

Midlothian



Corporate Parenting and Promise Plan

2026 - 2030



**The Promise
Scotland**

SUPPORTING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & CARE EXPERIENCED ADULTS

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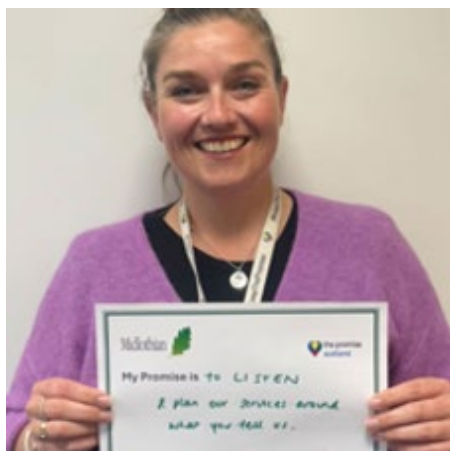
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Foreword from Rebecca Hooton - Chief Officer Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer



I am proud to introduce Midlothian's Corporate Parenting and Promise Plan 2026–2030. This plan reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that every child and young person with care experience is loved, supported, listened to and given the opportunity to thrive.

As corporate parents, we have a collective responsibility to be ambitious for our children and young people, responding to their needs with the same care, compassion and determination that any good parent would show. The Promise challenges us to transform our services and systems so that children's voices, rights and relationships are at the heart of everything we do.

This combined plan has been shaped by the experiences, views and aspirations of children and young people across Midlothian. Their feedback has guided our priorities and strengthened our resolve to drive meaningful change.

Over the next four years, we will focus on building strong relationships, listening to voices, and providing the support needed for positive futures. Together, we will continue working to keep The Promise and improve outcomes for all care experienced children and young people in Midlothian.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Hooton'.

Rebecca Hooton

Why is Corporate Parenting and the Promise important to us

Our Midlothian plan contributes to the wider Scotland's Promise Plan 24-30 by focusing particularly on outcomes relating to Voice, Family, People and Scaffolding. Through strengthening participation, improving transitions, supporting the workforce and embedding corporate parenting responsibilities across services, we aim to contribute to both local improvement and Scotland's wider commitment to keep the promise. We recognise that keeping the promise is not a series of standalone projects but a journey of continuous improvement. This plan will continue to develop through learning, feedback and partnership as we work towards 2030.

1. Introduction

What is a Corporate Parent?

A Corporate Parent [Corporate parenting - Looked after children - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/corporate-parenting-looked-after-children/pages/1-2.aspx) is a public organisation that has a legal duty to safeguard, support, promote the wellbeing for and improve outcomes for wee ones, children and young people who are looked after or have care experience.

These duties are informed by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. There are 5 duties outlined in the act which bring corporate parents together to act in the best interests of those with care experience.

Corporate parent responsibilities are intended to encourage people and organisations to do as much as they can towards improving the lives of care experienced and looked after children and provide them with support, guidance and advice.

Being a Corporate Parent means taking shared responsibility and accountability. All services must work with openness and transparency when discussing needs, making decisions and planning next steps. Together, we recognise our collective role in supporting and nurturing the children in our care, ensuring they are safe, valued and given every opportunity to thrive.





What is the Promise?

The Promise Scotland exists to make sure Scotland keeps its commitment to wee ones, children and young people following the findings of the [Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system](#). The purpose of the Promise is to support transformational change in the care system so that wee ones, children and young people feel loved, listened to and supported to reach their full potential. There are 5 foundations of the Promise which provide structure and focus on key areas that matter most. The foundations help to turn the vision of the Promise into practical actions, as we have tried to do in this combined plan.

2. The Midlothian Vision

Every Partner organisation will understand how its role contributes to keeping The Promise, recognising that Corporate Parenting is Everyone's responsibility. The current Midlothian vision states that - *by working together individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2045. It is our combined vision for wee ones, children and young people in Midlothian to have the best possible start in life and live safe, healthy, active, happy and independent lives.*

Based on the national Getting it right for every child wellbeing framework we have developed a set of priority actions that we believe will make a significant contribution towards achieving the wellbeing outcomes, which includes United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The Promise Scotland foundations. As Midlothian's children's services continue to evolve, the commitments within this plan will be delivered through both dedicated corporate parenting, children's rights and promise leadership, and the wider strategic pillars across children's services, reinforcing that keeping the promise is everyone's responsibility.

