

Agenda Item	<b>5</b>
Report No	<b>HSCW/01/21</b>

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

**Date:** 10 February 2021

**Report Title:** Corporate Parenting Board and The Promise

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer – Health and Social Care

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Independent Care Review (ICR) and the seven output reports contained within The Promise. The Care Review was one of the most substantial, ambitious, and necessary reviews in the history of the Scottish Parliament with cross party support. The CR and The Promise delivered a powerfully simple message: care must have love and nurture at its heart. Keeping The Promise will mean all children will grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential.
- 1.2 The report outlines the Health and Social Care Service and the Corporate Parenting Board's commitment to ensuring that all Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers across Highland feel safe, loved, and heard. It also details the priorities that are being actioned to ensure Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers' life outcomes are improved.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Notes the findings of the Independent Care Review and the seven output reports.
  - ii. Note the challenges and the assessment of where we are now, and the cross-cutting collaborative work we need to do, to achieve the aspirations of The Promise.
  - iii. Note and comment on the Corporate Parenting Board's approach to improving outcomes for Care Experienced Children, Young People and Care Leavers.
  - iv. Note and comment on the priorities identified by the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource – The intention is to deliver the Corporate Parenting Board Plan within existing resource. Further resource implications may be identified within the duration of the Plan.
- 3.2 Legal - Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 outlines a range of duties for corporate parents across Scotland.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – The report highlights a number of concerns relating to inequalities during the current pandemic. The next iteration of the Corporate Parenting Board Plan will be delivered through the Community Planning Partnership infrastructure and will be aligned to the aspirations of the Highland Outcome Improvement plan with a focus on community resilience and participation.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – None
- 3.5 Risk – None
- 3.6 Gaelic – None

### **4. Background**

- 4.1 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’. She commissioned an independent root and branch review of the ‘care system’ - the Independent Care Review. From February 2017 until February 2020 the Care Review went to work and was ground-breaking in its approach given it was driven by those with lived experience of the care system; it was their ‘stories’ that guided the Care Review and their experiences have shaped everything it concluded.
- 4.2 The work of the Care Review culminated in the publication of 7 reports on the 5th of February 2020. These are:
  - The Promise
  - The Pinky Promise (for younger readers)
  - The Plan
  - The Money
  - Follow the Money
  - The Rules
  - Thank You
- 4.3 There are fundamental human narratives embedded in the Care Review rooted in the ethnographic stories and voices of those with lived experience that we must grasp – no matter the challenges. These powerful messages are rooted in universal human needs, to be:
  - Loved
  - Belong
  - Heard
  - Ensuring Intervention ‘does no harm’
  - Empowered
  - Protecting human rights
  - Non-stigmatising

#### 4.4 **The Promise:**

The main output of the Care Review is contained within The Promise. The Promise and other reports have come out of a programme of work guided by the voices of over 5,500 people - over half were children and young people with care experience. The work involved the curation and commissioning of research, and the development of a detailed understanding of the legislative, policy and practice environment. For Scotland to support our children and young people to *grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential*, the Promise outlines the need for a redesign of the 'care system', including a fundamental shift in how decisions are made and money is spent in supporting Scotland's children and families.

#### 4.5 **The 5 Foundations:**

The Promise sets out a vision and blueprint for transformational change. At the heart of The Promise are 5 Foundations, which provide clarity of vision, a shared purpose, and a clear direction. These are:

1. **Voice:** Children must be meaningfully heard and listened to in all decisions about their care.
2. **Family:** Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay
3. **Care:** Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters when safe to do so
4. **People:** The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community.
5. **Scaffolding:** Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

#### 4.6 **Risk:**

The Promise also makes an important but challenging point about risk. Whilst we must always consider the immediate risk of harm to a child, we must also consider the risk that is created when we remove a child from their family. The risk then is that we may compound their trauma and make it harder for them to enjoy stable, loving, lasting relationships. Risk must also focus on the protection of family relationships, and, above all, allow children to enjoy the kind of childhoods that others take for granted.

#### 4.7 **Next Steps - The Plan:**

The Plan is split into three distinct phases over ten years – Bedding Down (2021-2024); Consolidation (2024-2027) and Continuous Improvement (2027 – 2030). The Plan will allow sufficient periods of innovation and implementation of new fit-for-purpose public services including tests, pilots and roll-out. A key message is that - *'organisations and institutions must radically rethink their underlying purpose and structures'*.

##### 4.7.1 The Scottish Government has committed to take **three key early steps:**

Firstly, to creating a structure that can facilitate the re-design of whole system approaches to care and support.

Secondly, an Oversight Board is being established to hold us all to account,

Thirdly, The Scottish Government are also supporting the establishment of a dedicated, independent Promise Team, including investing £4 million in the Promise Partnership Fund that will help embed and scale-up holistic family support.

