



2024 - 2025 Annual Report

Corporate Parenting

NHS Lothian's Delivery of The Promise





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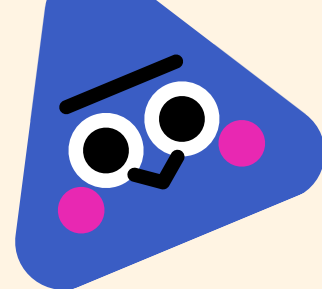


What is the purpose of this report?

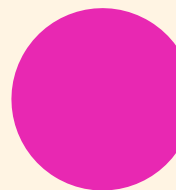
NHS Lothian has been working hard to improve health services and experiences for care experienced children and young people, their families and carers. We have a wonderful team of experts who work together with different organizations to solve problems and make positive changes that help.

In this report, we want to celebrate all the good things NHS Lothian has achieved since 2022. We are also excited to share our plans for the future to make sure that every child and young person gets the best care possible, no matter what challenges they face.

The words we use in this report



This report was made for children and young people to understand the work that impacts them. NHS Lothian and the groups we work with might use words that others may not be used to. If you find any words in this report that you don't understand, you can use this page to help.



What does “Corporate Parenting” mean?

Corporate parenting means that different groups work together to help children and young people who are in care or have been in care previously. NHS Lothian and partner organisations have special responsibilities to support young people until they are 26 years old. They try to make sure people with care experience have their rights protected and get the best chances in life.

What makes an organisation a “Corporate Parent”?

A corporate parent is the name given to an organisation or person who has special responsibilities to care experienced children and young people. Those organisations include NHS Health Boards (like NHS Lothian), the police, the fire service, local authorities (including East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian), social work services, and many more.

What does it mean to be “care experienced”?

A care experienced person is someone who has had experience of being “looked after” at some time during their life. This includes children and young people who have been in foster care, in kinship care, or stayed at home but with a legal order in place through the children's hearing system. It can also mean children and young people who are still living in care right now.



NHS Lothian Leadership

NHS Lothian has a group of leaders who work to meet the needs of care experienced children and young people. Below, you will see some of our leaders sharing what The Promise means to them.



Dona Milne
Director of
Public Health

Keeping The Promise to me means ensuring that children and young people's rights are embedded across the work of our organisation. It means listening to children and young people and ensuring that we don't make plans that impact on their lives without considering what they have told us is important to them. The work of The Promise in Scotland helps us to hear the voices of children and young people loud and clear.



Pamela Murray
Child Health
Commissioner

I believe all children and young people should have the same chances in life, keeping The Promise helps make that happen. It is about listening to children and making sure they get the help they need when they need it. Working together helps create a kinder system where every child feels valued, safe, loved, and supported.



Allister Short
Women's and
Children's
Service Director

The Promise, to me, means the care we deliver for care experienced children and young people is easy to access, responds and respects their individual needs and fully involves them in decisions around their health and wellbeing. At the heart of this is our commitment to listen to children and young people and to support them in reaching their full potential.

NHS Lothian Leadership



Carolyn Wyllie
Director of
Public Protection

Every Child and Young Person who has contact with our services has unique needs and experiences. As a member of the Corporate Parenting Board, I am passionate about making sure that our pathways and our staff delivering services, have the right tools and confidence to deliver flexible approaches which always put the needs of the Child/Young person at the heart of what we do. The Promise provides the strategic scaffolding; however we need to continually challenge ourselves to make sure that children and Young people are meaningfully heard, valued and given the opportunity to participate in co-designing their support to achieve the best chances and outcomes in their life.



Claire Kapusciak
Lead Nurse for
Public Protection

The Promise, to me, is about listening to and responding to care experienced children and young people in a meaningful way to meet their needs. It is about hearing their voices, upholding their rights and ensuring they have the right support and services, at the right time, to help improve their health and outcomes.



Words and Ideas

Corporate parenting refers to, “the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers.” Although this principle was laid out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the terminology and ideas have been active aspects of Scottish Government Policy since 2007.

