



Journey to Delivering The Promise

January 2022





Introduction

The Promise sets out an ambitious vision for Scotland.

In Barnardo's Scotland we have started out on the journey to create and sustain an organisational culture and service environment where safe, relational practice is the norm. We agree that some aspects of the current system are letting too many children, young people and families down and, as part of that complex system, we in Barnardo's Scotland need to commit to playing a full part in the change journey.

As we set off on this organisational journey, we need to understand and plan for significant change, ensuring we build focus and momentum within our organisation to deliver deep, meaningful and sustainable improvements in how we support children, young people and families over the next 10 years.

Changing our current culture, systems and practices to ensure every child has a foundation of stable, nurturing loving relationships will take effort from every one of us.

Since The Independent Care Review reported its findings in February 2020, we have been developing our organisational response.

With support from Columba 1400 in 2021 we established three Changemaker groups with a representative group of staff from every area of Barnardo's Scotland to help us shape our internal response to The Promise.

During the last year we have also created a Barnardo's Scotland Promise Oversight Group to reflect, plan and measure our progress toward embedding the principles of The Promise across all our services and support functions.

We have now identified an Assistant Director to help co-ordinate and progress key actions which we will collectively identify. This will

complement and support The Promise activity happening in services and localities.

Our aim is to develop an approach which allows us to grow, capture, share and align Promise activity happening across Barnardo's Scotland. This activity will also include all our support colleagues, retail and our Scottish National Advisory Board.

We are building on strong foundations, but we have much work to do.

This document is intended to be a useful reference tool for guiding discussions and identifying what actions are required to ensure we are keeping The Promise.

Next Steps

The Promise was built on five foundations:

- Voice
- Family
- Care
- People
- Scaffolding

These will be the building blocks of our internal Barnardo's Scotland approach to implementing The Promise.

The Promise sets out a clear aspiration supported by a set of guiding principles. However, it does not identify a destination. Instead, it challenges us to work with children, young people, families, and communities, to co-design future supports and services. Therefore, we are encouraging all our staff and carers to consider their role and how they can make a contribution to turning the aspirations of The Promise into a reality. The Promise should be priority area for discussion within all services and broader locality meetings.

Alongside this, and feeding into and out of these local discussions and associated activities, we plan to establish five foundation communities of practice populated with staff

from across different settings who can work together to support our Barnardo's Scotland response to The Promise. Through these communities of practice, we will develop an action plan to deliver the required changes to our cultures, systems and practice.

The nature and scale of the change needed in each of the different thematic areas may be very different. As each group begins to identify priorities we will capture and share these. This will ensure we work together as a coherent, connected whole.

This document is intended to be a starting point for our work, identifying themes, issues, challenges, questions, and aspirations as we progress our work together to deliver The Promise we have made to children and young people.

The document also provides some suggested areas for consideration. The required changes will extend across every aspect of how we work in Barnardo's Scotland, however, we won't be able to progress everything at once. Therefore, part of the work will be identifying and prioritising which improvement activities to attend to first and agreeing how we measure our progress toward achieving these. The content of this document is intended to support discussion and identification of key areas for action, rather than a checklist to be worked through.

Everyone is invited to play a part in generating a movement for change to ensure our children, young people and families get the services they need and deserve.

Areas for further consideration:

- 1. Are all staff, carers and families we support aware of The Promise and does everyone feel they have the opportunity to be engaged in this organisational journey?**
- 2. What more can we do to ensure everyone plays their part in the work we need to do to #KeepThePromise**





Section One – Voice

The Promise states,

Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focused on children and those they trust¹.

Language

The Care Review had feedback from children, young people and families that some of the language used by professionals to describe their lives and experiences was unhelpful and could be stigmatising.

Use of words like ‘unit’ or ‘placement’ to describe their home, ‘contact’ to describe the time they had with their family, and ‘LAC’ to describe their ‘care status’ were identified as compounding a sense of being different and risked increasing feelings of low self-esteem. There is a view we should no longer to use the term ‘respite’, referring instead to short breaks, removing negative connotations of parents and carers getting a break from a child.

Much of the language we use in Barnardo’s Scotland reflects that of the professional networks around us, rather than the words children, young people and families may choose to use to express their experiences. We need to unlearn the set of comfortable professional phrases and shorthand, replacing this with language which is less exclusionary and stigmatising.

We need to listen to children, young people and families and thoughtfully respond to their views about the most appropriate and accurate language we can use to capture and describe their lived realities.

We also need to get the message out to all staff and carers around language, and, if necessary, give them a new more positively ascribed language to use.

