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**Report to: Clackmannanshire Council**

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**Date of Meeting: 10 August 2023**

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**Subject: The Promise Plan 2023-26**

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**Report by: Sharon Robertson, Chief Social Work Officer /  
Lorraine Sanda, Strategic Director, People**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for:

- 1.1 Clackmannanshire's Promise Plan 2023-2026.
- 1.2 Clackmannanshire's Language of Care, Language Policy.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1 Approves the Clackmannanshire's Promise Plan 2023-2026 (**Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 Approves the Clackmannanshire's Language of Care, Language Policy (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.2 Notes the reviewing of specific Council policies and provisions, in the context of the Promise Plan.
- 2.3 Notes the further work needed to develop a 'Data Map' to assess our progress towards The Promise (para 3.6).
- 2.4 Notes the positive partnership work with The Vardy Foundation (para 3.7).

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 The Promise is a national approach that by 2030, all of Scotland's children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.
- 3.2 The Clackmannanshire Promise Plan 2023-2026 aligns to the National Promise Change Plan and aligns with local council plans (The National Improvement Framework, The People Business Plan, The Family Wellbeing Partnerships Plan) and Clackmannanshire Children's Strategic Partnership's Children's Services Plan 2021-2024.

- 3.3 Our Promise Plan sets out our actions and commitments to Keep the Promise for care experienced children, young people and their families and contributes to our ambition to ensure care experienced children and young people from Clackmannanshire have the very best support, life chance and opportunities possible so they can lead loving, settled and fulfilled lives well into adulthood.
- 3.4 In order to keep The Promise by 2030 in Clackmannanshire, Council wide policies and provisions, and our approaches to service delivery will be reviewed and adapted to better improve the life chances of our care experienced community. This will include:
- A review of current provisions for employees who serve on a Children's Panel or as a Justice of the Peace or undertake mentoring of a young person through a recognised scheme, such as MCR.
  - As part of a wider review of Housing Policy, ensure priority is given to care experienced young people leaving care, whether they have been in care in Clackmannanshire or other parts of Scotland, and as part of that review consideration to the housing needs of our kinship and foster carers to ensure that children and young people can remain with their family and community in Clackmannanshire.
  - Amend the Guaranteed Interview Scheme to allow for any care experienced young person whether in care in Clackmannanshire, or elsewhere in Scotland, to be guaranteed an interview and support to prepare for an interview with Clackmannanshire Council.
- 3.5 These policy and provision changes will come back to Council for approval, following relevant consultation and engagement, as appropriate with Trade Union colleagues.
- 3.6 To assess progress towards The Promise, and ensure that there is appropriate monitoring of The Promise Plan, including tracking of targets and measures, a 'Data Map' workstream will be established alongside the Family Wellbeing Partnership and Children and Young People Strategic Partnership to look across all data sets and improvement measures relating to The Promise delivery plan. This will ensure we are collecting the right data to understand where our priority opportunities for improvement are and identify data gaps.
- 3.7 To ensure that we have high quality residential care and housing accommodation for our children and young people, while working towards supporting more children to stay at home in loving family homes, we have developed a strong partnership with The Vardy Foundation. The Foundation is committed to funding a portfolio of accommodation and supports to assist Clackmannanshire to #KeepThePromise by 2030.
- 3.8 The Participation Network was established to uphold the voice principle of The Promise and strengthen participatory opportunities for care experienced children, young people and families to influence change in service delivery. The Language of Care Policy has been co-designed by the Participation Network utilising the Scottish Approach to Service Redesign, and has also been influenced by learning from workshops provided by Each and Every

Child in relation to framing and reframing language relating to care experience.

The policy reflects the priorities identified by the members of the network with lived experience, and provides a framework of principles to underpin considerations around language for services within the Council. The approach within the policy is not prescriptive, it is intended to guide considerations around language to ensure communication with care experienced individuals is framed in a way which doesn't reinforce stigma, is respectful, and removes some of the cold and formal language that families experience using services.

#### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

4.1 None

#### **5.0 Resource Implications**

5.1 None

#### **6.0 Exempt Reports**

6.1 Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) **No**

#### **7.0 Declarations**

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all

**Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life**

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential

**Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish**

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

- National Improvement Framework 2023-2024
- People Business Plan 2023-2024
- The Family Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2023-24
- The Virtual Headteacher Plan 2023-24

#### **8.0 Equalities Impact**

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

## 9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.

Yes No

## 10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 - Promise Plan 2023-2026

10.2 Appendix 2 – Language of Care, Language Policy – July 2023

## 11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Clackmannanshire Children's Services Plan 2021-24

National Improvement Framework 2023-2024 (Presented to Council – Aug 23)

People Business Plan 2023-2024 (Presented to Council – Aug 23)


The Family Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2023-24 (Presented to Council – Aug 23)

HR Policies

### Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO / EXTENSION
Sharon Robertson	Senior Manager People/CSWO	

### Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Lorraine Sanda	Strategic Director (People)	

# Clackmannanshire's Promise

## Keeping The Promise Plan 2023 – 2026

**Clackmannanshire Council's Promise Plan articulates with the five key actions of Change Programme One**

**The five foundations of family, voice, care, people and scaffolding underpin the principles of our plan.**

**By 2030, Clackmannanshire will #KeepThePromise and ensure that all young people grow up Loved, Cared for,  
Safe and Respected**

## Foreword by Ellen Forson

All children in Clackmannanshire deserve to grow up loved, safe and respected. That is the commitment made by Clackmannanshire Council and by our Alliance Partners when we collectively agreed to Keep the Promise in 2020.

We have made good progress with that pledge but we know we need to do more. Our children, young people and their families deserve better. Keeping the Promise is non-negotiable for me and as Leader of the Council, and our Champion for The Promise, I make no excuses for setting high expectations and driving the change that needs to happen. I know it is a considerable task but we can achieve it.

Through our Participation Network which works directly with our families and young people, we have ensured that "voice" is a foundation of our plans, and that there is a feedback loop as we progress.

We are redesigning our services so that what matters to children and families can be at the heart of our plans - and to support this work, we are working to ensure our workforce is trained in trauma informed practice and fully understands their role in Keeping the Promise.

We now have a Virtual Head teacher in post working directly with our education establishments to ensure that our care experienced young people have access to greater opportunities. Crucially, we are planning for young people to stay with or return to their families and communities, where there is the right support at the right time

None of this is easy but I want to ensure that Clackmannanshire gets this right and by 2030 at the latest. This Plan takes us closer to that ambition.

Councillor Ellen Forson,

Leader of Clackmannanshire Council

Champion for The Promise

## Clackmannanshire's Promise Plan

Our Promise Plan sets out the key actions that will be delivered by the People Directorate in 2023-2026 and will contribute to the delivery of key strategic objectives as set out within:

- Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-27 (Wellbeing Economy Local Outcomes Improvement Plan under development)
- Clackmannanshire Children's Services Plan 2021-24
- Clackmannanshire Community Justice Plan 2018-23
- Violence against Women and Girls Strategic Plan 23-24
- The National Improvement Framework Plan 23-24

It is guided by, and aligned with, the Be the Future Programme, Community Wealth Building and the Wellbeing Economy.

The plan sets out targeted aims, outcomes, priorities and activities for 2023-26. It focuses on collaboration and intelligence gathered from across the system - in particular stakeholders' needs. There is a continuing focus on Health and Wellbeing - of our staff, our families and communities, as we continue to address the short, medium and long term effects and learning from the impact of the COVID crisis.

As set out in the Be the Future Programme, we need to work differently to deliver sustained and improved outcomes for our communities, connecting and collaborating with our public sector and third sector partners, business, and empowering our families and communities.

This means embracing new ways of working, structuring and delivering our services differently, in a more integrated and collaborative way. We will focus on continuous improvement, and prioritise getting the basics right, as outlined in Clackmannanshire's Targeted Operating Model (TOM).

With the appointment of the Virtual Head teacher, we will work in a multi-agency manner to develop targets across all areas of the People Directorate. This will include care, support, protection, attendance, attainment, achievement and positive, sustained destinations for Care Experienced Young People. This will be underpinned by rigorous tracking, monitoring, intervention and bespoke support.

# The Promise Scotland

## Introduction

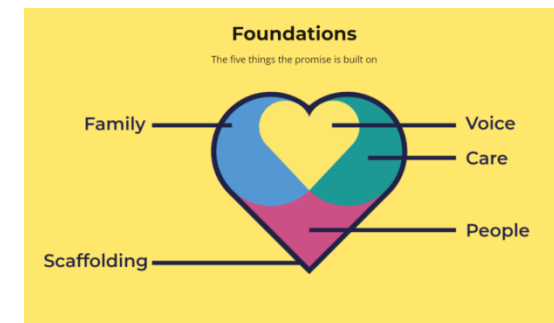
The Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Care Review in 2016. From 2016 – 2020, the Review listened to care experienced children, young people and families. It heard that many of them “did not feel loved, not kept safe and not respected”. Listening to the experiences of the “care system” helped make it clear what needed to change.

