

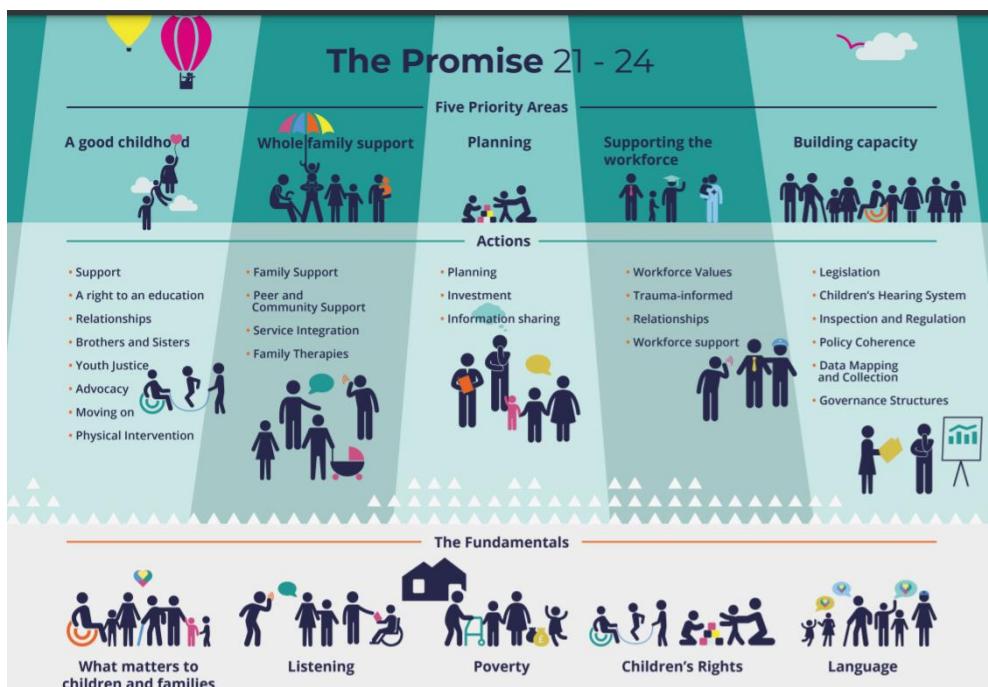


## CAPS will # Keep the Promise

An Independent Care Review lasting over three years, listened to thousands of infants, children, young people and families, many of whom did not feel loved, were not kept safe, were not respected, and were not supported to achieve their potential.

In February 2020, in response to this Review, all political parties in Scotland promised to implement the recommendations in full. Now Scotland needs to act to keep that promise. A route map for the first three years has been created identifying key priorities and areas of focus - **Plan 21-24** <https://thepromise.scot/plan-21-24/>

**CAPS Independent Advocacy promises to play a part in bringing about the social change required by ensuring that the voices of vulnerable children and young people are listened to and respected.**



(Ref: Plan 21-24, pages 6 and 7)

### We believe that:

- Care experienced children and adults must have the right, and access, to independent advocacy, at all stages of their experience of care and beyond. Their needs in terms of who they can relate best to must be recognised and respected.
- Children and young people 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.
- It is important to protect the relationships that are important to children and young people, particularly sibling relationships.

- Independent advocacy organisations must be commissioned to ensure that advocacy is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from statutory organisations and service providers.
- The provision of Independent Advocacy should be free of charge to those who need to access it.
- Independent Advocacy should comply with the National Practice Model and the SIAA Principles and Standards.
- Our Children and Young People's Advocacy team should be well trained, skilled and knowledgeable about the rights and entitlements of children.
- Independent Advocacy must be readily and quickly available to all children and young people who are in contact with the 'care system' and for as long as they need it.

**What actions we will take:**

- We will employ a team of Children and Young People's Advocacy workers who will be structurally separate from our adult team.
- Our workers will be well trained and supported to listen to what children and young people want. They will create trusting, meaningful relationships using age and stage appropriate resources with creative and thoughtful options to meet a diverse range of needs.
- We will ensure children and young people understand their rights and help amplify their voices when necessary to make sure their rights are respected and recognised by other adults and services.
- We will involve children and young people in the provision of our advocacy service to them, by gathering their views about their experience of working with us.
- We welcome and encourage children and young people's feedback and will ensure that they know how to make a complaint about our service.
- We will make sure our verbal and written language is age appropriate and easily understood by children and young people and will challenge inappropriate language of others within systems so they do not exclude the understanding and participation of children and young people.
- We will strive to secure sufficient resources to enable us to provide independent advocacy free of charge to the children and young people who want it so we can help them address power imbalances in the relationships in their lives.
- We will provide independent advocacy to siblings so they can voice their views also. We will ensure there is no conflict of interest and make sure a worker is unique to the child or young person they are working with.
- We will challenge injustice and discrimination to bring about the social change required so there is a culture where children and young people's rights are respected and upheld as a matter of course.
- We will assist care experienced children and young people to access child centred legal advice and representation if/when they need it.