Areas for further consideration:

- 3. How can we engage with people who use our services to help us shape the language we use in Barnardo’s Scotland going forward?**
- 4. How can we ask for help from our staff to review and refresh the language we use so it’s fully aligned to the principles of The Promise?**

Listening

We recognise that in Barnardo’s Scotland we need to get better at listening to the perspectives of children, young people and families and always have their voice in the room physically or metaphorically.

All aspects of our organisation should reflect what the people who use our services have told us they need. We should always work alongside people in a strengths-based way, recognising even the most challenged family has assets as well as vulnerabilities. While we should never use the label ‘hard to reach’, we can be mindful of particular groups, including infants, children who are non-verbal etc, where we may have to work in a different way to ensure their voices are heard.

All children, young people and families we engage with have the right to have their voice heard.

¹ <https://thepromise.scot/assets/UPLOADS/DOCUMENTS/2020/10/KeepThePromise-Oct-2020.pdf> p6

Areas for further consideration:

- 5. How do we evidence our listening approach currently?**
- 6. Are there areas of listening practice we need to strengthen and extend?**
- 7. How do we ensure that our staff have the time and space to listen meaningfully?**

We have a recording policy in place to support capturing proportionate and accurate information and we have a clear approach to when we can share information with other professionals to ensure the voices and experiences of children are heard.

Decisions about gathering and sharing information need to reflect the information which is important to children, young people and families.

Areas for further consideration:

- 8. Are we fully adhering to this approach in all circumstances?**
- 9. Are there wider implications for recording practice we need to consider?**

Decision making

The Promise was clear that decisions taken about support must involve children, young people and families, focusing on meeting their needs and not the needs of the systems which support them.

In Barnardo’s Scotland we recognise a key focus for our improvement activity needs to be on strengthening the meaningful participation of people we work with in decisions about their own journey alongside informing wider discussion about the strategic direction of our organisation.

The experiences and views of children, young people and families must directly and consistently inform our approach.

Areas for further consideration:

- 10. Do we always ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are represented in our work with them?**
- 11. Is this always done in a meaningful way, ensuring people feel it has integrity and is not tokenistic?**
- 12. Are we clear about our expectations with staff and are they provided with the support they need to implement this?**
- 13. Do we need to further support staff to embed better participation practice across our services?**
- 14. How do we ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are represented?**

Upholding children’s rights

The UNCRC is a legally binding international agreement setting out the Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Every Child. Key principles include:

- Every child has a right to life, survival, and development
- Every child has a right to non-discrimination
- Every child has a right to be heard and understood
- A child’s best interests are paramount.

The Scottish Government committed to full [Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) through the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill 2021, which was passed by the Scottish Parliament in March 2021. Following a subsequent UK Supreme Court decision that certain provisions of this fall out-with the power of the Scottish Parliament, this will be revised. However, the intention remains full incorporation which



will include a duty for organisations to act compatibly with UNCRC requirements.

Our aim in Barnardo's Scotland is to 'create enabling environments' where children's rights are protected and protected. This involves:

- Ensuring children, young people, parents and carers are aware of and understand the UNCRC (Article 42)
- Embedding participative practice ensuring that children and young people's views are given due weight within decision making at all levels (Article 12)
- Rights-based decision making, enabling us to assess the impact of our decisions on the rights of children and young people.
- Establishing processes to identify and challenge rights violations including those by external agencies.
- Promoting child friendly justice processes e.g., complaints.
- Working alongside external agencies who provide children's rights and advocacy support for children and young people.

Internally we have had the recent launch of the [**Barnardo's UK Voice & Influence Strategic Plan 21-25**](#) including the development of B-Amplified – A network for children and young people aged 11-25.

This approach compliments the Scotland specific work we are taking forward in the area of participation and engagement.

Barnardo's Scotland has must made a clear and explicit commitment to upholding the rights of children and young people, however, we know we have more work to do to create and sustain a right's respecting culture across all settings.

Areas for further consideration:

- 15. Do all staff and carers know what rights children and young people have?**
- 16. Do all staff understand the principles of embedding a Human Rights approach to working with children, young people and families.**
- 17. Do we need to create a self-evaluation tool to measure our progress toward fully incorporating the UNCRC in all settings?**
- 18. Are we mindful of the challenges of upholding the rights of those with additional barriers, including those for whom English is a second language, those with additional support needs etc?**
- 19. How do we assess the impact of our decision making upon children and young people's rights in terms of policy and service delivery.**

Access to advocacy

Advocacy is seen as an essential component of developing a culture where children's rights are enabled and upheld as a matter of course. The principles of advocacy articulated in The Promise include ensuring care experienced children and adults have access to independent advocacy at all stages of their experience of care and beyond, thus removing any age limits. The Promise states advocacy must be structurally, financially and psychologically separate from provision of support services.