In 2020, Scottish Government committed to **#KeepThePromise and ensure that– all young people in Scotland grow up loved, cared for and respected.** Since 2020, the launch of The Promise and its subsequent supporting documentation and reviews have reflected the Scottish Government’s pledge to deliver excellence and equity for all young people, with a particular focus on care experienced children and young people.

Significant change is required to systems, processes and structures in all areas and **The Promise** provides recommendations, outcomes, ‘calls to action’ and a phased change programme from 2021 – 2030.

## Promise Scotland Plan 21 - 24

On 31 March 2021, The Promise Scotland published Plan 21-24, the first of three overarching plans, outlining five priority areas of change, each with actions. Those actions must be completed by 2024 for Scotland to stay on track to #KeepThePromise it made to its children and families, in full, by 2030.

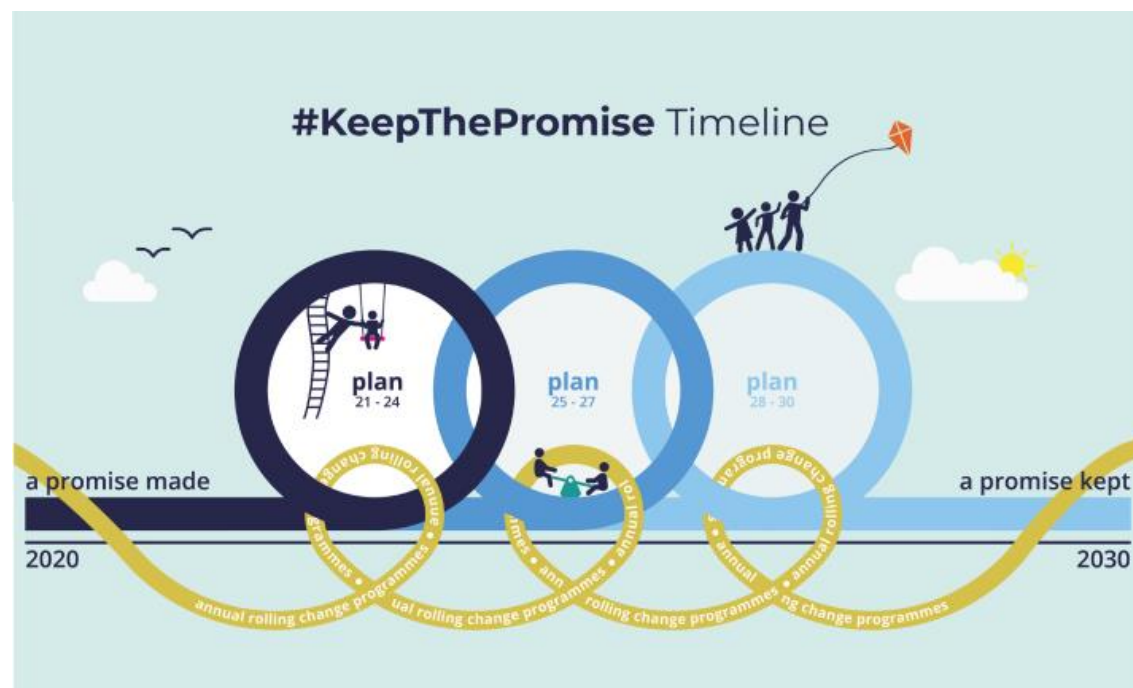


Family, Voice, Care, People and Scaffolding are the five foundations that underpin Scotland’s Promise Plan 2021 - 2024



## Introduction to Clackmannanshire’s Promise

Clackmannanshire’s Keeping The Promise Plan 2023-26 seeks to build on what we have already achieved within Clackmannanshire since The Promise Scotland published Plan 21-24, and looks ahead at how we can build momentum in Clackmannanshire to uphold our Promise by 2030. Our plan is ambitious and reflects our commitment to transformational change to ensure that we are able to Keep Our Promise that care experienced children and young people in Clackmannanshire will grow up loved, safe, and respected.



### Change Programme One 21-24

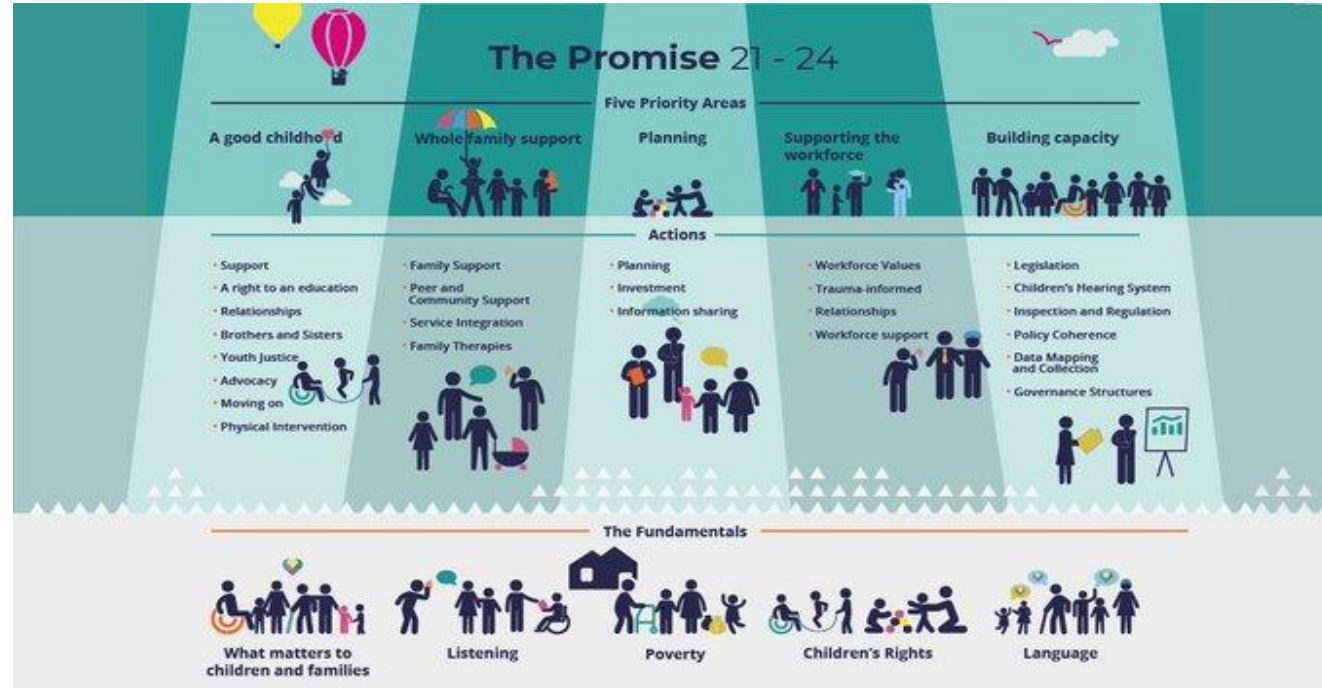
The Promise that Scotland made to care experienced children and young people is built on **five foundations: family, voice, care, people and scaffolding.**

The Promise Scotland published Plan 21-24, followed up with **The Change Programme One** outlining **five priority actions, under which organisations will work to achieve the required change.**

Our plan is aligned to the five priority areas and underpinned by the five principles.

## Five Priority Areas

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



### What must change

Find out the specific actions that Scotland must take in order to keep the promise.

### Supporting organisations to change

The Promise Scotland can offer support to organisations who act to #KeepThePromise.

### Foundations of the promise

The promise that Scotland made to care experienced children and young people is built on five foundations: family, voice, care, people and scaffolding.

**Behind every one of these statistics there are real children and young people. It does not have to be like this.**



<sup>1</sup> Source: Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research - <https://www.celcis.org/news/news-pages/new-information-published-infants-born-care-scotland>  
<sup>2</sup> Source: Scottish Government - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/keeping-promise-implementation-plan-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessment/>  
<sup>3</sup> Source: Scottish Government - <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2022/07/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/documents/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21/govscot%3Adocument/education-outcomes-looked-children-2020-21.pdf>  
<sup>4</sup> Source: Scottish Prison Service - <https://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publication-7196.aspx>  
<sup>5</sup> Source: Independent Care Review - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Follow-the-money.pdf>  
<sup>6</sup> Source: Independent Care Review - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Follow-the-money.pdf>

## Why change is still needed?

The Promise Oversight Board met in June 2023 to review progress and consider whether Scotland remains on track with The Promise in regards to pace of change, quality of change and whether it is reaching children, young people and families.

