

EAST AYRSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD: 26 AUGUST 2020

INDEPENDENT CARE REVIEW – THE PROMISE

Report by Clare Wilson, Senior Manager (Children’s Authority Wide Services)

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| Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both | Direction to: | |
| | 1. No Direction Required | √ |
| | 2. East Ayrshire Council | |
| | 3. NHS Ayrshire & Arran | |

PURPOSE

1. To outline the key messages from the Independent Care Review (ICR). It will provide an overview of current strengths within East Ayrshire, current areas of change and challenges. It will also set out intentions and aspirations for the future to elevate implementation of the ICR across East Ayrshire.

RECOMMENDATION

2. The Integration Joint Board are asked to
 - Consider the key messages from the Independent Care Review and what this means for East Ayrshire
 - Acknowledge the strengths of East Ayrshire that show we have the right conditions to implement the care review and equally understand the challenges we face to achieve our aspirations based on the care review
 - Note and comment on the content of the report

SUMMARY

3. This report highlights the key messages and findings from the Independent Care Review-The Promise and lays out the five foundations the review is based upon. It outlines the powerful voice of over 5,500 young people and the importance of corporate parents to listen and respond to this. Corporate parent partners have begun the journey of identifying strengths and challenges which are outlined in this report. Next steps will be to have further discussions about The Promise through the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group to ensure a holistic approach and ownership of the key messages for all partners. Following this a shared approach to implementation of The Promise needs to be agreed.

BACKGROUND

The experience of being cared for must be normalised and free from stigma. Scotland should be a good parent.....carers and workers must act, speak and behave like a family

4. In October 2016 the First Minister announced there would be an Independent Root and Branch Review of Care (“the Care Review”) driven by those with experience of care. This time the review needed to be different. Several reviews of the care system over the past several years have failed to have the impact required to truly change the care experience for our most vulnerable children and young people. The previous barriers to effect change have included a lack of buy-in for change, no money to invest in the changes needed, restrictive rules preventing change and not knowing how to make the changes needed.
5. The Independent Care Review “The Promise” was published in February 2020 <https://www.carereview.scot/conclusions/independent-care-review-reports/> outlining clearly the call for action required by Scotland to be good parents to our most vulnerable children.
6. On 5 February 2020, the First Minister agreed in Parliament to the independent care review’s calls for “an independent oversight body with at least 50% of its members being care experienced including its Chair”. More recently, “The Promise” oversight board has been created chaired by Fiona Duncan. In July 2020 the Deputy First Minister announced there would be an initial investment of £4m through to the ‘Promise Fund’ to help families stay together.
7. Understandably, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a slight delay across the country in the ability to take such a key review forward as attention has been focused in dealing with the global pandemic. However, more recently at a local level partners are starting to consider the key messages from the review and how these are taken forward to implementation. Implementation, locally and nationally, will take a significant period of time to achieve in terms of true transformation in our care system.
8. The care review heard from over 5,500 individuals at the point the review was concluded. Over half of them were children and young people with experience of the care system, adults who had lived in care and lots of families. The remaining voices were the paid and unpaid workforce.
9. The Promise is built upon five foundations:

Voice: 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 focussed on children and those they trust.

Family: 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 which get in the way.

Care: 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

People: The children that Scotland care 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

Scaffolding: *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.*

10. Sitting alongside The Promise is

- The Pinky promise
- The Plan
- The Money
- Follow the Money

11. East Ayrshire will not be starting from 'ground zero' to fully realise and implement the messages from the care review. A range of key strengths are already in place that can be built upon, adapt and develop.

12. Key strengths are:

- Strong value base about the importance of our children and young people as a key and valuable asset to our communities. This recognition is embedded through our strategic plans and forms a key component of our Recovery and Renew plans and efforts;
- Partnership working is embedded in our operational and strategic efforts. Partners recognise they cannot achieve the best for our children and young people in isolation from each other;
- Robust universal services that offer a range of varied support to our communities. Education, housing and child health services continuously make a positive impact in the lives of our children at the earliest possible stage through early intervention and prevention. This is supported by equally strong targeted services through social work locality and authority wide intensive and family support services;
- Our children's house model is based on a social pedagogy model which supports strong love, care and compassion for our children based on relationships;
- High quality fostering service where our children are thriving and receive high level of care to help them be the best they can be;
- Connecting Voices- collaboration between care experienced young people and corporate parents in East Ayrshire-works to ensure the voice of our care experienced young people is heard and is able to influence how we help and support them. The efforts of this work can be seen through our own Promise which was signed off by East Ayrshire Chief Executive and Chair of East Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership in 2019;
- Partnership across public services, including community planning partners and corporate parents. This is supported by strong relationships with third sector partners.