Areas for further consideration:

- 20. What are the implications for our Barnardo's advocacy services if they have to be separated from service delivery?**
- 21. Do we have agreement with commissioners to remove the age limit across our current provision?**
- 22. Do we support children and young people to access independent advocacy delivered by external agencies.**

Children's Hearings

The Promise had a range of reflections on the Children's Hearing system in Scotland.

The need to review the language used in formal paperwork, which can be a barrier to engagement and participation, was highlighted, alongside concerns about inconsistencies in the quality of written documentation and general variation in practice across Scotland.

Areas for further consideration:

- 23. What does this mean for how we write reports in Barnardo's Scotland which are part of the Hearing process?**
- 24. Do our reports mirror the language and style of statutory agencies at the expense of the voice of the child?**
- 25. Do we need to consult with children, young people and families about the style of our reports?**
- 26. Do we need further training for staff on written submissions for formal proceedings?**



Section 2 – Family

The Promise states,

Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties that get in the way².

Poverty

When The Promise reported it was clear we needed to consider the pervasive impact of poverty on children, young people and families in Scotland.

We know where poverty is present there is greater risk of a range of negative outcomes for children, young people, and families, including poor mental health, problematic substance use and higher levels of involvement with the child protection system.

We also know that poverty itself does not result in poor parenting, as there are many parents on a low income who do a great job raising their families. However, the stress of living in poverty can make family life much, much harder.

Our 2020 joint report with the NSPCC, *Challenges from The Frontline Revisited*, highlighted poverty as one of the fundamental issues for families supported by our intensive family support services in Barnardo's Scotland. Therefore, our starting point with any family is often to address the immediate practical challenges they have because of financial hardship.

Areas for further consideration:

- 27. Are we doing enough in Barnardo's Scotland in terms of highlighting the impact of poverty on the children, young people, and families we support?**
- 28. What policy and influencing work are we doing in relation to this at both a UK and Scotland level?**
- 29. What activity are we engaged in, in our day-to-day work (e.g., income maximisation, referrals to foodbanks) to support families impacted by poverty?**
- 30. Are we routinely collecting data on this aspect of our support?**
- 31. Do we always recognise poverty in our interactions with families?**

Mental Health

We know from our work with individuals and communities there is an acute need for timely, trauma informed, therapeutic supports for children, young people and families. We recognise we must work flexibly and in partnership with others to meet the scale of need in our communities.

The aspiration in The Promise is that all services broadly take the same approach and operate within the same values framework. There is also a recognition that some individuals and families will require long-term support.

² <https://thepromise.scot/assets/UPLOADS/DOCUMENTS/2020/10/KeepThePromise-Oct-2020.pdf> p6

Areas for further consideration:

- 32. Do we have an effective, flexible but consistent approach to mental health in Barnardo's Scotland?**
- 33. Will delivering 'long-term' support to families place us in conflict with commissioners?**
- 34. How will we manage 'long-term' support alongside increased demand for support?**
- 35. Does our delivery approach need to move to a much more flexible model, increasing in intensity to respond to crisis situations when children or parents are unwell and reducing when not required?**
- 36. Is group work consistently available for children, young people and families as an option for support?**
- 37. Are we having discussions with families about their own ideas and solutions?**

Service design with families in mind

Historically, family support has often been perceived as an early intervention approach. One of the outcomes of the Care Review was a firm articulation that families must be provided with support that lasts for as long as it is needed. In addition, longer-term involvement should not be perceived as inherently negative, as it may in fact be enabling a family to sustain improvements and maintain their children at home.

Areas for further consideration:

- 38. Where does this leave us where we have services which are time limited with our commissioners who have determined how long a piece of work will last?**
- 39. Are we recording when we are restricted / impacted by service design and not able to fully meet child / family need?**

The Promise also urged us to think about whether our services are delivered by people drawn from varied backgrounds, including having staff who reflect the communities we serve.

Areas for further consideration:

- 40. What is the makeup of our staff group?**
- 41. Is it representative of the communities that we work in?**
- 42. Does our leadership team also have a mix of backgrounds and experience to reflect the demographics we serve?**

One of the ambitions of The Promise is that more children and young people can remain where they feel safe and loved. This should mean it will become much more common for families to be supported to stay together.

Areas for further consideration:

- 43. How would we know we are getting this right?**
- 44. What evidence would we have that demonstrates this?**



Family Support

The Promise stated that there must be a significant upscale in universal family support services. The provision of holistic, non-stigmatising support from services who build trusting relationships with families can ameliorate the impact of poverty, reduce stress and anxiety as well as nurture positive family relationships and attachment. Good universal support also supports the identification of risk of harm for children.

