

### 1. Work to Date

To be a “good” corporate parent, NHS Lothian recognises the need for strong leadership and governance structures to demonstrate commitment to and have oversight of organisational changes. Progress on plans laid out in the NHS Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-26 (appendix 1) and consideration of how to overcome any obstacles are reported through our Corporate Parenting Board (CPB).

NHS Lothian is a key partner alongside Local Authority and third sector organisations in the collaborative delivery of all five corporate parenting plans set forth by NHS Lothian, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian, with delivery of The Promise as a key priority in each of them.

NHS Lothian’s senior level management personnel are committed to keeping The Promise. It is a priority area for the organisation as highlighted in our annual corporate objectives<sup>1</sup> and the Lothian Strategic Development Framework<sup>2</sup>.

NHS Lothian regularly reviews corporate parenting-related policy implementation and actively seeks to understand successes, barriers to progress and actions to drive positive impact in the lives of care experienced children and young people (CECYP). NHS Lothian’s Corporate Parenting Plan is centred around CECYP and developed through the lens of the seven responsibilities of corporate parenting (alert, assess, promote, opportunities, access, improve, collaborate.)

In a response to the Scottish Government’s (SG) consultation, NHS Lothian’s Chief Executive highlighted a continued determination and drive to advance sustainable change in our delivery of The Promise (appendix 2). This letter demonstrates significant levels of work NHSL Lothian undertook, despite the impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and the financial context in which services are operating.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://org.nhslothian.scot/keydocuments/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2024/03/NHS-Lothian-Corporate-Objectives-2023-24-Final-21.06.23.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [Lothian-Strategic-Development-Framework-for-website-08042022.pdf \(nhslothian.scot\)](#)

### 2024 Assessment

Building on the information given in the response to SG and using The Promise guidance document “How the NHS can help deliver The Promise” (appendix 3), NHS Lothian CPB held a workshop to evaluate and improve our work as corporate parents. Our CPB is strong voice in shaping the delivery of the Promise. Our aim is to cascade the vision throughout the organisation and partners, and to influence nationally through working relationships with The Promise Team and SG. This work requires incorporation of the principles of The Promise, UNCRC and GIRFEC<sup>3</sup> in the day-to-day work of the organisation. The assessment findings are outlined below.

#### Areas of successes

- The principles of The Promise and the responsibilities of NHS Lothian as corporate parents have been clearly articulated at board level.
- Strategic leadership is clearly committed to delivering The Promise.
- NHS Lothian collaborates in the design and delivery frameworks, strategies and policies that further The Promise.
- Progress has been made to better engage CECYP in the development of services.
- NHS Lothian’s Equalities Impact Assessments have been integrated with principles outlined for both UNCRC and The Promise.

#### Areas to strengthen

- Given the complex, crowded policy landscape, workforce challenges and financial constraints, the CPB will need to determine a structure to prioritise tasks and deliverables.

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<sup>3</sup> [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-it-right-for-every-child/girfec/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

- NHS Lothian can improve both qualitative and quantitative data collection, assessment and use to support understanding, determine outcomes and share lessons learned.
- The principles of The Promise are not clearly articulated beyond strategic and executive levels of the organisation; therefore, additional training, communication and leadership must be widespread to reach frontline staff in a way that is meaningful, digestible and actionable.
- Continued collaboration with partner organisations to support joint solutions and enhance service delivery is paramount.
- CECYP can be more actively consulted throughout Lothian and processes to meaningfully involve CECYP in decision-making should be prioritised.

## 2. Moving Forward

NHS Lothian recognises the importance of the statutory duties placed upon them by The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014<sup>4</sup> to be good corporate parents. This means that we must work with our partner organisations to ensure that we provide CECYP with everything that a loving parent should provide. They have the right to expect that we will support them to grow and develop with security, safety, positive regard, support and boundaries<sup>5</sup>. It is essential that we provide the best possible needs led care to ensure their well-being, aspirations and successful transition to adulthood.

Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Scotland Act 2024<sup>6</sup> strengthens Scotland's commitment to children's rights and affirms our statutory obligations as corporate parents to ensure that Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) grow up loved, safe and respected to realise their full potential.