The Promise Oversight Board has acknowledged that three years have now passed since the promise was made. **Keeping the promise is non-negotiable.**

Lives have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic for over two years and the cost of living crisis has pushed more children, young people and families into poverty. These factors make it even more imperative that The Promise is kept.

The June 2023 meeting of The Promise Oversight Board recognised that due to worsening circumstances for so many, and the pace of change to date that there will be additional challenges in delivering Plan 21-24 in the original timescale. The Oversight Board believe that 'a call to action' around explicit leadership and strategic planning is required at all levels in order to #KeepThePromise. Plan 21-24 will continue into 2025.

## Clackmannanshire Virtual Head teacher

Clackmannanshire Council have appointed a Virtual Head teacher to support the implementation of The Promise.

The Virtual Head teacher Improvement Plan (23-24) articulates with the five key foundations of The Promise and the five key priority areas of Change Programme One. The Virtual Head teacher Improvement Plan has key impact measurements for 2024, 2026 and 2028 to support our ambition.

The Virtual School acts as a local authority champion to bring about improvements in the education of Care Experienced children and young people and those who are furthest from engagement; to promote their educational achievement as if they were in a single school.

The core purpose of the Virtual School Head Teacher is to be relentless in driving up improvements in the educational progress and attainment/achievement of an identified group of young people, including Care Experienced, across Clackmannanshire schools.

This includes ensuring that all young people have access to appropriate and timely support by collaborating with relevant professionals and developing plans, which are of a high quality, with impact and outcomes followed up. This will require the creation of appropriate support packages with partners, including third sector colleagues, Community Learning & Development (CLD) and college that best meet the needs of young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN), enabling them to enter positive, post school destinations.

In practice, the Virtual Head teacher will fulfil a dual role for young people **and their families**. For those young people who are disengaged from Education, the Virtual Head teacher will work with the school and

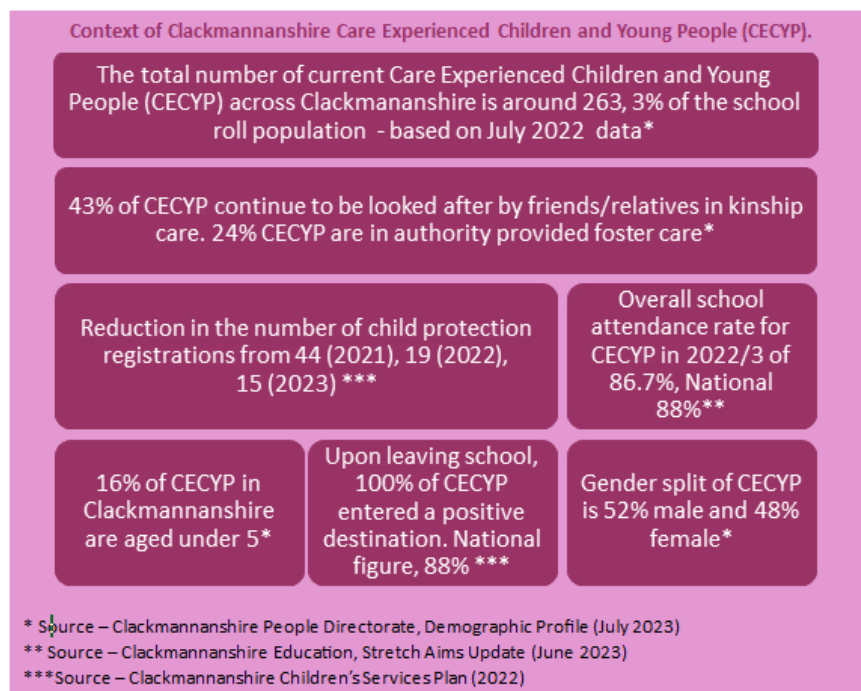




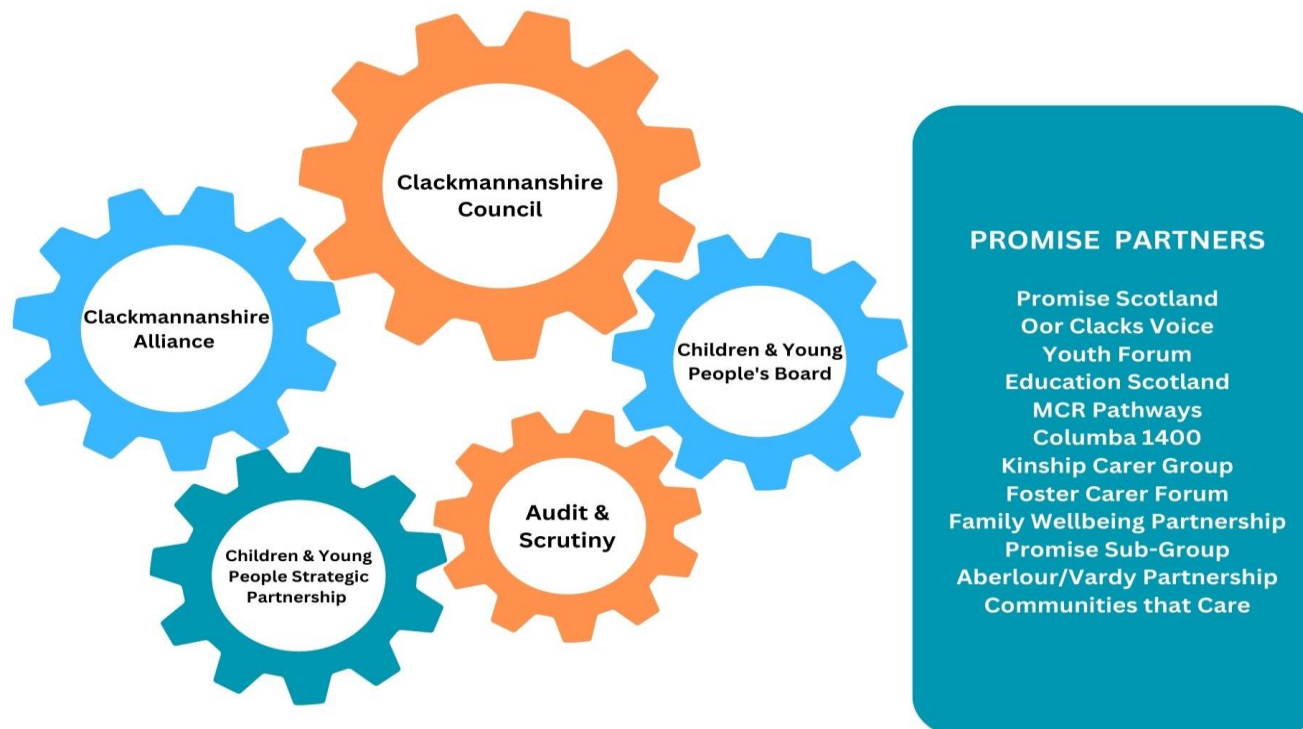
the families as a conduit, looking for innovative and bespoke methods and timescales to gradually introduce to education, balancing support and challenge to ensure this is genuinely pupil focused.

**Our plan** has been informed by what young people have told us is important to them, as well as ongoing self evaluation, engagement with stakeholders, and the data and evidence we hold about the Clackmannanshire area and what is important to our care experienced children, young people and families.

**Our context** informs the next steps in Clackmannanshire’s journey towards ‘The Promise’. From June 2023, a bespoke tracker for attendance, attainment and bespoke curriculum development for Care Experienced and other targeted groups will support the improvement of outcomes for young people. Rigorous data meetings will drive this.



**Our Governance** structure around CECYP is shown below.



## Corporate Parenting

Our commitment to The Promise is consistent with our statutory Corporate Parenting responsibilities to care experienced children and young people here in Clackmannanshire. Clackmannanshire Council is committed to being a good corporate parent to our children and young people; upholding their rights, safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people. Our Promise Plan is an expression of our commitment to uphold our Corporate Parenting responsibilities through the lens of the Promise, as loving and supportive parents, providing the scaffolding and support to enable all of our care experienced children and young people to thrive and meet their full potential.

Central to our Corporate Parenting actions are “Oor Clacks Voices”, a group of care experienced children and young people with a focus on peer support and participation. Central to the group is care family, and young people are involved in co-design and consultation based on their lived experiences within the care system and what they identify as priorities for change... “Oor Clacks Voices” are part of a wider Participation Network in Clackmannanshire which comprises of a range of representatives from different groups for example young people, foster carers and kinship carers. The Participation Network has been instrumental in driving the voice of young people to underpin the promise in Clackmannanshire - utilising the Scottish Approach to Service Design model. The professional group within this network comprises of Corporate Parents and third sector partners who assist in affecting change.