We know from The Promise that strengthened support for families can:

- keep families together and avoid children going into care
- interrupt and address intergenerational cycles of trauma
- sustain meaningful and loving relationships

We have a 'Family Support in Barnardo's Scotland' document which gives an overview of the approach we have to supporting families across our services in Scotland. We also have access to internal trauma informed training for all Children's Service staff who can [book onto the course via b-learning](#).

Areas for further consideration:

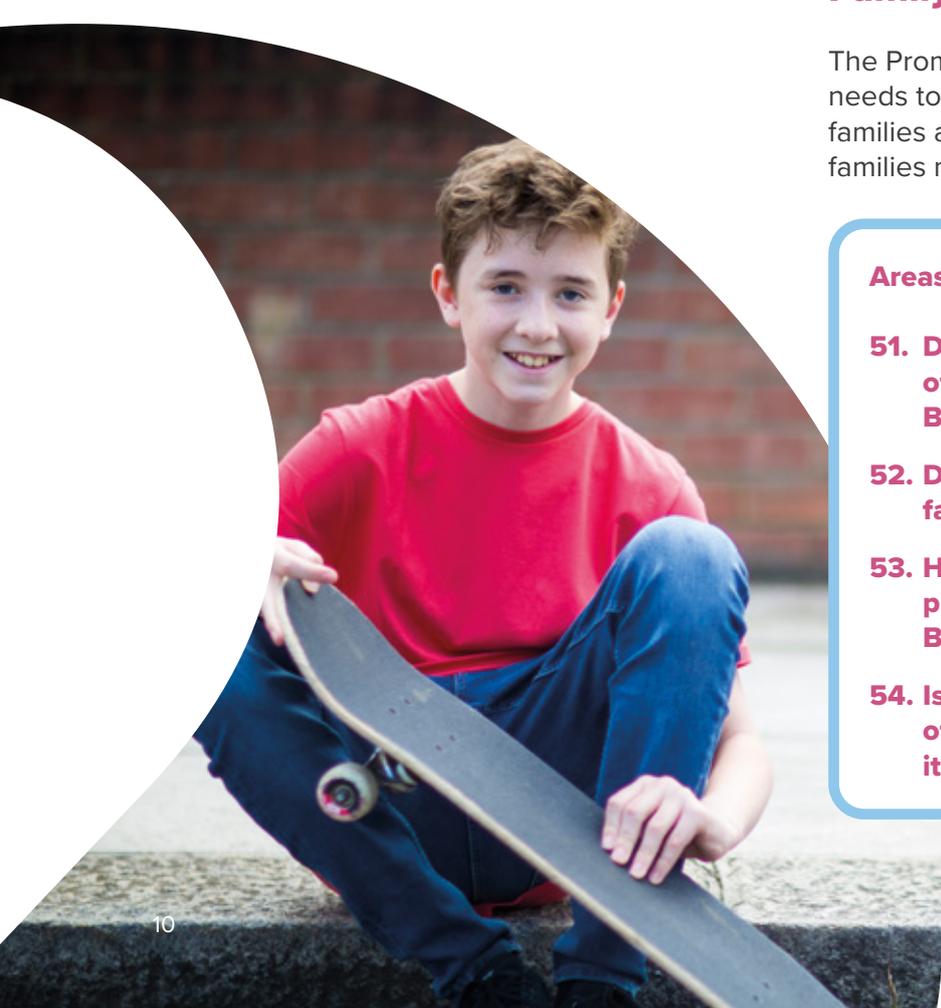
45. Do all our services who deliver family support work do this in an attachment-aware, trauma informed way?
46. Does all Barnardo's Scotland family support include addressing poverty?
47. What approaches underpin all our family support services?
48. What training do our staff have to support these approaches?
49. How do the principles outlined in The Promise fit with the commissioning criteria for services, where there can be expectations of time limits on support?
50. From the recent internal review of Intensive Family Support where are we in relation to meeting all 10 principles of family support?

Family Therapy

The Promise has stated that family therapy needs to be more available for all kinds of families and seen a something that a range of families may require throughout their lifetime.

Areas for further consideration:

51. Do we have a shared definition of what family therapy is in Barnardo's Scotland?
52. Do we have any services that offer family therapy?
53. How many family therapy practitioners do we have within Barnardo's Scotland?
54. Is this something that we want to offer more of and if so, what would it take for us to be able to do this?