Corporate Parents have specific duties and responsibilities toward care experienced children and young people up to the age of 26. Corporate Parents help ensure the rights of care experienced people are upheld, and that they have the best chances and outcomes in life.

Corporate Parenting Duties



Look out for things that could hurt or make life harder for care experienced children and young people and their carers.



Find ways to give care experienced children and young people and their carers fun activities that help them feel good and happy.



Help care experienced children and young people and their carers by making sure they can get the support they need.



Work with care experienced children and young people to connect them to services and supports that fit their needs.



Listen to CECYP's needs and experiences and support them to feel confident and connected.



Take steps to improve help and support for care experienced children and young people.

Guides that Help Us Make Good Choices

UNCRC

By ratifying the The Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, into law, Scotland commits to protecting the rights of children in all areas of their life, including rights to:

- Go to school and learn,
- Be safe from harm and bad treatment,
- Have their voices heard and be taken seriously,
- Have a home, enough food, and clothes to wear, and
- Have time to relax and play.

GIRFEC

GIRFEC stands for Getting It Right For Every Child. It is a plan that helps make sure children can enjoy their rights. It is based on the idea that all children and young people should feel safe and reach their full potential. GIRFEC is about giving children the help they need, whenever they need it, for as long as they need it.

The Promise

The Promise is about making Scotland a place where every child feels loved, safe, and respected. It wants to create a country where:

- Children are safe at home and feel cared for.
- Families get help to take care of each other and deal with tough times.
- If children can't live with their family, they can stay with their brothers or sisters and have a loving home.
- Adults who grew up in care can get the support they need to be happy and reach their goals.

Corporate Parenting in Lothian

NHS Lothian works together with local councils, schools, charities and other groups to help make sure care experienced children and young people in Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian are taken care of. NHS Lothian and the local councils have specific plans to support care experienced children and young people .

NHS Lothian's leadership is committed to The Promise and ensuring care experienced children and young people get the support they need. Corporate Parenting is one of NHS Lothian's main priorities and is included in our strategic planning documents. This means, when NHS Lothian makes plans for the future, we include supporting care experienced children and young people. One of the many documents for future planning is the Corporate Parenting Plan. This plan is really important because it guides us and helps us record our progress.





Corporate Parenting in Lothian

As part of future planning, NHS Lothian brings together a variety of professionals to discuss actions, create plans, provide updates, engage care experienced children and young people and address barriers. This group is called the Corporate Parenting Board and they meet every other month. The Board is led by the Director of Public Health and includes leaders that are crucial to the progress of the Corporate Parenting Plan. Those members include:

- Advanced Nurse Practitioner for Children's Services
- Child Health Commissioner
- Clinical Nurse Managers for Health Visiting and School Nursing
- Clinical Services Manager for Child & Adolescent Mental Health
- Director of Primary Care
- Director of Public Protection
- Director of Strategic Planning
- Director of Women's and Children's Services
- Head of Careers Development and Employability
- Heads of Service Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Lead Nurse for Public Protection
- Lead Paediatrician for Care Experienced Children and Young People
- Public Health Consultant for Women's and Children's Services
- REAS General Manager
- Strategic Programme Manager for Women's and Children's Services

Plan 24-30



What is the Plan 24-30?

Plan 24-30 is Scotland's road map to Keep The Promise by 2030. The Plan organises needed actions identified by a Independent Care Review.

Five Foundations



Scaffolding



Voice



People



Care



Family

24-30 Plan Development

Plan 24-30 was made with help from important groups, including the care community. The Plan will continue to improve as more feedback and information is shared with leaders across Scotland. The main ideas behind the plan are:

- The Plan 24-30 will remain rooted in the needs and goals of children, young people, families and care experienced adults.
- This plan was created as a route map to keep The Promise by 2030.
- This plan provides a common understanding of how progress will be measured and be able to keep track among different groups working toward the same goals.