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<sup>4</sup> [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/26/contents)

<sup>5</sup> [These are our bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/these-are-our-bairns/pages/10.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/1/contents)

Plan 24-30<sup>7</sup> builds upon authorities' progress in their ambitions to implement the conclusions of the Independent Care review. This is a different approach to planning and implementation, it is iterative, live, and dynamic; it will evolve as feedback on progress supports learning and development.

### **Recommendations:**

- Continue to deliver on the activities highlighted in the Lothian Strategic Development Framework, our Corporate Parenting Plan and Children's Services Plans to help improve health outcomes and life chances for our CECYP.
- Coordinate activities across the organisation and with partners to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The statutory and policy landscape relating to Children, Young People and Families is crowded, complex and often overlapping, which gives ample opportunity to align services that better meet the needs of CECYP.
- Analyse policies, programmes and services impacting CECYP through the CPB to aid learning and advance improvement.
- Establish data and CECYP perspectives as the driving factors in policies, programmes and services that impact CECYP.
- Create opportunities to better share data, best practices and lessons learned between partner agencies and local authorities.
- Influence resource allocation to move towards long term, flexible and focused prevention, reducing inequalities and improving lives.
- Align activities relating to Corporate Parenting with the five foundations of The Promise and The Plan 24-30.

## **3. Updated Action Plan**

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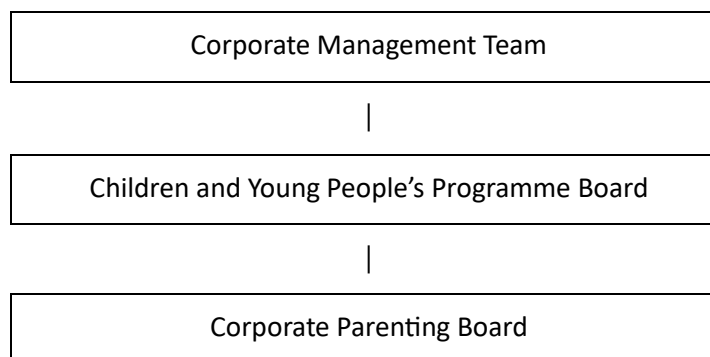
<sup>7</sup> [Welcome to Plan 24-30, Scotland's route map to keeping the promise by 2030 \(plan2430.scot\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/plan2430/)

This plan is updating the 2023-2026 Corporate Parenting Plan. The timeline for this plan remains the same, ending in 2026. Listed in the tables below are the high-level plans, linked to the five foundations of The Promise, outlining outcomes, actions and measures. Identified leads hold the responsibility for supporting the development of detailed delivery plans, implementation and reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board on each action.

These actions relate to those which are the direct responsibility for the Corporate Parenting Board. There are other significant programmes of work, linked to the outcomes of The Promise, being actioned throughout NHS Lothian and across our partnership agencies, which also serve to lead change projects to improve the lives of CECYP. Those widespread actions are identified, and more details are available in their respective service plans and the LSDF<sup>8</sup>.

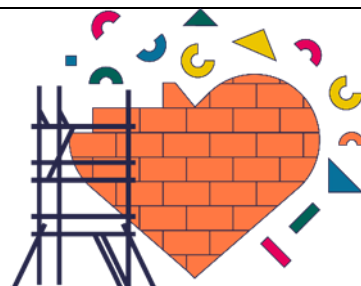
Reporting periods for the various outcomes are listed in Appendix 4.

The governance process is as follows:



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<sup>8</sup> [Lothian-Strategic-Development-Framework-for-website-08042022.pdf \(nhslothian.scot\)](#)



## Scaffolding

**"Children, young people, families, and care experienced adults 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."**

*the promise, page 25*

### Themes in Scaffolding:

Data and Information – Education – Governance – Health - Justice - Legislation - Money and Commissioning - Rights - Scrutiny and Inspection

### Widespread actions related to this foundation delivered via other governance structures:

- Commissioning through CYP Programme Board
- ANCHORS Institution including Child Poverty work
- Data groups, including Health Visiting Data Group, Child Death Review Oversight Group, Chronology Oversight Board, Child and Maternal Health Data Strategy Group
- UNCRC – engagement with children and young people
- Single Points of Access for young peoples mental health
- Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services
- Strategic planning consideration of prioritising where money is spent and aligned with need
- Public Health prevention work
- Child Death Review process
- Bairns' Hoose