Parents who have a Learning Disability

We know there are some groups of parents who are likely to need long-term and at times intensive support to navigate the parenting task. Some parents who have a learning disability are likely to be in this group.

Areas for further consideration:

- 55. Do we have a consistent offer of support across our range of services for parents who have a learning disability?**
- 56. Are our staff knowledgeable in this area and able to offer what is needed in terms of family support?**

Parents in the Criminal Justice System

Barnardo's Scotland works with families impacted by imprisonment, so we are aware of the impact on children and young people when a parent is incarcerated and support the view in The Promise that parents facing imprisonment must be supported to make plans for their children.

We know the experience of visiting prison can be difficult for families but with support this can be made more positive, helping to sustain relationships where it is safe to do so.

Areas for further consideration:

- 57. Do all staff have a good understanding of the impact of parental imprisonment?**
- 58. What, if any, additional training do we need to put in place?**

Families affected by substance use

Our Barnardo's Scotland approach to family support should involve supporting people manage and address problematic substance use so

families can stay safely together. Recognising the recovery journey can be lengthy and complex is important in ensuring we have a proportionate and compassionate response when relapse occurs.

The Promise urges us to move from planning that focuses on the management of risk to supporting parents in addressing needs and focusing on recovery. This approach supports the development of positive, trusting relationships where people feel able to share their challenges rather than mask issues in fear of a punitive response.

Areas for further consideration:

- 59. Does this describe current practice in our services?**
- 60. If yes, how do we know?**
- 61. If not, how can we support practice change?**

Families affected by domestic abuse

Alongside our specialist domestic abuse work, all our community services also have experience of supporting families impacted by domestic abuse. We are most effective when we use a holistic, non-victim blaming, and trauma informed approach, delivered in partnership with other relevant service providers.

Areas for further consideration:

- 62. Does this describe our services – not only our specialist services – but across the full range of services we deliver?**
- 63. Do all staff understand domestic abuse and the complexities involved in supporting families where this issue is present?**
- 64. We previously had a range of staff trained in the Safe and Together Approach. Should we be revisiting this and embedding this approach across Barnardo's Scotland services?**



Section 3 – Care

The Promise states,

Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

Care in Barnardo's Scotland

We know carers and staff in all our service settings – fostering families, residential settings, short breaks – must be supported to develop caring relationships with the children and young people they engage with.

The Promise invites us to consider how we can also support long term connections between children and young people and those who provide their care. This is a shift in how we have practiced historically, creating space for nurturing, enriching relationships to be sustained in a way that mirrors the lives of children and young people who live with their families in the community, who often routinely experience spending time with a relative or family friend away from their main carer.

In order to support continued connections between children and young people and people in our workforce who are important to them, Barnardo's Scotland needs to understand the implications and plan for changing professional relationships between staff and children and young people across our workforce.

Areas for further consideration:

- 65. How can we support relationships beyond placement end dates with appropriate safeguards for both carers and children and young people?**
- 66. Will staff be paid for their time when contact continues beyond service involvement?**
- 67. How will we support children and young people who move on to other settings to sustain connections?**
- 68. Can we recruit and assess our own interested staff as short break carers so we can support sustaining relationships over time?**
- 69. What will this approach mean for our existing carers / staff?**
- 70. How will we support a change in culture and practice as this approach becomes more of an expectation from LA's and other commissioners?**

As we increasingly explore ways of supporting children and young people to have the experience of visiting, staying over and holidays with people who are not necessarily their main caregivers, we will need to review our professional guidance to reflect this change in approach.

Laying down new expectations, changing traditional work practices and embedding a truly relational approach will influence the type of people we need to recruit.

Areas for further consideration:

- 71. What does this mean for our current job descriptions and person specifications?**
- 72. How will we set clear guidelines across the whole organisation to ensure safe practice?**
- 73. What, if anything, will we need to change in our safeguarding policy, code of conduct and other HR processes to reflect changes to practice?**

Brothers and sisters

Since The Promise was published there has been a great deal of focus on the importance of keeping brothers and sisters together wherever possible and supporting ongoing relationships where that is not possible.

Clearly in Barnardo’s Scotland this presents a range of challenges as we have a limited number of placements which can accommodate multiple children from the one family.

Areas for further consideration:

- 74. Is this change in respect of practice with siblings reflected in our approach?**
- 75. Do we always consider how we can contribute to sibling relationships when we are just working with one child?**
- 76. Can we seek to recruit a more diverse range of carers who can meet the expectation that sibling groups remain together wherever possible?**
- 77. Can we ensure our practice in residential, family placement and community settings supports and sustains sibling relationships?**
- 78. Is there more we can do to help repair sibling estrangement?**

Kinship Care

Where children and young people go to live with extended family members, the same supports available to fostering families should be on offer, including financial assistance, space for reflection, and practical help.

