, policy and impacts and be laid out under the five sections used within Plan 21 – 24:

**A Good Childhood –**

* We continue to be a Social Work Scotland Radical Test Site pilot at Pathways – This approach was developed by listening to the voices of parents who came to Pathways impacted by distress and trauma.

Talking /Listening Support is provided by a Health Visitor over a 6- 8 week period at the point a child is outwith family care, to listen and acknowledge the parent’s distress & offer a safe space to explore their emotions and needs. It is hoped this approach will create a better platform from which parents can have the child returned to their care.

We have developed a small parent’s reference group who have engaged very well with the service.

* During 2021/2022, a review and refresh of the Universal Health Support offered to school-aged children/young people was undertaken. This has led to a move away from a dedicated Care Experienced Nurse post and instead we now have a dispersed model through the school nursing service. This will allow continuity of support for care experienced young people regardless of their journey and will allow support to be offered in the same way it would for any young person, reducing stigma and any barriers to accessing a “LAC Nurse”.
* In January 2022, a new model of support for all families with children under 5 was implemented within Universal Early Years. The enhanced support will be offered to families who may benefit most from a relationship and strengths-based approach which will see a support worker linked to the family from as early as the ante-natal period, right through to a child starting their Early Learning Centre placement. This aligns to the Promise’s recommendation to provide scaffolding around families and to provide continuity of support whilst empowering parents/ carers.
* Employability – We Work For Families approach is targeted at unemployed and low income parents and carers. Referrals are made through a Health Visitor or Family Nurse. The service provides intensive, person-centred support to overcome barriers to employment, education and training.  One example of this work in action involved: A mum to 3 children who was referred to the We Work For Families service by her Health Visitor. Mum had low self-esteem and confidence as well as poor mental health; childcare issues and household debt. Regular intensive support was provided by We Work For Families and other services and although there were periods where engagement was difficult, Mum remained open to support from the service.

This continued throughout the pandemic, including support to make a college application, which led to success and Mum has now started an HNC Childhood Practice Course in August 2021. She feels her confidence has increased and is now able to participate in activities with her children. She said:  *‘I feel like I now have a purpose in life.’*

* Early intervention – Our Family Centred Wellbeing Service work with families focuses on those on the edge of care, creating a sustainable, multi-agency, holistic, strengths focussed community-based assessment and support service for families. Work is being targeted at primary aged pupils to support even earlier one-to-one, group and bespoke family support.

**Whole Family Support –**

* Implementation of our Keeping Sisters and Brothers together policy.
* Advocacy - We listen to our children and young people through our commissioned advocacy service, Barnardo’s Hear4u Service, which is provided for all children and young people on the Child Protection Register or who are care experienced.

The feedback from children and young people is that they feel:

* more able to report safety concerns/complaints
* safer/at reduced risk
* more able to contribute to planning/decision making; and
* there is improvement in how their views are voiced

and acted upon

* We have received a grant to employ a family support worker to specifically work with care experienced families where there are siblings involved.
* We have received a grant to employ staff to work with Carers and Parents on learning toolkits for nurture, trauma and relationships
* Signs of Safety ­- we are at the initial stages of implementing Signs of Safety which will ensure that children, young people and their families are involved in all stages of decision making.

**Supporting the Workforce** –

* We have appointed a Corporate Parenting Participation and Engagement Lead and a Corporate Parenting Youth worker to actively engage with Care Experienced Young People – specifically those in kinship care. We have also had our Corporate Parenting Engagement and Participation Lead attend the ‘Promise Design School’ who will work alongside young people as a Promise Design Champion.
* All interviews for Health and Social Care Partnership frontline staff and those that manage them now have a pre-interview meeting with two care experienced young people and their views taken into account when appointing candidates.

Planning –

* We have established a local Oversight Board and Promise Operational Group (PrOG) and have agreed the governance for the Promise work.
* We have increased the number of children and young people involved in strategic and operational groups and supported them to actively take part. We have young people co-chairing both the Oversight Board and the PrOG.
* We have two workstreams being managed through the PrOG (Communications and Language and Alternative Care Groups) with young people also co-chairing these. We also have work progressing with two other sub-groups: discovery mapping and trauma informed approaches/training for our workforce. We have also drafted an anti-discrimination policy which is out for consultation at the moment.
* We have a weekly data dashboard to track trends of ‘looked after young people’ over time and this is reviewed at our Management Information Group where solutions and data is used to initiate changes in policy or practice.

**Building Capacity –**

* We have asked all teams and departments to appoint a Promise Champion to be the central point of contact for all consultations, views and to disseminate developments to their teams etc. Our Promise ‘Champions’ Sharepoint site is set up and has 17 Champions as members.

Each section will include:

* National policy developments including, but not limited to, those explicitly mentioned in Plan 21 – 24 and Change Programme ONE
* Local developments / service redesign / local investment
* Evidence / data / case studies from local authorities
* The ‘voice’ / views of children, young people and families
* Impacts of changes on children / young people / families / workforce / service delivery / budget and funding etc.
* A mix of text and pictures
* Link to a dedicated section on COSLA and other websites for further information

Gathering information

* Ideally it would be useful to have one item from each LA under each of the 5 sections listed above. This could be a mixture of case studies / examples of service design / work practice / workforce / clip with a link to a video / quotes. Too much information from each LA could result in the document becoming unwieldy and not enough information could mean it isn’t representative of the work going on across the country.
* Case studies for the report should be limited to a paragraph or two that can be highlighted within the report. Longer versions of each case study can be hosted on the COSLA website and linked to within the report.
* If you have access to, and are willing to share, your LA Promise ‘position statement’ would be useful in setting the context and starting point.
* If possible, please share pictures (with relevant permissions) so the report is appealing to see and read
* If you have dedicated pages on your council website for The Promise, please share the link and these can be included in the report
* All information should be sent to thepromise@cosla.gov.uk by 21st March, at the very latest. Please and THANK YOU!