One of Midlothian's strengths is the quality of the relationships between our partners. Keeping the promise depends on shared ownership across social work, education, health, housing, Police Scotland, community learning and development, the third sector and wider community planning partners. No single service or organisation can achieve this alone.

3. Why are we linking our plans?

Linking our Corporate Parenting plan with our Promise plan will make sure that we can use all of our resources efficiently and will also afford us the opportunity to maintain a clear focus whilst reducing duplication. Combining our plans means that we can clearly identify and share commitments across our partners, ensuring that we streamline our approach to planning, reporting and delivery.

4. Engagement

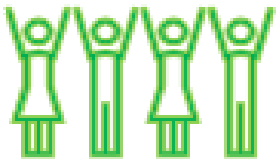
This plan was created in consultation with a variety of groups and partner organisations, with the most important information being from children with experience of care across Midlothian. Their voice will continue to be heard through a variety of opportunities and participation groups. We worked with Corporate Parent Board members, who reviewed our previous plan and helped shape our new commitments. Who Cares? Scotland have helped us to gather and share feedback whilst supporting our wee ones, children and young people to understand that their voice has been heard.

One such example of this “you said, we did” in action came following feedback from a young person who shared their frustrations about the information shared about them prior to meeting new staff, they felt that it was unfair a new professional had so much information about them but they didn’t know anything at all about the worker. As such our Champions Board worked to create a staff biography guide with ‘top tips’ on what children and young people would be interested to know about the worker. This has been very successful; children and young people have told us that receiving the biographies before their meetings has made it feel less stressful and it’s been nice to get to know something funny or special about the staff too.

We will continue to share with wee ones, children and young people what has changed as a result of their feedback and where change has not been possible, we will explain why. We will demonstrate this through regular “You said, we did, feedback and involve care experienced children and young people in reviewing and shaping this plan throughout its lifetime.

5. Our shared commitments

Relationships



- We are committed to ensuring that all staff understand their role as corporate parents. This includes promoting trauma informed, rights-based practice.
- We will actively raise awareness across our workforce by providing accessible training, clear guidance and regular opportunities for learning.
- We will promote a culture where staff are alert to the needs of care experienced children and young people, challenge stigma and respond with informed compassionate practice in their everyday work.
- We will foster a culture of openness, transparency and mutual accountability across all partners.

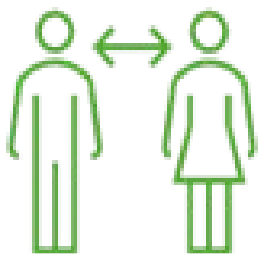
- Our relationships will be built on trust and respect, where constructive challenge is actively encouraged and welcomed as a means of continuous improvement.
- Together, we will work collaboratively to address issues, learn from one another, and collectively overcome challenges to improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

Listening



- We will actively listen to children and young people with care experience, ensuring their voices are heard, valued and acted upon.
- We will create safe, inclusive opportunities to share their views, ensuring they are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives and their rights are upheld.
- We will provide opportunities for children and young people to influence service design, policy development and strategic decision making, demonstrating how their views have informed change.
- We will demonstrate how their feedback shapes the services and supports they receive.
- Where young people feel we don't meet this expectation, we will ensure a robust, fair and accessible complaints process, where care experienced children and young people are supported to raise concerns.
- We are committed to providing clear, timely feedback on how their views have been considered, including transparent explanations of decisions and how their input has influenced outcomes.

Support



- We will provide person-centred support to care experienced children and young people at key transitions. Careful planning and strong partnership working will ensure moves between services, settings and life stages are smooth, supported and centred on needs. Timely support will aim to build confidence and enable positive sustained outcomes at all stages, including into adulthood.
- We are committed to ensuring that children and young people understand what is happening in their lives, feel prepared for changes, and are not left uncertain about decisions affecting them. We recognise that support should not end simply because a formal transition has been completed.
- We will work to maintain important relationships unnecessary disruption and ensure children and young people continue to experience trusted, consistent adults throughout their journey. We will work with partners to reduce cliff edges and ensure care experienced young people know where and how they can return for support when they need it.