The Promise highlights the importance of supporting kinship carers to enable children to remain within their families and prevent a sense of overwhelm for those stepping in to care for a child or young person.

Areas for further consideration:

- 79. Do we routinely record where the families that we support are kinship carers?**
- 80. How many kinship carers do we work with across Barnardo’s Scotland?**
- 81. Should we be doing more to support the kinship carers that we work with?**
- 82. Have we considered the possible additional barriers for kinship carers and ensured we offer them the same level of access to them as other parents?**

Fostering families

The Promise underlined the importance of foster carers receiving high quality support in order that they can provide the best possible care to the children and young people they look after. Therefore, carers should have access to a range of supports to reduce the risk of disrupted care or placement breakdowns.

The primary purpose of foster care is to offer nurturing, patient, kind, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships which support children and young people to feel loved and safe.

Organisations who deliver foster care must not profit from this.



Areas for further consideration:

- 83. Do we effectively facilitate all of the above?**
- 84. Can we evidence this?**
- 85. Do we have clear and transparent funding arrangements which meet the requirements outlined in The Promise?**

Adoptive families

The Promise highlights several areas in relation to adoption practice which are important for Barnardo's Scotland to consider.

Adoption has an important role in providing permanent, loving, nurturing homes for children and young people. The Promise is explicit there must not be targets associated with adopting children including financial and profit-based targets.

We know that for many families adoption is complex. The Promise states adoptive families should be able to access post adoption support at any point over the lifecourse they feel they need this.

Areas for further consideration:

- 86. In Barnardo's Scotland is this something we only do in family placement?**
- 87. Are our community services skilled up and responsive to this need and able to support families?**
- 88. Could we work more effectively across localities and family placement to build knowledge, skills, and capacity to meet this need?**

Youth Justice

We know from our own work a disproportionate number of care experienced children and young people end up in the criminal justice system. Although our Children's Hearing System can hold young people involved in offending, some are still referred to the Criminal Courts.

We support work to develop a more progressive rights-based youth justice approach that builds on the Kilbrandon principles and makes them a reality for all.

Areas for further consideration:

- 89. Do we need to ensure more linkages between our Barnardo's Scotland Youth Justice services and our care experienced services?**
- 90. Do our staff fully understand the Hearing system and feel confident engaging with this e.g. making a direct referral to the Children's Reporter?**
- 91. Are we sharing the knowledge from our Youth Justice and Adult Justice Services as widely as we could?**

Stability

We know multiple moves of home for children and young people undermines a sense of safety and belonging. The Promise states we must limit the number of moves children experience and support carers to continue to care, avoiding unnecessary change and disruption.

The Promise also underlines the importance of family support for those who care for children and young people in foster, kinship and adoption settings when needed.

Where breakdowns occur between carers, staff and children and young people in the places they live, it's essential we seek to understand the reasons for this.

Areas for further consideration:

- 92. Can we demonstrate we deliver this for children and young people in our residential and family placement services?**
- 93. Is there additional support which could be offered by our community services to help offer stability for children and young people?**

Transitions

Transitions in any care setting can be very challenging for children and young people and therefore it is important that wherever possible these are planned, with clear information and communication, supported by known carers and staff, and undertaken in a thoughtful, sensitive and trauma informed way.

Areas for further consideration:

- 94. Do we challenge poor transitions when they happen currently?**
- 95. Do we try and provide mitigations and supports when poor transition practice occurs?**
- 96. What have we learned from our experience needs to be in place to reduce this risk of poor practice in this area?**

Growing up and moving on

Many of our services in Barnardo's Scotland support young adults as they move toward independence, while ensuring they still have access to practical and emotional help and supportive adults for as long as they need this.

Existing 16+, housing support and the GAP home developments all seek to meet the needs of young people transitioning to adult life. Our employability services also often work with this group of young adults.

Areas for further consideration:

- 97. Can we scale up available support to this group of young people?**
- 98. Can we strengthen internal connections between our community and employability services to deliver more joined up support to young people?**
- 99. Are these services currently able to offer longer term, relational support?**
- 100. If not, what do we need to do to make this possible?**

Capturing life stories

Understanding the story of who we are, knowing about the people and places which have been part of our journey is very important in making sense of our lives. We know from young people who have shared their reflections on their care experience of the importance of having access to information recorded in their case files and other documentation which captures their experiences and relationships in simple, caring language. Reports must always be written with the assumption that a child or young person will read them at a later date.