**Keeping The  
Promise:  
Exploring the Language of care**

**FRIDAY 21ST APRIL**

**9.15AM - 4PM  
SAUCHIE HALL  
ALLOA  
FK10 3JQ**

The Participation Network has co-designed a Language of Care Policy to support change in the language we use which can be formal and impersonal, this policy also challenges us to work differently with young people and their families. This culminated in a dedicated day of collaboration with young people, care givers, and partners in April 2023. Work is ongoing within the network to develop Trauma-Transformed Cultures in Clackmannanshire

## What has Clackmannanshire **already achieved** as part of our Promise?

- Language of Care Policy has been co-designed 2022 - 2023
- Engagement with Communities That Care / Who Cares? Scotland to support workforce capacity
- Virtual Head teacher Appointment – focus on the delivery of The Promise across all Clackmannanshire establishments
- Bespoke tracking database created – including:
  - Attendance tracking
  - Attainment tracking
  - Achievement profiling being designed in conjunction with schools
- Partnership working opportunities being developed for Care Experienced Young people including partners such as Ochil Youth Community Improvement , Clacks Voices, Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface, Coach My Sport and Clackmannanshire Primaries and Early Learning Centres (35 young people) providing placement opportunities
- Specific support of a Wellbeing Worker for all Care Experienced Young People in Clackmannanshire is available
- 1-1 support for individual families and young people across all Secondary's from Virtual Head teacher
- Collaborative work around Children's Hearings has been undertaken between Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Panel Members, Social work and Education
- Active schools monitoring participation of care experienced young people in sport and leisure opportunities
- FLIP (Flexible Learning Independent Pathways), FLIP Plus and individual pathways created for those most at risk of being disengaged from education.
- Roll-out of NHS Education for Scotland Transforming Psychological Trauma materials across the Council workforce in collaboration with the Resilience Learning Partnership and led by the Educational Psychology Service, including piloting of a trauma-informed audit tool which will support service re-design.
- Development of a Participation Network to improve the current collaboration and participatory opportunities for care experienced children and young people and their families and carers to support Keeping The Promise across Clackmannanshire
- Increased foster and kinship care allowances, applicable to children in foster care and eligible kinship care
- Targeted financial support for care experienced families for activities during the summer holidays.





- Increased support to foster carers, kinship carers, and adopters through investment in Family Placement Team and focus on building the Care Community
- Children's Services Redesign focusing on early intervention, a community model of working, implementing a relationship based approach to practice.
- Commissioning of intensive support provision to support children on the "edge of care" to remain supported at home with their family
- Development of enhanced support for young people and families returning to Clackmannanshire from placements in other areas
- Establishment of a brothers and sisters working group to develop policy, review procedures and build on keeping brothers and sisters connected training which took place in December 2022.
- The Early Intervention Team has continued to strengthen support to families by developing the range of family support services and groups available
- A new Family Support Working Group is ensuring co-ordinated support to parents and carers across Clackmannanshire
- Establishment of a Children and Young People's Suicide Prevention Group; which has the aim of re-developing Suicide and Self-Harm policies for education staff.
- Established a Housing and Through Care After Care group to ensure improved pathway planning for care leavers preparing to living independently and maximise opportunities for care experienced young people to return and live closer to home
- A Supported Lodgings Service has been registered with Care Inspectorate and awaiting approval
- Joint working between Educational Psychology and Woodside Children's House to embed trauma informed therapeutic approaches to caring through PACE and DDP training for staff.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing in Clacks transformation project has implemented a well-developed Continuum of Support that offers both digital and face-to-face services for children and young people aged 5-26 years including a text based crisis service. New services developed include a Wellbeing Worker for young people who have left care.
- The MCR Pathways Programme across Clackmannanshire continues to ensure that every care experienced young person has access to the same educational outcomes, career opportunities and life chances as every other young person.
- Award of funding from The Lens following a successful bid created by young people at Woodside Children's House to design the spaces that matter to them.

- Strengthening support in Early Intervention for 0-2 through development of baby massage and groups at the Alloa Family Centre in partnership with health.
- Provision of flexible wrap around child care supporting families
- Initial phase complete of Human Economic Cost Modelling (HECM) in partnership with the Clackmannanshire Alliance and The Promise Scotland
- A strong partnership developed with Vardy Foundation to support our commitment to keeping The Promise.
- Selected to work alongside the Aberlour/Vardy Foundation Partnership in Clackmannanshire using the Scottish Model of Service Redesign to define and discover approaches to designing and delivering services to support children disengaged from school and at risk of going into care, and support for young people leaving care and moving onto positive destinations.
- Embedding the principles of The Promise in the Family Wellbeing Partnership
- Secured funding for five year programme 'Communities that Care' delivered within schools and communities within Clackmannanshire.

## Clackmannanshire's Promise

### A Good Childhood

Key	
Promise Foundations	Promise Key Priority Areas (Promise Pillars )
1. Voice – Children must be listened to - meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision making 2. Family – Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay 3. Care – Children must be able to live with brothers and sisters, as long as it's safe 4. People – The children Scotland cares for must be supported to develop 5. Scaffolding – Children, families and the workforce must be supported – help, support and accountability	<b>A Good Childhood</b> <b>Whole Family Support</b> <b>Supporting the Workforce</b> <b>Planning</b> <b>Building Capacity</b>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
GC 1	No Care Experienced Children or Young People excluded in Clackmannanshire	A Good Childhood	5	1. Ensure there are no formal or informal education exclusions of Care Experienced Children and Young People. 2. HTs to liaise with Virtual HT if there is a significant concern regarding safety of a CECYP where exclusion would previously have been considered.	1. 0% care experienced Children and Young People excluded, formally or informally in 2023 – 2024 2. Where previously an exclusion would be considered, VHT/Senior Manager to be involved, to ensure appropriate education is maintained 3. To maintain no formal exclusions within Clackmannanshire.	Head teachers
GC 2	Young people have access to the appropriate support they need to thrive at school	A Good Childhood	1, 4, 5	1. All CECYP to have appropriate educational planning built into statutory Child's Plans. 2. Quality Assurance process to be strengthened around Child's Plans to ensure adherence to Clackmannanshire Education Service, Additional Support for	1. Audit of CECYP's GIRFEC paperwork including Child's Plans to be completed by December 2023. .	Senior Manager: Inclusion and Partnerships  Virtual Head teacher

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				Learning - Staged Intervention Guidance 3. The Educational Psychology Service will continue to provide an enhanced level of support to care experienced children and young people educated outwith Clackmannanshire		
GC 3	Clearer understanding of the impact of Care Experience on Children's development aged 2-8  Appropriate and timely interventions aged 2-8 to ensure children meet developmental outcomes.	A Good Childhood	1, 4 ,5	1. Creation of a Data Gathering tool from age 2+ with colleagues in ELCs 2. Creation of an Observation tool from age 2+ with colleagues in ELCs 3. Support ELCs and Schools to provide developmentally appropriate experiences through the curriculum. 4. Developmental Milestones to be tracked from age 2 5. Working with all ELCs and Primary Schools to ensure consistency of data gathered	1. Data Gathering Tool to be created 2023 – 2024 2. Data Gathering Tool to be implemented by 2024 3. Observational Tool to be implemented for 2+ and record from 2 years old to 8 years old – annual implementation	Senior Manager: ELC, Primary & Libraries  Virtual Head teacher (Primary)  ELC and Primary Leadership Teams
GC 4	Improved educational outcomes (SCQF) and improved SLDR statistics for Care Experienced Children and Young People	A Good Childhood	1, 4 ,5	1. Tracking discussions with a key focus on care experienced group 2. Creation of Care Experienced Bespoke Local Authority Tracker by October 2023 3. Quality assurance of Care Experienced data termly (VHT + DHTs) 4. Embedding of Good Practice group to identify emerging good practice 5. Work with Scottish Government INSIGHT advisor to support proactive planning around enhanced SCQF outcomes for young people	1. Termly discussions with DHTs Support/CECYP lead via existing forum 2. Bespoke Tracker has been implemented ahead of schedule (June 2023) 3. Senior Manager Secondary and VHT to meet with Scottish Gov by Aug 2023 to discuss SCQF for CECYP 4. Skills Development Scotland meeting (termly) with Senior Manager and Virtual HT	Senior Manager: Secondary and Communities  Virtual Head teacher  Improvement Analyst