#### 4.8 **The Money & Follow the Money:**

The Money and Follow the Money sets out very clearly the direct cost of supporting children in the care system. It is established that annually Scotland invests in the region of **£942** million in delivering the current 'care system' and **£198** million in universal

services associated with the 'care system. Additionally, it invests in the region of **£875** million in meeting the needs care experienced people have as a result of the 'care system' failing them, and, finally, Scotland loses in the region of **£732** million in lost income tax and national insurance as a result of care experienced people having lower incomes.

#### 4.9 **Planning & Moving Forward:**

The Promise Team are actively asking Community Planning Partnerships to think about how they shall work collaboratively. Ideally, there is an expectation that Councils and Partnerships will join together to build collaborative networks across regions building momentum and movement across Scotland.

#### 4.10 **Health and Social Care Service:**

We recognised the legacy in which we were bringing too many children into the 'care system' and placing children out of the area into foster care and residential care - often at a distance away from their families, schools, friends, GPs and local neighbourhoods. While clearly not intended, we often had no choice but to place our children in other authorities and communities in which they had no identity, connections or ties.

##### 4.10.1 In Highland, we are proposing that we:

- Restate our commitment to The Promise and make a public commitment.
- Collaborate with our staff teams and ask for their views.
- Listen to children and families on the edge of care to understand what they want our priorities to be.
- Undertake an assessment of where we are now with this paper forming the beginnings of that process.
- Understand The Promise and map against our Service Plan to be brought to this committee in May 2021.

4.11 A link to the Promise can be found at : <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf>

## 5. **The Corporate Parenting Board**

5.1 Corporate parenting is defined as an organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted. The organisations defined are:

- Children's Hearings Scotland
- The Principal Reporter
- The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- All post-16 education bodies including colleges and universities
- National Health Service Boards
- Skills Development Scotland
- The National Convener of Children's Hearings Scotland
- The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
- Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland
- The Scottish Social Services Council
- The Scottish Sports Council
- The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- The Scottish Police Authority

- The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- The Scottish Legal Aid Board
- The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
- The Scottish Housing Regulator
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig

5.2 Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 outlines a range of duties for corporate parents across Scotland. These duties aim to ensure the attention and resources of corporate parents are focused on the task of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of Scotland's looked after children and care leavers. The duties came into effect on 1 April 2015. This means corporate parents should listen to the needs, fears and wishes of children and young people, and be proactive and determined in their collective efforts to address these.

5.3 It is the statutory duty of all Corporate Parents to:

- Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people.
- Assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides.
- Promote and champion the rights of those children and young people.
- Seek to provide those children and young people with opportunity, support and encouragement to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take appropriate action to help those children and young people to;
  - access opportunities it provides designed to promote wellbeing.
  - make use of services, and access support, which it provides.
- Take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those children and young people.

5.4 The purpose of the Highland Corporate Parenting Board is to provide strategic leadership that ensures that Highland has a collaborative approach to:

- Strengthen corporate parenting to improve outcomes for Highland's children and Young people with care experience.
- Listen and respond to the voices of Care experienced young people.
- Develop and progress a collective Corporate Parenting improvement plan which reflects the common themes of individual Corporate Parenting plans.

5.5 The work of the Board aims to raise the profile of young people with care experience in Highland and champion the needs and rights of care experienced young people. The board is committed to deliver change for the young people in Highland who experience care.

5.6 Membership of the Board is made up of senior representatives from Community Planning partners including:

- Young Person with Care experience
- Youth Convenor
- Highland Council (Member and senior officer representation)
- Skills Development Scotland
- UHI
- NHS Highland (Board and senior officer representation)

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Highlife Highland
- HTSI representative
- Who Cares Scotland

## **6. The Corporate Parenting Board Plan**

- 6.1 The Corporate Parenting Board Improvement Plan is currently under development and the structure and format was agreed by members of the Corporate Parenting Board on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- 6.2 At this meeting it was agreed that the plan should be further developed to set out actions in relation to the following key themes:
- Implementation of The Promise
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - Housing and Accommodation
  - Education, Training and Employment
  - Youth and Criminal Justice
  - Rights and Participation
- 6.3 Whilst the Corporate Parenting Board has strategic oversight for work in relation to care experienced young people, many strategic and operational groups have specific areas of responsibility in relation to this. The Corporate Parenting Board recognises that it is important this work is co-ordinated across the Partnerships in order that any gaps can be identified, and duplication of effort avoided.
- 6.4 An ambitious timescale for completion of the plan has been set as 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and a link to this plan will be available to members of this committee on completion.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Health and Social Care

Date: 25 January 2021

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