Areas for further consideration:

- 101. Is there a need for refreshed training, staff development and organisational briefings on appropriate language in recording?**
- 102. Should we be reviewing our recording policy?**



Restraint

The Promise shared the voices of children and young people who had experienced the practice of physical restraint. They told us how frightening, painful and embarrassing the use of restraint was.

Our shared ambition is to remove restrictive practice from all care of children and young people in Scotland. This means we need to build the confidence and capacity of staff in keeping children and young people safe using other approaches. Alternative approaches must be relational and use trauma informed principles, knowledge of attachment, attunement and co-regulation to support distressed children and young people.

Where restraint is used it must only ever be to keep someone safe. It must always be reported and recorded, and a post event debrief undertaken to allow for learning and reflection to take place.

Areas for further consideration:

- 103. Do we have information from the current review of restraint underway in Barnardo's?**
- 104. What is our working definition of restraint and restrictive practice?**
- 105. Do we accurately and consistently collect data on our use of restrictive practice?**



Section 4 – People

The Promise states,

The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

A new relationship

We recognise relationships are central to improving outcomes from Scotland’s children and young people. Our staff who work directly with children, young people and families are encouraged to develop compassionate, caring and trusted relationships with the people we support. The Promise invites us to further explore the way we have framed our relationships in the workplace and think about how we can integrate the things children and young people have told us are important to them. This includes facilitating long term connections between staff and children and young people who have formed attachments, even after they have ‘moved on’.

Staff need to be encouraged to relate to the people we support in a way that feels natural and supports meaningful human connection.

Areas for further consideration:

- 106. Do we need to change how we recruit to ensure we are employing the right staff to deliver this type of relational practice?**
- 107. Do all staff have a clear understanding of our organisational expectations about relational practice?**
- 108. Are we clear about what is acceptable practice and how we maintain professional warmth alongside appropriate boundaries?**
- 109. Is there a need to review the safeguarding, code of conduct and other related policies to reflect changing practice?**

Developing a positive culture across the organisation which holds the lives of children, young people and families at its heart will take leadership at every level. Senior leaders will need to model a relational approach which encourages a culture of openness, transparency, learning and reflection.

Areas for further consideration:

- 110. What does this mean for how do we facilitate discussions about organisational culture?**
- 111. Is SCLG, our leadership forum in Scotland, the right space to take these discussions forward?**
- 112. What other mechanisms do we need to put in place to progress priority areas identified for action?**



Nurturing staff

In order to support Scotland's children and young people, our staff must be nurtured and supported. Supervision and reflective practice should be embedded in all services, for all practitioners.

We need to be aware that many staff may have had experience of adversity and trauma in their own lives and our approach to staff care should take account of this.

Our staff demonstrate a high level of commitment in their roles and it is important our employment conditions, workloads, remuneration and workplace environments reflect our value of their contribution.

Areas for further consideration:

- 113. Do we need to review our supervision policy to ensure our approach integrates expectations outlined in The Promise?**
- 114. Are we confident we have the right range of supports in place for staff?**
- 115. Do we appropriately support and reward staff for their contribution to Barnardo's Scotland?**

Living with risk

The Promise has stated the workforce needs to move from trying to eliminate risk to working alongside children, young people, and their families to explore how we can have a more proportionate and balanced approach which offers opportunities to grow, learn and develop risk competency from activities and experiences in the community. Navigating risk is an important part of normal, healthy development.

We need to shift our collective mindset to one which accepts an informed approach to living with some risk is part our approach in supporting children, young people and families.

This means more sophisticated practice. An example of this may be where we may know family contact has some challenges but we know the impact of not doing this on a child having a coherent, life narrative means we support this.

Our staff will need support with being less risk averse and we need to ensure there is support for them to make decisions.

Areas for further consideration:

- 116. What does this mean for our current approach to risk assessments for the children and families we support?**
- 117. How will this impact our wider assessment and analysis in family work where there are risks present?**

Learning and Development

The Promise has asked us to think again about what children and families need. The range and scale of the change we are being asked to deliver means we will need to reflect and review what learning and development opportunities staff will need to deliver this ambitious vision across Scotland.

We will need to ensure staff in Barnardo's Scotland have opportunities to grow together and access to training and experiential learning which is rights respecting, builds emotional competency, deepens our trauma informed approaches and nurtures our capacity for human connection.

Areas for further consideration:

- 118. Does our current range of mandatory training cover all relevant areas?**
- 119. Currently Children's Rights training is not a mandatory course for staff in Barnardo's Scotland. Do we need to review this?**
- 120. Are there any gaps in our suite of training opportunities we need to address?**
- 121. Could we offer more informal learning opportunities through mentoring, coaching and communities of practice?**
- 122. How do we ensure we have a consistent approach across all our services?**



Section 5 – Scaffolding

The Promise states,

Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability must be ready and responsive when it is required.