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
GC 5	Care Experienced Young People to have access to wide ranging opportunities	A Good Childhood	1, 4,5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creation of Clackmannanshire Virtual Academy of partnerships</li> <li>2. Bespoke curriculum making process for young people –removing barriers to education</li> <li>3. Training opportunities for all CE leads in all establishments around bespoke curriculum making and partnerships</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Virtual Head teacher to forge 15 additional partnership opportunities for young people by June 2024</li> <li>2. Virtual Head teacher to create access to 50 individual work experience opportunities for young people by Dec 2024</li> <li>3. Virtual Head teacher to facilitate Leadership Programmes with CMS</li> </ol>	<p>Virtual Head teacher</p> <p>Head teachers Depute Head teacher</p>
GC 6	Children are supported to have safe, quality time with people they care about	A Good Childhood	4,5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with families to develop flexible, friendly and welcoming spaces that enable families who are separated to spend time together</li> <li>2. Develop programmes that support children and young people to keep in touch with people that matter to them</li> <li>3. Implementation of AFKA Staying Connected Toolkit</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Families will be able to access a range of ways to remain connected including use of technology.</li> <li>2. Evidence that significant relationships are central to planning for children.</li> <li>3. Evidence of creative approaches to family time which are not stigmatising and trauma informed.</li> <li>4. These will be measured through planned quality assurance activity including survey and consultation to determine families' experiences of contact and areas for improvement.</li> </ol>	Senior Manager: Permanence
GC 7	Brothers and sisters live together when safe to do so	A Good Childhood	4,5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brothers and sisters to be supported to stay together, unless for reasons of safety. No brothers or sisters should be separated</li> <li>2. Sibling relationships to be cherished and protected across decision making around placements</li> <li>3. Local drive to recruit more foster carers and adoptive parents to look after larger sibling groups</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bespoke tracker implemented that monitors whether brothers and sisters are living together – develop baseline July 2023</li> <li>2. Development and Implementation of a brothers and sisters policy. December 2023</li> <li>3. Evidence that assessment of significant relationships to the child is considered in all planning forums. - planned Quality Assurance activity.</li> </ol>	Senior Manager: Permanence

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				4. Increase availability of placements in the local area to support young people staying together	4. Implementation of AFKA Staying Connected Toolkit by January 2024	
GC 8	Transformation in youth justice reduces the criminalisation of care experienced young people	A Good Childhood	1, 2, 3, 4,5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review approaches to how CECYP access Youth Justice</li> <li>2. Second multi-agency event for the youth justice re-design led by the Children's and Young People's Centre for Justice. Ensuring alignment of The Promise and UNCRC to develop a rights upholding approach to practice.</li> <li>3. Ensuring there is a seamless transition between Children's Services and Justice Services for care experienced young people.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children referred to the Children's Reporter on Offence Grounds will reduce to 4% by 2026 below national average.</li> <li>2. Clackmannanshire will continue to have no children placed in Secure Accommodation</li> <li>3. Numbers of care experienced young people referred to adult justice will reduce.</li> </ol>	Senior Manager: Justice
GC 9	Children and young people in care are receiving trauma-informed, safe care without physical intervention	A Good Childhood	4,5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All appropriate staff to be trauma-informed Those young people who need to have their liberty restricted will be cared for in small, secure, safe and trauma-informed environments that uphold their rights</li> <li>2. Processes implement to record and gather information on use of physical intervention for children placed out with authority or in health and educational settings.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whole workforce engaging with care experienced children is trauma informed by 2026.</li> <li>2. Establish baseline data and mechanisms to track.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate continued trend of no admissions to secure care, and no use of restraint within Clackmannanshire Council Residential Establishments</li> </ol>	Senior Manager: Permanence
GC 10	CECYP and families have access to independent advocacy and legal advice	A Good Childhood		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All CECYP to be made aware that they have access to independent advocacy through Who Cares? Scotland</li> <li>2. All CECYP attending a Children's Hearing to have access to independent advocacy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased numbers of children and young people receiving advocacy support</li> <li>2. All Care Experience Young People will be offered advocacy support via Who Cares?</li> </ol>	Senior Manager: Permanence

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				3. Improved awareness across educational establishments around advocacy services for young people	3. Implementation of Communities that Care will strengthen advocacy and participatory opportunities through increased awareness.	
GC 11	Clackmannanshire Care Leavers' Guaranteed Interview Scheme is extended to lead to more employment opportunities for care experienced young people	A Good Childhood	4, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care Leavers' Guaranteed Interview Scheme to be extended to include care experienced young people via My Job Scotland regardless of where they have been in care.</li> <li>Pre-interview coaching to be developed in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Virtual Head teacher to support those on Care Leavers' Guaranteed Interview Scheme as a scaffolded support</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of Care Experienced Leavers/families to be aware of scheme. Signposting/promotion to be started August 2023 and re-publicised termly</li> <li>Continue to increase number interviewed under guaranteed scheme</li> <li>To increase the number of Care Experienced people working within the organisation.</li> </ol>	<p>Senior Manager (HR)</p> <p>Senior Manager: Secondary and Communities</p> <p>Virtual Head teacher</p>

## Whole Family Support

Key	
Promise Foundations	Promise Key Priority Areas (Promise Pillars)
6. Voice – Children must be listened to - meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision making 7. Family – Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay 8. Care – Children must be able to live with brothers and sisters, as long as it's safe 9. People – The children Scotland cares for must be supported to develop 10. Scaffolding – Children, families and the workforce must be supported – help, support and accountability	<b>A Good Childhood            Whole Family Support            Supporting the Workforce            Planning            Building Capacity</b>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
WFS 1	High quality family support for Care Experienced Children and Young People	Whole Family Support	1,4,5	1. Clackmannanshire Alliance to continue to forge new partnerships 2. Clackmannanshire Alliance of statutory, third sector and community services continue to meet to support and challenge authority support for CECYP 3. Looking outwards at best practice, nationally, around CECYP 4. Bespoke curriculum making 5. New Intensive Support for children on the edge of care has been commissioned and will reduce the number of children becoming care experienced	1. Commissioning Consortium to be developed in partnership with families 2. Reduction in children that are looked after to be in line with Scottish average 12.9% BY 2026	Senior Manager Secondary & Communities  Virtual Head teacher  Senior Manager: Early Intervention
WFS 2	Support to families will and communities will be non-stigmatising	Whole Family Support	1,4,5	1. Communities that Care will work to break down stigma within schools and communities.	1. Development and Implementation of new communication strategies	Virtual Head teacher



Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				2. Current Whole Family Support Provision will develop clearer community links through engagement in the communities model and early intervention team 3. Approaches within the Family Wellbeing Partnership will be aligned.	around Care Experienced Young People 2. Measure through service evaluation to ascertain people's lived experience and areas of improvement.	Senior Manager Early Intervention
WFS 3	Care Community will experience high quality support – with measurable improvement	Whole Family Support	1,4,5	1. Language of Care Policy to be implemented – test of change for Reviewing Service and Community Teams. 2. Investment in Family Placement Team and Social Work Redesign will increase support available to care giving families 3. Clackmannanshire Care Experienced Event to be arranged – all support organisations to be invited – “Care Fest” with Columba 1400	1. Evidence of increased support to care giving families through increase in care givers accessing training and support. 2. Reduction in unplanned endings of placements 3. Reduction in children who have had one or more placements within twelve months – target 10% by 2026 4. Reduction in children who have had three or more placement moves – target 3.8% by 2026 5. Increase in local care provision, measured through % of children cared for within the Local Authority – Target 20% by 2026 6. Clackmannanshire People Directorate to host a Care Event for all CECYP and families, support agencies and partners during 2023 - 2024	Senior Manager Permanence  Virtual Head teacher
WFS 4	Improved support for young people leaving care	Whole Family	1, 3, 4, 5	1. Invest in home and community opportunities for Care	1. 100% young people transitioning out of care will	Senior Managers

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
		Support		<p>Experienced young people in partnership with the Vardy Foundation</p> <p>2. Dedicated Independent Reviewing Officer resource to support quality pathway planning and reviews for young people</p>	<p>access supportive, caring services for as long as they require them OR</p> <p>2. 100% young people supported through the transition into adulthood and independent living have active pathway plans</p> <p>3. 100% of care leavers will have an allocated pathway coordinator</p>	Virtual Head teacher
WFS 5	School leaders to be aware of attendance concerns, to proactively support families	Whole Family Support	1, 2, 5	<p>1. Monthly attendance tracking of CECYP to be implemented</p> <p>2. Monthly information sharing with each Secondary establishment around attendance to provide support and challenge</p> <p>3. Monthly information sharing with each Secondary establishment around attendance to provide support and challenge</p> <p>4. Tracking, monitoring and interventions around attendance in liaison with young people and families to improve outcomes</p>	<p>1. Monthly attendance tracking to be implemented by VHT &amp; Improvement Analyst by Aug 2023</p> <p>2. 100% of CECYP with attendance below 80% to be highlighted monthly to schools by VHTs</p> <p>3. 100% of CECYP who are not attending school to be referred to Virtual HT for discussion</p> <p>4. Improvement in attendance percentage for Care Experienced Children and Young People from 2022 – 2023 into 2023 - 2024</p>	<p>Virtual Head teacher</p> <p>Improvement Analyst</p>