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead	Status	Due Date
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## Corporate Parenting Plan – Updated February 2025

CECYP are not disadvantaged by organisational “Did Not Attend” policy	Test of change to trial “was not brought” process	Evaluation of policy including qualitative and quantitative data	Service Director, Women’s & Children’s	Action Complete	Action Complete
	Implement of sustainable "was not brought" policy to all areas of Children’s Services	Standard practice in all areas of children’s services	Service Director, Women’s & Children’s	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Feb 2025</b>
Increase employment opportunities for CECYP	Develop annual employability programme that includes CECYP with robust staff and community engagement	Number of CECYP engaged in discussions, number offered opportunities, ongoing destinations, CECYP feedback	Associate Director of OD & Learning	Action Complete	Action Complete
Increase skill development and job readiness with CECYP	Develop opportunities for CECYP in NHS Lothian youth volunteering and work experience opportunity	Number of CECYP volunteers, volunteer duration, ongoing destinations, CECYP feedback	Associate Director of OD & Learning	Action Complete	Action Complete
Increase awareness amongst the community regarding the supports available for CECYP NHS Lothian can provide	Develop a website page for CECYP	Website is launched  Website analytics showing traffic, new users, etc  Feedback from users	Strategic Planning SPM	<b>New Action</b>	<b>March 2025</b>
Improved annual health assessment pathway	Develop and implement a CECYP annual health assessment pathway	Percentage of CECYP receiving annual health assessments  Feedback from service users and staff	Director of Public Protection	Action Complete	Action Complete
Reduce barriers to primary care access.	Provide primary care services with signposting information to assist them to respond to the needs of CECYP.	Percentage of care experienced children are registered with a GP.	Director of Primary Care	Action Complete	Action Complete

## Corporate Parenting Plan – Updated February 2025

				<a href="#">Corporate Parenting – RefHelp</a>	
	Develop processes to ensure CECYP can access unscheduled dental service for urgent needs if not registered with a General Dental Practitioner (GDP).	Percentage of care experienced children are registered with a GDP or can access urgent needs through the unscheduled dental service.	Director of Primary Care	Action Complete	Action Complete
	Provide ongoing support to primary care services in Lothian to raise awareness of delivering The Promise for CECYP that use their services.	Primary care providers distributed information about working with CECYP once a quarter.	Director of Primary Care	Ongoing	March 2026
	Update Health Assessment data collection to better capture links from care experienced nursing team to primary care services.	Record and report data on dentistry referrals and health promotion provided by CE nurses.	Director of Primary Care Director of Public Protection	Ongoing	March 2026
Increase the completion of Initial Health Assessments of CE school aged children	Develop and implement a CECYP health assessment pathway.	Health assessment pathway is created and implemented	Director of Public Protection	Action Complete	Action Complete
	Work with local councils to improve the uptake of health assessments.	Percentage of CECYP offered an initial health assessment  Percentage of CECYP that receive an initial health assessment		Ongoing	March 2026



Improve access to health services for CECYP	Prioritising CECYP's initial referrals at the point of referral for dental, sexual health, paediatrics and CAMHS services	Standard operating procedures created and implemented to prioritise CECYP  Waiting times for CECYP compared to general population	REAS General Manager  Service Director, Women's & Children's  Director of Primary Care	Ongoing	March 2026
Strengthen immunisation pathways for care experienced children and young people	Engagement and scoping with relevant stakeholders to agree best way forward.	Completion of strengthened pathways for immunisations.	Vaccination Programme Manager	New Action	December 2025
		Guidance completed raising awareness and confirming robust pathways are in place	Vaccination Programme Manager	New Action	March 2026



### People

**"The children that Scotland cares 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."**

*the promise, page 22*

#### Themes in People:

Leadership - Recruitment and Retention – Rules, Processes and Culture – Workforce Support

**Widespread actions related to this foundation delivered via other governance structures:**

- UNCRC
- Trauma-Informed Training
- Solihull Training
- Workforce planning and development
- Workforce leadership network
- Children Friendly Complaints process
- Completion of Equalities and Children’s Rights Impact assessments
- Neurodevelopmental Pathway