6. Our plan

Our three shared commitments have been created following the feedback we received from our wee ones, children and young people and our plan is our promise to take steps to improve support, uphold rights and support improved lifelong outcomes for our care experienced communities. The legal duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 are delivered in a way that reflects the vision that all our wee ones, children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected but also that they have the right supports available exactly when they need them.

On the 15th of May this year the **Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill** became an act which means that the work towards realising the aims of the Promise need to embed into practice and this is exactly what our plan is to do. The developing legislative framework reinforces the need to embed the aims of the promise within core planning, practice and accountability arrangements. This plan sets out how Midlothian will contribute to that work locally. Recognising that relationships do not end when services do and will seek to preserve the people and connections that matter to children and young people wherever possible.

7. Conclusion

Our vision and plan support lasting change, and we know in order for this to be achieved we require a whole partnership approach which places all of our wee ones, children and young people at the centre of our decision making. So, we have translated the Corporate Parenting duties and foundations of the Promise into everyday actions that respond to the feedback we have received.

By 2030, we want care experienced wee ones, children and young people in Midlothian to be able to say that they felt listened to, supported, connected and loved by the people and services around them. We want our workforce to feel confident in their role as corporate parents, our partners to work seamlessly together and our communities to recognise that keeping the promise belongs to everyone.

We want to use this as an opportunity to celebrate everyone who was brave, willing and honest enough to share their feedback. We are so grateful to each and every one of you. We want your voices to continue to influence how our services are shaped and designed. Our promise is to listen to the stories of the past and support hopes for the future.

Action Plan 2026-27

Commitment	What will we do (key actions)	The difference we want to see (impact)	How will we know we are making a difference?	The Promise in practice	Corporate parenting in practice	Who do we need
Relationships 	Raise awareness of Corporate Parenting duties via the Who Cares? Scotland e-learning module and Promise Award	More of our Care experienced children and young people feel supported and understood by all Midlothian staff.	Staff will have completed online learning module/promise award and be better informed.	PEOPLE workforce learning, culture and shared responsibility.	Alert	• Staff induction process • Learning and development • WC?S
Relationships	Corporate parenting, the Promise and children's rights are incorporated into staff induction.	Staff feel more confident in understanding and acting on their corporate parenting responsibilities	Wee ones, children and young people understand their rights, feel heard and are supported to influence decisions that affect them.	PEOPLE workforce learning, culture and shared responsibility.	Alert	• Staff induction process • Learning and development • WC?S
Listening 	Establish Primary School Champs Groups with senior students as mentors/advocates.	Primary aged children have the opportunity to share their voice via 'champs' groups.	10 primary school groups / pupils are actively engaging	VOICE listening, participation and demonstrating influence.	Promote	➤ Early years ➤ Education ➤ School link supports
Listening	Develop a "you said we did" report annually to demonstrate the impact of participation	More of our children will experience their voice being shared, listened too and acted upon.	Participation groups will provide 3 monthly updates which will inform an annual report.	VOICE listening, participation and demonstrating influence.	Promote	➤ Childrens services ➤ Early years ➤ Education • Participation group members

Commitment	What will we do (key actions)	The difference we want to see (impact)	How will we know we are making a difference?	The Promise in practice	Corporate parenting in practice	Who do we need
Listening	Increase opportunities for young people to influence recruitment policy and service development	Care experienced children and young people are actively involved in staff recruitment.	8 children and young people receive training to support recruitment.	VOICE listening, participation and demonstrating influence.	Promote	• Childrens services • Early years • Education • Participation group members • CLLE • ESO - Equity
Support 	• Improve partnerships and support for post school transitions. • Our RISE (Resilient Included Supported Empowered) team, strive to prevent young people being accommodated out with their local community.	Care experienced young people are supported to sustain a positive destination. Children and young people who belong to our community are supported to remain there safely. Children and young people are supported and empowered to return to their local community.	Improved positive destination data from schools and college Families are identified via robust referral process. A reduction in the use of out of authority provision	SCAFFOLDING governance, planning, data and collective delivery. CARE supporting children to remain safely within their families and communities wherever possible. FAMILY Receive early support and be listened to, multi-agency supports.	Assess	• Edinburgh college • Secondary school transitions • CLLE • RISE team • Childrens services teams • Educational psychology • Police Scotland (school links) • School nursing team • Speech and language therapy • CAMHS • Cyrenians