## Supporting the Workforce

Key	
Promise Foundations	Promise Key Priority Areas (Promise Pillars)
11. Voice – Children must be listened to - meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision making 12. Family – Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay 13. Care – Children must be able to live with brothers and sisters, as long as it's safe 14. People – The children Scotland cares for must be supported to develop 15. Scaffolding – Children, families and the workforce must be supported – help, support and accountability	<b>A Good Childhood</b> <b>Whole Family Support</b> <b>Supporting the Workforce</b> <b>Planning</b> <b>Building Capacity</b>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
STW 1	Enhanced Support for Foster carers, adopters and kinship carers	Supporting the workforce	1,2	1. Develop and deliver trauma informed training 'Readiness for Caring' for foster carers, adopters and kinship carers	1. All foster carers to complete this suite of training by end of 2024. 2. Training to be offered to all new and existing kinship carers and adopters by end of 2024 3. Reduction in unplanned endings 4. Increase in care givers reporting feeling supported and well trained through annual evaluation. 5. Reduction in children who have had three or more placement moves – target 3.8% by 2026	Senior Manager Permanence
STW 2	Enhanced knowledge and skills of staff in trauma informed practice	Supporting the workforce	4, 5	1. Develop and deliver a trauma informed suite of staff training 'Readiness for Practice' within Children's Services. 2. Continue to implement Readiness for Learning (R4L) across educational establishments.	1. To be developed in partnership with Psychological Services building on R4L approach. 2. All Children's Services staff to completed Readiness for Practice (R4P) by December 2024. Increased number of	Senior Manager Permanence  Principle Educational

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				3. Programme of training, development and support for all council employees delivered in collaboration with the Resilience Learning Partnership	education establishments achieving R4L accreditation status as a result of at least 95% of staff completing the R4L Level One modules 3. Increased number of education establishments implementing an R4L approach through school improvement planning cycles 4. All managers to take part in half day in-person trauma-informed training by December 2023	Psychologist.
STW 3	Improved support for practitioners	Supporting the workforce	4, 5	1. Identify Trauma Champions to develop and facilitate a support network for practitioners 2. To be developed in partnership with Psychological Services and RLP	1. Increased reporting of practitioners feeling supported when dealing with trauma.	Senior Manager Permanence
STW 4	Improved policy and guidance to support staff in effective practice and engagement with children/young people.	Supporting the workforce	1,2,4,5	1. Develop and Implement a 'Language of Care Policy' to support the changes in practice and language used to ensure the children and young people are included in decisions involving them, their views are sought and taken account of 2. Review of electronic mechanisms to support young people to share their views and participate in planning.	1. Policy to be implemented through communication strategy and tests of change across services. 2. Increase in number of children and young people attending and or participating in planning processes 3. Increased evidence year on year of the voice of children being evidence in planning processes. 4. Increased evidence year on year of children and young people participating in their meetings.	Senior Manager Permanence

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
					5. All care experienced children will have permanent plans within six months of becoming looked after. – by December 2025	
STW 5	Increased staff awareness of their responsibilities under The Promise	Supporting the workforce	4, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and deliver training on The Promise across all areas of Clackmannanshire Council – three key directorates</li> <li>2. Who Cares? will deliver training on Corporate Parenting and the legislative responsibilities around the promise</li> <li>3. Provide training to all People Directorate staff around 'The Promise' – national context and Clackmannanshire's plan/commitment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Virtual Head teacher to present to all People Directorate staff in September 2023 on Promise</li> <li>2. Who Cares will deliver Corporate Parenting Training by March 2024</li> <li>3. Through evaluation all staff within the Directorate will report increased understanding of The Promise and Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.</li> </ol>	<p>Virtual Head teacher</p> <p>Senior Manager (Permanence)</p>
STW 6	<p>Clackmannanshire Council to be the first local authority in Scotland to be part of Education Scotland's Keeping The Promise Award (KTPA).</p> <p>Improving life chances for CECYP through a highly-skilled workforce</p>	Supporting the workforce	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clackmannanshire Council to sign up to Education Scotland "Keeping The Promise Award" (KTPA) as an early adopter of programme</li> <li>2. Virtual Head teacher to work with Senior Manager (Secondary's) and Senior Manager (Primaries) on KTPA implementation plan</li> <li>3. Self-evaluation processes and quality assurance to be co-developed by Virtual Head teacher and Education Scotland</li> <li>4. Virtual Head teacher to keep Senior Managers appraised on progress</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KTPA to be launched to all HTs Aug 2023</li> <li>2. Identified ELCs, Primaries and Secondary's to begin programme by October 2023</li> <li>3. KTPA Phase 1 to be completed by identified establishments by December 2023</li> <li>4. KTPA Phase 2 to be completed by identified establishments by April 2024</li> <li>5. KTPA Evidence (MS Forms) to Education Scotland by June 2024 for individual school awards</li> </ol>	<p>Virtual Head teacher</p> <p>Senior Manager Secondary &amp; Communities</p>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
STW 7	All establishments provide excellent support to CECYP	Supporting the workforce	4, 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who Cares? Scotland training to all Primaries (Term 3)</li> <li>2. Who Cares? Scotland training to all Secondary's (Term 1)</li> <li>3. Keeping The Promise Award launched with ELCs to support data exercise</li> <li>4. Cluster support (for each Secondary) from Who Cares?/VHT</li> <li>5. GIRFEC Resilience Matrix tool to be used for all CECYP in schools</li> <li>6. Training opportunities for CECYP leads to be created</li> <li>7. Virtual HT to attend CELCIS to identify best practice – monthly</li> <li>8. Virtual HT to facilitate best practice groups and opportunities for collaboration</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KTPA Self Evaluation throughout 2023 – 2024</li> <li>2. Cluster support from Virtual HTs termly – enhanced support for CECYP with signposted opportunities</li> <li>3. Virtual HT to embed good practice network – termly</li> <li>4. CELSIS termly meetings to be attended with feedback to Education Directorate and HTs/DHTs in each establishment</li> </ol>	<p>Virtual Head teacher</p> <p>Senior Manager (ELC, Primary, Libraries)</p> <p>Senior Manager (Secondary &amp; Communities)</p>

## Planning

Key	
Promise Foundations	Promise Key Priority Areas (Promise Pillars)
16. Voice – Children must be listened to - meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision making 17. Family – Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay 18. Care – Children must be able to live with brothers and sisters, as long as it's safe 19. People – The children Scotland cares for must be supported to develop 20. Scaffolding – Children, families and the workforce must be supported – help, support and accountability	<b>A Good Childhood</b> <b>Whole Family Support</b> <b>Supporting the Workforce</b> <b>Planning</b> <b>Building Capacity</b>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
P 1	Improved delivery of relationship based services to families	Planning	4,5	1. Undertake redesign exercise of People Service	1. Increased numbers of children and families will be supported on a voluntary basis 2. Fewer children and young people will be care experienced	Senior Manager Early Intervention
P 2	Improved policies which positively reflect on children/young people who are care experienced and their families	Planning	2,5	1. Review of housing and recruitment policies to ensure care experienced children/young people and their families are positively represented 2. Creation of Youth Voice (ASN Inc. CECYP) strategy to be created	1. Audit of existing housing/recruitment policies to ensure support for Care Experience Young People and support to Kinship Carers by December 2023 2. Audit of existing Pupil Voice structures by end Term 2 (Apr 23) to inform positive representation strategy	Senior Manager Permanence  Virtual Head Teacher
P 3	Improved service delivery incorporating the principles of Scottish Service Design	Planning	5	1. Expand the work of the participation network 2. All Education Staff to be trained in The Promise by 2024 (phase 1)	1. Who Cares?/Virtual HT to train 100% of Secondary establishments by October 2023 2. Who Cares?/Virtual HT to train 100% of Primary Establishments	Senior Manager Permanence