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead	Status	Due Date
Increase understanding of corporate parenting and The Promise across the workforce	Include corporate parenting in mandatory Public Protection module	Corporate parenting embedded into mandatory public protection module.	Director of Public Protection	Ongoing	March 2026
	Develop communication strategy to support staff awareness.	Communication strategy developed and being rolled out.		Ongoing	March 2026
	Develop and implement a training programme for NHSL staff	Number of staff that have had training and evaluation of training.	Strategic Planning SPM	New Action	March 2026
Increase awareness amongst staff regarding the supports available for CECYP	Develop a Corporate Parenting Information Hub and Ref Help page	Website analytics Staff feedback	Strategic Planning SPM	Action Complete <a href="#">Corporate Parenting – RefHelp</a>	Action Complete
Leaders across the organisation demonstrate The Promise as a key priority	The Promise is identified as a key priority in all relevant policy and process documents.	Evaluation of key policy and process documents.	Strategic Planning SPM	Ongoing	March 2026

Demonstrate that reflective supervision and structured support is essential	Reflective supervision policy regarding child protection is developed and rolled out in maternity services	Number of staff receiving supervision  Evaluation of supervision	Director of Public Protection	Ongoing	March 2026
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## 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 focused on children and those they trust."**

*the promise, page 12*

### Themes in Voice:

Documenting decisions - Listening - Participation and Engagement

### Widespread actions related to this foundation delivered via other governance structures:

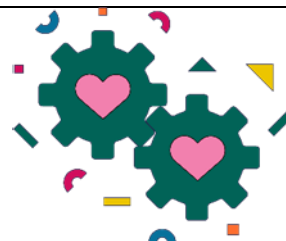
- UNCRC – Engagement of Children and Young People and Child Friendly Complaints process
- Employability

- Data groups, including Health Visiting Data Group, Child Death Review Oversight Group, Chronology Oversight Board, Child and Maternal Health Data Strategy Group
- Solihull Training for NHS Lothian staff

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead	Status	Due Date
Understand the needs of CECYP	Develop a local outcomes framework for CECYP to assess the impact of services on health, wellbeing, and wider outcomes to support and direct service development and improvement	Outcomes framework in place and monitored bi-annually	Strategic Planning SPM Lothian Analytical Services	Ongoing	March 2026
Documentation in records reflect new standards of language and decision making	Development of resources to support staff to understand the documentation standards that are reflected in The Promise	Record keeping audits  Evaluation of tools	Director of Public Protection  Child Health Commissioner	Ongoing	March 2026
Increase opportunities for CECYP to provide feedback on our services	Develop a feedback tool and schedule for all children's services as part of normal practice to gain feedback and support service improvement Develop tracking mechanism for feedback and how learning is shared, and improvements made	Number of CYP that participate in providing feedback  Number of improvements made because of feedback received	Service Director, Women's & Children's	Action transferred under Children and Young People's Programme Board	

## Corporate Parenting Plan – Updated February 2025

CECYP's need are considered in the delivery and development of services	CECYP needs built into Equalities and Children's Rights Impact Assessment process	An increase in the number of published Equalities and Children's Rights Impact Assessment that consider care experience  Narrative of how work has been developed to improve outcomes for people who are care experienced	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Lead	Action Complete	Action Complete
Increase opportunities for CE individuals to participate in NHSL service and policy development	Develop structures that support participation in the development and delivery of health services for those with care experience e.g., Champions Boards, Who Care Scotland	Feedback from CE staff, CYP and partners  Number of improvements made because of feedback received	Strategic Planning SPM  Child Health Commissioner	Ongoing	March 2026
	Develop a CE staff support network	Evaluation of network  Number of staff engaged with staff network	Director of Strategic Planning	CE Staff Network disbanded, therefore unable to complete.	
Increased staff understanding on how to consider infant needs.	Develop mechanisms to share the Infant Pledge	Evaluation of mechanisms of sharing the infant pledge  Staff evaluation of their workplace and ability to use infant pledge	Child Health Commissioner	Ongoing	March 2026



## Care

**"Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters wherever safe to do so, and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed."**

*the promise, page 19*

### Themes in Care:

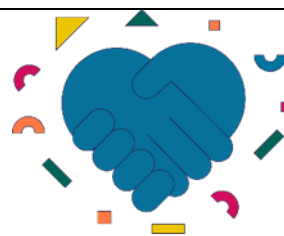
Advocacy and Legal Services - Decision making - Moving on and lifelong support – Relationships - Stability