13. Key challenges to consider and address to achieve implementation of the care review are;

- Mental health support for our young people. A range of tiered supports is in place to address emotional health and wellbeing and mental health. Whilst there are key strengths to approaches we consistently hear that our children and young people are struggling and their mental health and wellbeing is being detrimentally affected.

- Support to kinship carers has not been as strong as it should be. A dedicated Kinship Care Team has recently been put in place to provide the level of support required to ensure our kinship carers are able to provide the best care for our children.
- A range of targeted family support is in place across different services. This support requires to be reviewed to ensure it fits with future community cluster models and is diverse, non-stigmatising and easily accessed
- Develop different ways in providing family based care that better supports families to stay together within their communities when they may be struggling, such as shared care
- Education attainment remains a challenge for our care experienced children
- Participation of our young people is good in some respects, such as hearing their views and consulting to influence service changes. However ensuring children and young people are actively involved in decision making about their lives remains a challenge, both locally and nationally.
- The care review recognises the importance of children and young people staying connected with their family and friends when they are unable to live together. More needs to be done to ensure our care experienced young people have access to digital devices and technology in the same way their peers do to help them stay in touch, learn, be connected
- Several young people are taking up Continuing Care and continuing to live with us as they enter into young adulthood. This is extremely positive and is testament to the care and nurture we provide. There are pressure to be able to continue to meet growing demand
- To shift the culture of language for care experienced young people. Young people continually told the care review about feeling the stigma of care compounded by the language used that makes them feel different and uncomfortable.
- Young people told the care review their experience of care often denied them experiencing risks as an important life adventure. Sitting alongside this was a reinforcement of being different due to boundaries that are in place for those in care.

PEOPLE WHO USE SERVICES AND CARERS IMPLICATIONS

14. The Promise has significant implications for children, young people and young adults who are care experienced. This is also the case for the families and carers of those children who will be impacted upon in terms of the changes and transformation that should come for the care review. This should have a substantial positive impact on care experienced young people and result in better outcomes for them.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no financial implications at this stage. As senior leaders consider priorities and approach towards implementation of the key findings of the review there will likely be financial implications. Given the Scottish Government has initially invested £4m to support families to stay together, we await how this will be used across the country and what this will mean for us to achieve our aspirations.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

16. At this stage there are no human resource implications but undoubtedly there will be in the future. It may be helpful here to consider this in two different ways.

17. Firstly the call to change the experience of our care experienced young people and those on the edges of care will require a multi-agency response. To achieve the ambition of the care review it is likely East Ayrshire will require a bespoke resource, possibly through a Care Review Implementation Team/Service.
18. Secondly the review highlights clear factors for the workforce in respect of support and development, strong shared values, reflective and empowering practice. To have a varied and skilled workforce across all services will require targeted investment.

POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. In terms of what is best for Scotland's care experienced young people it is important all corporate parents take cognisance of the key messages from The Promise and what it means for them. Failure to consider these and make change may result in continued trauma and poorer outcomes for our children.

COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

20. Given we are in the early process of considering and planning what the systemic and practice changes need to be and how we will achieve these in the short, medium and long term, it is challenging at this stage to advise of community planning implications. However given the messages in The Promise we know there will be implications for all community planning partners as we proceed with our ambitions. It will be appropriate at key stages in our implementation journey to provide ongoing reports to the IJB. This report supports the strategic priorities as outlined in the Community Planning Partnerships Wellbeing Delivery Plan and the HSCP Strategic Plan.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

21. Similar to above, for this report there are no equality implications, but future proposals and transformation require careful consideration of this.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

22. There are no current risk implications in relation to implementation plans and actions regarding The Promise due to the stage of development. The main risk at this stage is that endeavours to manage and recover from Covid-19 may well distract from making progress with The Promise. Partners need to be alert to this. A second wave, alongside new ways of living for our communities and different ways of delivering our services may also provide challenges to progress. Future reports to the IJB will highlight specific risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

23. Members are asked to:
 - I. Consider the key messages from the Independent Care Review and what this means for East Ayrshire
 - II. Acknowledge the strengths of East Ayrshire that show we have the right conditions to implement the care review and equally understand the challenges we face to achieve our aspirations based on the care review
 - III. Note and comment on the content of the report

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20 August 2020

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Background papers;

Independent Care Review - The Promise;
<https://www.carereview.scot/conclusions/independent-care-review-reports/>