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
				3. Development of Clacks Learners Who Move Policy 4. All Education Directorate policies to be linked to The Promise by 2024 5. Training e-module to be created in Clacks Academy 6. Probationer Teacher and new employee training to be created 7. All Directorates to be trained in The Promise by Who Cares by 2028 8. All Council policies and procedures designed to be cognisant of The Promise by 2028	by April 2024 3. Implementation of Learners Who Move Policy 2023 - 2024 4. E-Module to be created in conjunction with Education Scotland/ HR – by Dec 2024 5. E-Module to be in use by all Directorates by August 2026 6. Virtual HTs to work with all new Education (Teaching) staff as part of induction in session 2023 – 2024 7. Full policy review/policy mapping linked to Phase 2 + Phase 3 of Change Programme One by 2028	Senior Manager Secondary & Communities  Virtual Head teacher
P 4	Improved understanding of UNCRC and the implications for practice, processes and systems	Planning	2, 5	1. Ensure Clackmannanshire's implementation of UNCRC takes account of The Promise and aligns with this plan.	1. Timeline to be reviewed and refreshed as legislation progresses.	Senior Manager Secondary & Communities



## Building Capacity

Key	
Promise Foundations	Promise Key Priority Areas (Promise Pillars)
21. Voice – Children must be listened to - meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision making 22. Family – Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, they must stay 23. Care – Children must be able to live with brothers and sisters, as long as it's safe 24. People – The children Scotland cares for must be supported to develop 25. Scaffolding – Children, families and the workforce must be supported – help, support and accountability	<b>A Good Childhood</b> <b>Whole Family Support</b> <b>Supporting the Workforce</b> <b>Planning</b> <b>Building Capacity</b>

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
BC 1	Improved local care provision and housing options for children and young people who are care experienced.	Building Capacity	5	1. Work to develop a portfolio of accommodation and supports for care experienced young people in partnership with the Vardy Foundation. 2. Recruitment of Foster carers and Supported Lodgings Carers. 3. Review of local housing policy and protocols that ensure all young people with care experience in the area are given priority access to housing	1. Decrease in number of external placements from 2022 – 2023 level. 2. By December 2024 demonstrate year on year increase to meet demand. 3. Demonstrate a year on year Increase in number of young people able to access housing in the area they consider home.	Senior Manager Permanence
BC 2	Integrated support from Skills Development Scotland with Senior Manager and Virtual Head teacher.	Building Capacity	5	1. Strengthening Pathway Planning for Care Experienced Young People in a collaborative way with partners	1. 100% of young people in Virtual Head teacher caseload to be offered bespoke support from Skills Development Scotland by December 2023	Senior Manager Secondary and Communities Virtual Head teacher

Action Code	Outcome	Promise Pillar	Promise Foundation	Actions	Target and Timescales	Responsible
	Wide range of bespoke opportunities for young people including work experience in the locale.				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of disengaged young people in Virtual Head teacher caseload to be offered bespoke curriculum making by December 2023.</li> <li>100% of young people on Virtual Head teacher caseload to be offered additional opportunities including work experience and extra curricular offers – from August 2023 ongoing.</li> <li>Monthly review of targets to be completed by Virtual Head teacher and recorded on bespoke tracker.</li> </ol>	
BC 3	Robust tracking, monitoring and intervention in place to support young people	Building Capacity	4, 5	1. Develop a robust tracking mechanism to track attainment and sustained positive destination outcomes for all care experienced children and young people, strengthening oversight of children placed out with Clackmannanshire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All young people on bespoke packages to be tracked on VHT bespoke authority tracker by September 2023.</li> <li>All CECYP to be tracked and monitored by July 2023.</li> <li>Quality Assurance with each establishment to be completed by Term 1</li> </ol>	<p>Senior Manager Secondary &amp; Communities</p> <p>Virtual Head teacher</p>
BC 4	Improved data collection and analysis to demonstrate impact of actions	Building Capacity		1. Develop a data map to inform how indicators of success can be further developed and analysed to measure impact on children and young people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Map to be developed by December 2023</li> <li>All People Directorate staff to have draft Data Map by December 2023</li> </ol>	Programme Manager Family Wellbeing Partnership



## Scotland made a promise ...

Scotland made a promise to care experienced children and young people:



You **will** grow up loved, safe and respected.  
And by 2030, that promise **must be kept**.

"Every child deserves

**A CHAMPION**

an adult who will **never** give up on them  
who understands the power of connection

and **INSISTS** that they

**become the best**

they can possibly be."

-Rita Pierson

-intheLandofTeaching-

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Clackmannanshire **can deliver** on that promise





# Language of Care

Clackmannanshire Council Language Policy



# Who is this policy for?

This document was developed in the context of care experienced children and young people, however it is applicable to any child we support. It is for anyone across Clackmannanshire working with children, young people and their families including:

**Clackmannanshire Council Staff**

**Elected Members**

**Clackmannanshire Alliance**

**Corporate Parents**

**Clackmannanshire Community**

**Third Sector Partners**





# Language and The Promise



Between 2017 and 2020, the Independent Care Review listened very carefully to those with experience of living and working in and around the 'care system' to properly understand what needs to change. The Care Review heard over 5,500 experiences. Over half were children, young people and adults who had lived in care. The rest were families and the paid and unpaid workforce. It was their stories that guided the Care Review and their experiences that shaped the findings of the Care Review.

The Care Review published seven reports; The Promise was one of these reports. The Promise laid out five foundations and over 80 calls to action.

The Promise shone a light on the impact of language and the language used when talking to and about care experienced children and families.

Through the Independent Care Review, care experienced children and young adults voiced that their time being looked after by the state often "felt cold, overly professionalised, stigmatising and uncaring."

The Promise outlines that "Scotland should be a good parent to the children it has responsibility for."

The workforce, carers and the community should "act, speak and behave like a family so that Scotland can be the best parent it can be."

*"Scotland must stop stigmatising the children it cares for."*

- The Promise, p.87



# Language in Clacks

In Clackmannanshire, we are keen to ensure we are keeping The Promise by addressing our language and its impact on our care experienced community.

Oor Clacks Voices and Oor Wee Clacks Voices were involved in giving their views to the Care Review and vocalised that they wanted the language used around care experienced children and young people to change. Our Participation Network have been looking into language intensively, working with different groups including foster carers and kinship carers, as well as local organisations to discover and define the changes in language required in Clacks.

The Participation Network developed a Corporate Sponsorship Pledge signed by Senior Leaders and Elected Members to pledge their commitment to address reframing the language of care.

Through extended Discovery and Definition phases, utilising surveys, discussions and design workshops, the idea of a Language Policy for Clackmannanshire was developed.

## Corporate Sponsor Pledge



### Task: Re-framing the Language used in Care

I, Lorraine Sanda and Councillor Ellen Forson, on behalf of the Children and Young People's Board pledge to support work undertaken by Keeping the Promise Clacks (Participation Forum) in collaboration with the Mobilisation Team to challenge and re-frame the language used in respect of care within the work of Clackmannanshire Council, our Third Sector Partners and The Clackmannanshire Alliance.

#### I will support this by:

- Ensuring that I maintain **clarity** to those within Clackmannanshire Council, Third Sector Colleagues and The Clackmannanshire Alliance around the potential impact that re-framing the language used in care will have on our care experienced community and our wider community.
- Ensuring my **commitment** to the planning, implementation and evaluation of reframing the language used in respect of care.
- Ensuring that I am actively **challenging** the Keeping the Promise Clacks and the Mobilisation Team around their commitment to the delivery of re-framing their use of language in care.
- Ensuring that I am effectively **communicating** to members of the organisation, including members of our Communications team, the significance and impact of reframing the language used in care.



# What does this mean for practice?

*"The voice of every person with care experience must be heard in their care journeys, with real weight given to their wishes in line with the UNCRC"*