### Widespread actions related to this foundation delivered via other governance structures:

- Data groups, including Health Visiting Data Group, Child Death Review Oversight Group, Chronology Oversight Board, Child and Maternal Health Data Strategy Group
- UNCRC – Engagement of Children and Young People
- Transitions
- Employability
- Income maximisation
- Throughcare after care support
- Solihull Training
- Trauma-Experienced Training

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead	Status	Due Date
Improved data sharing knowledge and understanding	Creation of tools to support understanding of the process of development data sharing	Evaluation of tools	Strategic Planning SPM	Action transferred under Children and Young People's Programme Board while	

	agreements across multiagency partners	Increased number of data sharing agreements across children's services	Child Health Commissioner	linking to Child and Maternal Health Data Strategy Group.	
Staff working with CYP have training to increase understanding of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024	Incorporate into child protection training	Evaluation of training	Director of Public Protection	Ongoing	June 2025



## 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."**

*the promise, page 15*

### Themes in Family:

Intensive Family Support – Poverty - Universal Family Support

### Widespread actions related to this foundation delivered via other governance structures:

- Universal services
- Children's Environment programme
- Child poverty
- Maternity – Complex social needs pathway
- Employability

- Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services
- Single points of access

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead	Status	Due Date
Improve family relationship between CE mothers and their children	Offer Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) to first time CE mothers until the age of 26	Number of eligible CE mothers are offered to FNP	Associate Midwifery Director	Action Complete	Action Complete
Increase access to income maximisation services for CECYP and their families	Provide training on financial wellbeing to the Care Experienced Nursing Team	Evaluation of training	Public Health Consultant	Action Complete	Action Complete
	Develop referral pathway for income maximisation.	Client income gained			
Strengthen partnerships and collaboration with relevant organisations to enhance service delivery	Appropriate representation from NHSL on Promise partnership groups with regular communication to and from the NHSL Corporate Parenting Board	Inclusion of Corporate Parenting/The Promise in Integrated Children's Service Plans	Strategic Planning SPM	Action Complete	Action Complete
		Participation in partner Corporate Parenting Boards		Action Complete	Action Complete

## Appendix 1





NHS Lothian  
Corporate Parenting F

## **Appendix 2**



Response to The  
Promise from NHS Lc

## **Appendix 3**



NHS contribution to  
delivery of The Promi:

## **Appendix 4 Reporting Period**

February Meeting		
Outcome	Lead	Category

Increase understanding of corporate parenting and The Promise across the workforce	Strategic Planning SPM	People
Strengthen immunisation pathways for care experienced children and young people	Vaccination Programme Manager	Scaffolding
<b>April Meeting</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Category</b>
Increase awareness amongst the community regarding the supports available for CECYP NHSL can provide	Strategic Planning SPM	Scaffolding
Increase the completion of Initial Health Assessments of CE school aged children	Director of Public Protection	Scaffolding
Staff working with CYP have training to increase understanding of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024	Director of Public Protection	Care
<b>June Meeting</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Category</b>
Improve access to health services for CECYP	REAS General Manager Service Director, Women's & Children's Director of Primary Care	Scaffolding
Demonstrate that reflective supervision and structured support is essential	Lead Nurse for Public Protection	People

Understand the needs of CECYP	Strategic Planning SPM, LAS	Voice
<b>August Meeting</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Category</b>
Improved health assessment pathway	Director of Public Protection	Scaffolding
Leaders across the organisation demonstrate The Promise as a key priority	Strategic Planning SPM	People
<b>October Meeting</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Category</b>
Increased staff understanding on how to consider infants views	Programme Manager - Maternal, Children & Young People's Health	Voice
Increase opportunities for CE individuals to participate in NHSL service and policy development	Strategic Planning SPM Child Health Commissioner	Voice
<b>December Meeting</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Category</b>
CECYP are not disadvantaged by organisational "Did Not Attend" policy	Service Director, Women's & Children's	Scaffolding
Reduce barriers to primary care access.	Director of Primary Care	Scaffolding

Documentation in records reflect new standards of language and decision making	Director of Public Protection  Programme Manager - Maternal, Children & Young People's Health	People
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