



Centre for excellence
for Children's Care and Protection

CELCCIS Additional Evidence

Education, Children and Young People Committee Meeting

22nd November 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to supplement the evidence given to the Committee on 22 November 2023 on the progress of The Promise. There are a few resources and reports with evidence that members of the Committee may find useful which provide more detail to that shared in the oral evidence. We have focussed on implementation and programmes driving areas of support and change that are currently underway.

Transforming and improving services for children

CELCCIS was asked by the Scottish Government to carry out a research study to inform the understanding of current Children's Services structures and delivery models in Scotland and how services can best support the needs of children and their families. This research has been taking place over the last year and has looked at how children's and public services are provided and configured in Scotland and elsewhere, identifying what has an effect and what has a barrier to create the conditions to best meet the needs of all children and families who require support. This includes children and young people in need of care and protection. This study includes an in-depth look at six recent case studies of service integration which provides a helpful insight when considering what it takes to make effective change. Our work has also identified the components that are required to improve services and outcomes and, most recently, our research will the children's workforce identifies what is happening in Scotland now and what is needed.

Links to summaries of the four published reports can be found below:

- [Children's Services Reform Research study: Rapid Evidence Review](#)
- [Children's Services Reform Research study: Case Studies of Transformational Reform Programmes](#)
- [Children's Services Reform Research study: Mapping Integration and Outcomes Across Scotland: A Statistical Analysis](#)
- [Children's Services Reform Research study: Scotland's Children's Services Landscape: The Views and Experiences of the Children's Services Workforce](#)

Please find a link [here](#) for the full range of reports within the research. The final report is due to be published shortly and will also be shared with the committee.



Virtual School Head Teachers (VSHT)

An example of a body of work that is happening to improve outcomes and support for children and young people is the Virtual School Head Teachers (VSHT) approach and the Network that is supported by CELCIS.

Children and young people with care experience may need additional support during their time in education to meet distinct, and often unseen, needs. Likewise, the education system needs to be supported to ensure it can adapt and support every child. One of the key goals of Virtual School Head Teachers is to help create environments where care experienced children will feel more settled, motivated, and nurtured, to ensure a better experience at school. This, in turn, will help to improve educational outcomes, and contribute to better life chances. Since 2020, a network of the people who now operate as Virtual School Headteachers in local authority areas across Scotland comes together to share learning and practice. This is facilitated by CELCIS who also generate resources about the evidence of what is working well. These show the many ways in which the role is providing support to Keep the Promise and having an impact at a local and national level:

- [Scotland's Virtual School Headteachers Case Studies](#)
- [Joining the dots: Virtual School Head Teachers' and Care Experience Teams' Network - Summary of 2020-2021 Evaluation Report](#)
- [Scotland's Virtual School Head Teachers' and Care Experienced Teams' Network: Information booklet.](#)

Bright Spots programme

Listening to, hearing and acting on what children and young people need is at the very forefront of The Promise. There have been many ways in which the voice and experiences of children and young people have been shaping and informing changes nationally, including informing Children's Hearings through Our Hearings, Our Voice, and the Secure Care Standards to name just two. At a local level, beyond the work of 'Champions boards' that many local authorities have, Scotland is now using an approach first developed with children and young people in England called 'Bright Spots' which supports direct feedback between children and young people and people providing the care and support they need.

CELCIS, in partnership with Coram Voice, began the Bright Spots programme Scottish pilot in 2022. It uses two surveys, 'Your Life, Your Care', and 'Your Life Beyond Care', which have been developed to provide an opportunity for children and young people to share their experiences of care and how they feel about their lives, based on what they say is important. The pilot has been extended beyond the initial three local authority areas. While the report of the first stage of the pilot is being worked on, there are two videos capturing the impact of Bright Spots in two of the local authority areas already.



- [Second phase of Bright Spots programme Scottish pilot](#)

Secure Care Pathway

Scotland's Secure Care Pathway and Standards guidance, published in 2020, seeks to deliver a consistent, unified approach to caring for vulnerable children in all council areas and to all children placed in secure care in Scotland. It aims to ensure support is provided before, during and after a stay in secure care and that the rights of children and young people, who will often face vulnerabilities and risks in their lives, are respected.

- [Secure Care Pathway and Standards Scotland](#)

Continuing Care

Continuing Care was an example raised in the evidence session of where Scotland has introduced enabling legislation to support care experienced children and young people, however, there are challenges to the implementation of this. Continuing Care was introduced in 2014 and our research has identified what it is that enables and challenges the necessary improvements needed at national and local level to support children and young people to successfully transition to adulthood.

The research has recommendations covering what is needed to address culture and leadership, guidance, and practice, building on the good practice already taking place in some circumstances, and highlighting where improvements are needed.

- [Continuing Care: an exploration of implementation](#)

Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group (SPRAG)

Restraint was another issue raised in the evidence session. CELCIS hosts the Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group (SPRAG), a member-led group with representation from over 70 organisations from a range of sectors and perspectives, individuals and organisations across Scotland which is working together to reduced restraint in residential child care. The following documents provide information on SPRAG's response to different consultations:

- Letter from SPRAG regarding the proposed Restraint and Seclusion (Prevention in Schools) (Scotland) Bill (attached)
- [SPRAG Care & Justice Bill consultation response](#)
- Physical Intervention in Schools guidance consultation response by the SPRAG (attached)

More information on this work and the Reflection and Action Learning Forum (RALF) being supported by funding from The Promise Partnership can be found below.



- [Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group \(SPRAG\)](#)

Stigma and Discrimination

Finally, but crucially, we also wish to support our evidence by sharing what is being done to address the significant issue of prejudice that came through the evidence to and considerations of the Independent Care Review. We must never underestimate the impact that stigma and discrimination has had on children, young people and families needing the support of services for generations. Addressing the language used and public attitudes remains essential. Scotland is leading the way with the Each and Every Child initiative in how care and care experience is framed and understood, at every level - from national government policy-making, to social work record-keeping, to national and local campaigns, to the operational language of the hearings system. This initiative which began in 2021 is evidence-informed and the learning is shared freely through training and online resources. We are seeing time and time again now examples of how and where - attention is being paid to the language being used, and the impact of language and how things are said, written and understood is changing.

- [Each & Every Child](#)