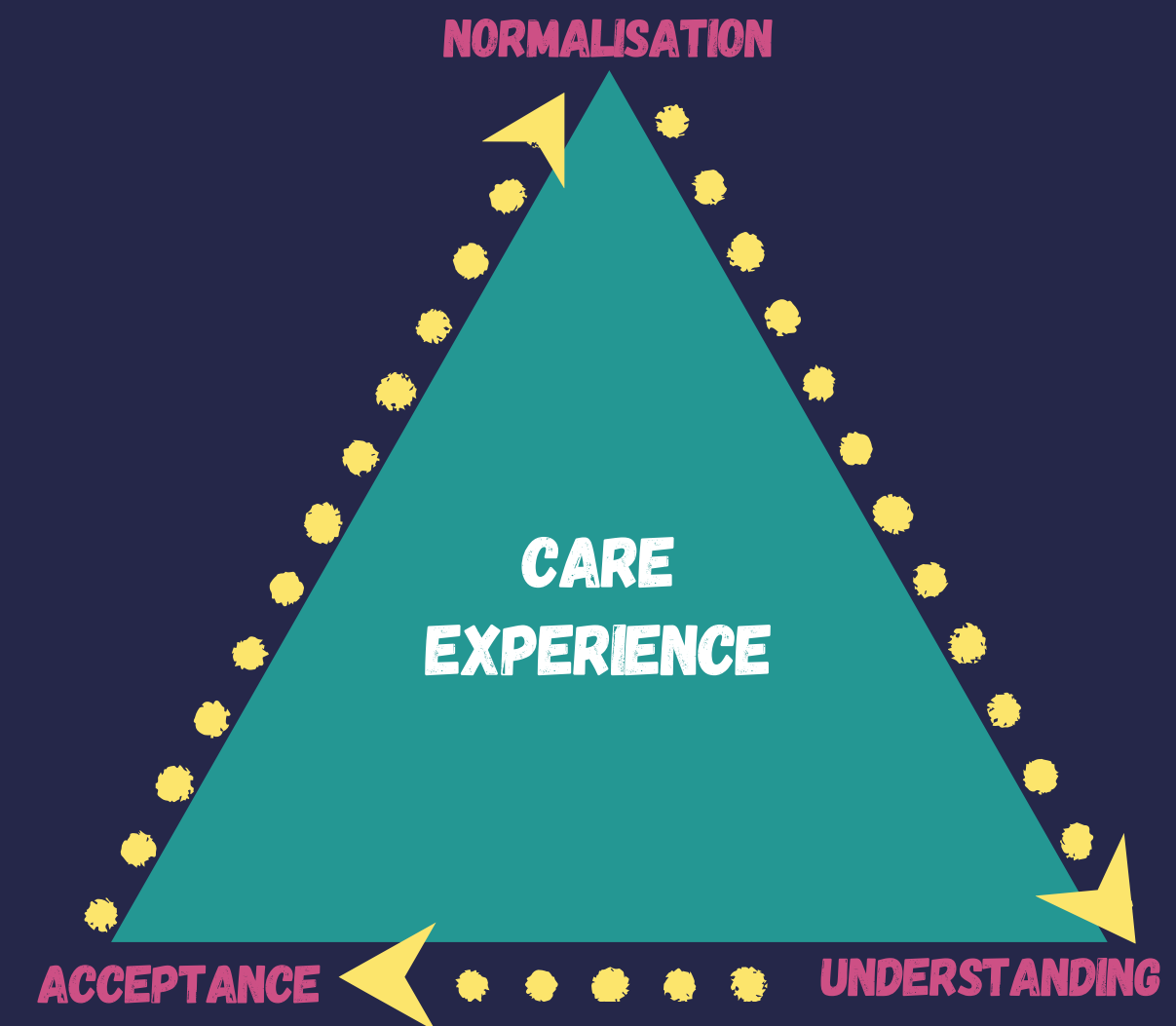
-The Promise, p33

We want to ensure that we provide stable environments with the loving, supportive, and enduring relationships that every child needs to thrive, while ensuring that our care experienced community have access to the support and tools they may require when it is needed, for as long as it is needed.

Our language should be reflective of this, and should be respectful, empowering and inclusive of our care experienced community. We will achieve this by reducing the language that reinforces the 'othering' and stigma associated with the care system.

Discussions around preferred language will be a collaborative and individualised conversation between professionals and children and their families. We will check with each individual young person what terms and phrases they prefer and they are most comfortable with. In doing this, our young people's own language will be heard, respected and included in their reports, meetings and discussions.

We will become flexible and able to evolve with our language, taking time to pause and reflect while writing reports or having discussions within our teams, and remember the lasting impact that language can have.



*The Promise, p 87*

**KEY THEMES TO CONSIDER**



# Key Themes

These four themes were identified during the collaborative design process of the policy.

## **Non-judgemental**

Language used should be inclusive, thoughtful and free of judgement.

## **Easy to understand**

Language should be clear and use of abbreviations and acronyms should be limited.

## **Transparent**

Young people should be able to see and hear themselves within anything written about them.

## **Culture and values align**

It is not enough to just change our language. These changes need to be reflected in our work with children and their families.

# NON – JUDGEMENTAL

It is important as a community that the **language we use is non-judgemental and empowering.** Our care experienced community may have experienced language that make them feel blamed, judged and stigmatised.

We will ensure that the language used in respect of care experienced children and young people does not reinforce negative feelings that have a lasting impact.

We will try to **understand the thoughts, feelings and experiences of our young people rather than labelling behaviour.** For example, rather than referring to 'challenging' behaviour, considering how the young person is feeling and what they are experiencing.

## WHY THIS MATTERS?

We know through research that "shifting public attitudes is a vital component of addressing stigma and creating systemic change at all levels of society."

Each and Every Child, Frameworks

Through ensuring that our language is non-judgemental, empowering and focused on what all children need to thrive and meet their potential, we can create real change in public perception, and remove some of the barriers and stigma associated with living in care.

Our care experienced children and families are some of the few groups in society that are required to read and hear about their lives. This in itself reinforces difference. It is important to be mindful of the language that we use reduce the judgement placed on the care community.

## KEY POINTS:



Language should be inclusive



Language should not reinforce stigma or shame



Understanding of feelings and experience rather than labeling behaviour

# TRANSPARENT

We will **always write and speak as if children and their families are in the room alongside us.**

We will ask children and young people their preferred words and phrases so that their language is heard and respected when writing reports or attending meetings.

When writing or speaking about a child, we will use language that describes what is happening for them at that time in a way they can understand. For example, rather than using 'dysregulated', explaining what this means: 'having trouble coping with some of the big emotions that a person feels.'

**Checking in with the child or young person around the content of what has been written and ensuring their understanding of this throughout their journey of care.**

## WHY THIS MATTERS?

Key themes and feedback from young people were:

*they felt passionately around ensuring that their voice is clear throughout*

*reports should be written alongside them*

*they could not see themselves in their reports and meetings*

*don't cut and paste!*

*they understand the language used*

*actions are communicated back to them*

## KEY POINTS:

★ Write and speak as though the child or young person is in the room

★ Check that a child or young person understands what has been written



# EASY TO UNDERSTAND

**We need our language to be simple, clear and easy to understand for everyone, with little use of abbreviations and acronyms.**

Sometimes we can use professional terms or jargon and this can feel too formal. Acronyms or abbreviations may feel like a hidden or secretive language to the wider community, and can leave people feeling unsure or embarrassed to ask the meaning.

We will ensure that reports, meetings and discussions take on a **more informal tone** where professionals **use clear, simple language and limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms. If there is a requirement to use an abbreviation or acronym, explain what they mean.**

## WHY THIS MATTERS?

Discussions with Oor Clacks Voices and The Participation Network highlighted abbreviations and acronyms as problematic. Most notably, the acronym LAC due to the association with 'lacking' in something.

*"The physical act of writing out or saying the words in full serves to remind us that looked after children are children and young people first and not a category. Each child has individual talents and claims on a positive future. And is it really such an inconvenience to type a few more letters?"*

**Dr Graham Connelly, CELCIS**

When someone does not understand the meaning of words or acronyms it means that they can't fully engage in the decisions that are being made about them or their children. We need to make sure that everyone understands what is said or written so they can be fully included in decisions.

## KEY POINTS:

- ★ If there is a simpler word to use, use it
- ★ Less jargon
- ★ Try to write more informally
- ★ Limit or stop using abbreviations

# CULTURE AND VALUES ALIGN

**It is not enough to just change our language.** These changes need to be reflected in the way we work with children and their families.

While it is key that we understand individual preferences around language, we need to ensure our culture and values align. To put this policy into practice, **we will work in a personalised and collaborative way with children and their families.**

We will **lead in sharing the preferred language that individual children and young people use with other professionals** working alongside families to ensure respect and consistency.

## WHY THIS MATTERS?

Changing language is only effective if we also change the practice. For example, considering words around 'family time' is meaningless if the arrangements themselves reinforce the stigma associated with care experience.

**This policy challenges us to consider whether the language we use is as a result of duty, choice or habit.**

The language we use in writing about a child or young person is both a habit and a choice. Often, there is no legislative reason as to why we need to use certain descriptors, yet we continue to use them. For example, while we continue to have the term "looked after" in policy and legislation, this does not need to dictate the language we use in discussions and reports with or about children and young people.

We will promote a positive culture with the conditions to challenge our language and change our habits. This policy does not stand alone, and should inform the review and development of other policies and procedures relevant to children and their families.

## KEY POINTS:

- ★ Considering language in isolation is not enough. Our values and culture need to reflect this.
- ★ Is our language a habit, duty or choice?
- ★ A child's preferred language should be consistent amongst those working alongside them.

# Further Information



**Clackmannanshire  
Council**

[www.clacks.gov.uk](http://www.clacks.gov.uk)

Comhairle Siorrachd  
Chlach Mhanann



**the promise  
scotland**



**WHO  
CARES?  
SCOTLAND**



**Clackmannanshire  
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