Our relationship with risk

It is clear, to deliver The Promise we need to look again at how we approach and understand risk. *'This is not about tolerating more risk or becoming more risk enabling. It means ensuring Scotland has a more holistic understanding of risk that includes the risk to the child of removing them from the family. There must be a shift in focus from the risk of possible harm to the risk of not having stable, long-term loving relationships.'*

Areas for further consideration:

- 123. How do we currently talk with families about identified risks and concerns?**
- 124. Do we effectively co-create plans to manage identified risks with people?**
- 125. What does any change to how we assess risk mean for our internal processes and the risk assessment activity that we engage in with other partners?**

Scrutiny and Regulation

'There must be a complete overhaul of regulation and scrutiny that centres on listening to children about how they are cared for, their ability to flourish and thrive and that measures the things that matter to them.'

Feedback in The Promise tells us that the current infrastructure which supports evaluation and inspection of service provision is overly complex. Services are often working across multiple frameworks with similar but different indicators of success. There are often too many indicators to be able to measure effectively.

Often evidence of improvement is based on what can be measured rather than what is more important to children, young people and families.

Areas for further consideration:

- 126. How do we link with CAIU to reflect the changing expectations around scrutiny, evidence, and inspection?**
- 127. What do these changes mean for services currently subject to inspections from the Care Inspectorate?**
- 128. How do we record children, young people, and family views of their experience of our relationship with them?**
- 129. How child/young person friendly is our current complaint process?**
- 130. Do we need to review and refresh our approach to assessing, planning and recording so we are capturing what is important to children, young people and families?**

The move to a new and more holistic approach will mean inspection frameworks will increasingly look for evidence of the voices of children, young people and families, quality of relationships and safe and nurturing practice.

Areas for further consideration:

- 131. How are we going to measure quality of relationships within our own outcomes framework?**
- 132. Are we confident that children and young peoples voices are consistently and adequately captured currently?**
- 133. Do we need to work with CAIU to ensure services are gathering and collating the required evidence to demonstrate Promise implementation?**
- 134. Should we develop opportunities for young people to become peer assessors/inspectors within Barnardo's Scotland?**

Planning and commissioning of services

The Promise took the view that too often the needs of the system have taken precedence over those of children, young people and families. Our current approach to planning and commissioning services can encourage competition not collaboration across Children's Services. The Promise has asserted that we must avoid the monetisation of the care of children and prevent the marketisation of care. It has been made explicit that *'Scotland must make sure that its most vulnerable children are not profited from'*. Independent scrutiny processes will now include identifying any profits generated from the provision of care.

The ambition outlined in The Promise is that services must be designed and delivered strategically, based on need, which is informed by clear data, including the views of people who receive those services. The aspiration is

that Scotland will move towards extension of early intervention and prevention supports, with more acute and crisis services eventually being reduced or phased out entirely.

Standards of care must be consistent, with clear evidence delivery meets core standards and principles of The Promise. Where service providers can evidence this there is an ambition to reduce the frequency of tendering and extend contract length, to ensure greater stability and consistency.

Areas for further consideration:

- 135. Can we, with other partners, look to develop ways of working with our commissioners which are in line with The Promise?**
- 136. What impact would a shift to early intervention have on our current service delivery and future planning?**
- 137. Are we doing enough to prepare for this changing landscape?**
- 138. Are we actively engaged in embedding these standards and principles in all our activity?**
- 139. Have we provided our staff with the clarity they need to ensure we are delivering to the required standard?**
- 140. What does this mean for our Barnardo's services where a surplus is generated?**
- 141. Are we able to evidence any profit is reinvested back into delivery of services which directly benefit children and young people?**



Data collection

Across Scotland all agencies involved in the lives of children, young people and families have tended to collect data on process rather than experiences and outcomes. The Promise urges us to improve the quality and completeness of the data we collect and to think about ways we could use this more creatively, to improve learning and impact.

Areas for further consideration:

142. Are we sure that all our services use the internal outcomes framework consistently and as completely as intended?

143. Does our recording and reporting reflect this?

144. Is our internal outcomes framework still fit for purpose?

145. Are we rigorous enough in including the voice of children, young people, and families?

Conclusion

We have commenced our change journey. We have identified 145 questions to support our conversations about what we need to do and will be discussing these in services, localities and communities of practice over the next year to bring about the transformation required.

Let's work together to keep this Promise.





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**#Keep
The
Promise**



**Believe in
children**
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