

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

By email to:
Karen Adam MSP
Convener
Education and Gaelic Committee

29 September 2026

Dear Convener,

I write to inform the Committee of the report published today by the Promise Oversight Board. In so doing I wish to welcome and commend to all members the key messages and the ten calls for action included within the report.

The report acknowledges that we can keep the Promise by 2030 and the Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to ensure we do. To get there we must work together to increase the scale of interventions and pace of efforts across the country.

Having made significant progress since 2020, the path to delivery is now clearer and narrower. The remaining four years must be focused firmly on delivery. As the Oversight Board identifies, real progress is underway and there are people and organisations across Scotland showing every day what good support can look like. There has been significant change so far. Policy, legislation and investment has enabled changes in practice, and progress in culture and awareness is supporting a shift in how Scotland understands and listens and acts in a trauma-informed way.

I recognise that there remains more to be done. I do not shy away from the significant issue of aligning the workforce and resources required to deliver the change required. The Oversight Board are clear that the next 18 months is critical in this regard. It is therefore essential that we have clarity, at both a national and a local level, about the actions that can and must be delivered by 2030.

I have therefore asked the Independent Strategic Advisor for The Promise, working with the Promise Scotland, to provide a sharp and readily understood articulation of the key national and local deliverables by 2030. This work will both inform the Scottish Government's forthcoming Implementation Strategy, and will fully compliment the further development of

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Plan 24-30 and the routemaps for Scotland. Together these will set the delivery-focused strategic direction that the Oversight Board identifies is required.

The report identifies the significant achievement of the passage of the Children's (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning)(Scotland) Act, unanimously agreed by the Parliament in March this year. I wish to reassure the Committee that work to set the sequencing and action required to deliver the legislation is underway and that the Scottish Government will set out an implementation plan for the Act within our forthcoming strategy. I remain committed to working with COSLA, Social Work Scotland and all delivery partners to ensure that the legal changes required to Keep The Promise becomes reality. In so doing we must respect the workforce that are at the heart of making change happen and we must work together to be realistic about any challenges faced in delivery to ensure that we go as far as we possibly can by 2030.

The Promise provides an example of public sector reform in leading a preventative and joined up approach to service delivery. We must build on the learning and experiences to date and ensure that they are reflected in how Scotland delivers services for children and young people long into the future.

The Oversight Board Report speaks strongly of the role that data and evidence can play, recognising the Promise Story of Progress as the partnership-developed and agreed route for monitoring progress. I strongly agree with the assertion of the importance of ensuring that the voice of the care experienced community is at the heart of how we influence and direct the change required. The partnership work underway through the Data and Evidence Group led by Scotland's Chief Social Policy Advisor is actively engaged in bringing this to life and will help confirm where and how the change undertaken has been impactful.

Overall, the report recognises the role of family as a key source of stability and support. Through our approach to Whole Family Support we must deliver in a holistic and preventative way to keep families together and support improved outcomes. Again we must look and learn from the examples of where this is already being delivered successfully in practice and the cross-Scotland engagement that is underway by the Independent Strategic Advisor for the Promise will help us draw this together.

Implementation can not be achieved by the Scottish Government alone. It is incumbent on all partners across Scotland to sharpen our focus on delivery and join together to ensure that the goals for the remaining four years are clear. In welcoming the Oversight Boards report I will write to key partners today to express my gratitude for the work that is underway and reinforce the need to ensure that we work together to take heed and deliver on the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

SIOBHIAN BROWN

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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