NHS Lothian

23/24 Progress



Scaffolding



This foundation focuses on the different care systems, like education or health, that impact people's lives. When these systems and organisations work well, care experienced children and young people and adults will be treated as individuals first. This means that people will see them for who they are and their individual needs, not just for their care history.

NHS Lothian Actions to Date:

Themes in Scaffolding

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



Was Not Brought Policy

We made a change to help children and young people who miss their doctor appointments. Instead of calling them "Did Not Attend," we are now saying "Was Not Brought." This way, we can work with the family to help them schedule a new appointment. The Children's Services team is also making a plan to check on this change and make sure it keeps getting better.



Employability, Work Experience and Volunteering

We started a special programme every year to help young people who have been in care find jobs or apprenticeships with NHS Lothian. We also created a way for these young people to learn new skills by volunteering and getting work experience at NHS Lothian.



Primary Care Link

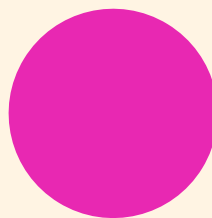
Primary Care Services like General Practitioners (or GPs), Dentists and Pharmacists are now getting information to help them take care of care experienced children and young people. Dental Services made it easier for care experienced children and young people to get help right away, even if they don't have a regular dentist.



Initial Health Assessments

We made a new way to help more children get their health check-ups faster. Children who are in care and are old enough for school need to have a special health check called an Initial Health Assessment. This helps doctors and other health professionals give these children and young people a check up to see if they need any extra support.

Scaffolding



Ongoing work outlined in the Corporate Parenting Plan to be completed by March 2026 includes:



Barriers to Primary Care

We are working with Primary Care Services like dentistry and oral health, eyecare, general practitioners (GPs), health screening and more to help make sure care experienced children and young people feel safe and happy when they visit for check-ups or when they feel sick. The Primary Care team wants to make sure they have the best information to support care experienced children and young people.



Access to Health Services

Leaders from health services like dental, sexual health, paediatrics and CAMHS are working to make sure that care experienced children and young people can get their appointments more quickly.



Awareness of Supports for CECYP

NHS Lothian is developing a webpage for care experienced children and young people so they can know about supports available to them more easily.



Immunisation Uptake

Strengthen immunisation pathways for care experienced children and young people to make sure they are able to get vaccinations when they need them.

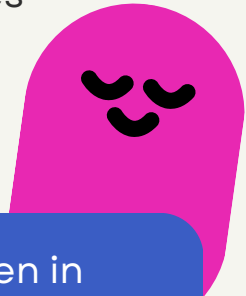




Service Highlights



Below is an example of how NHS Lothian's Dental Services Team has made using their services easier for care experienced children and young people .



NHS Lothian's Dental Services Team had an idea to help children in care get to the dentist easier. This plan, or "pathway," makes sure care experienced children and young people can get care in the right place and right time. If care experienced children and young people need to see a dentist, they will get support to find one and advice on how to see a dentist quickly if they are in pain.

The dental team included everyone involved in helping care experienced children and young people—like social workers, doctors, nurses, and even special programmes like "Child Smile" and "Open Wide"—when creating this pathway.

To make things even easier, the Dental Service spoke with groups that help children in care, so everyone is aware of what is available. The best part? The plan is already being used, and people are saying good things about it!

Health visitors (who check on babies and young children) can now refer to this pathway, which will help care experienced children and young people get dental checks when they are little. Preventing problems is a big part of what dentists do, so early check-ups are really important!

But, of course, there were a few challenges in getting the right information at the right time and there are teams still working to improve those issues.

Even though there's still work to do, the dental team has already made a big difference. Thanks to their plan, care experienced children and young people are getting the smiles they deserve!

Voice

This foundation's focus is making sure care experienced children and young people, their families and carers are listened to. The Promise says it is important to listen to children and let them be a part of the decisions about their care.

This is also an important part of child rights. The UNCRC says that all children and young people should be supported to give their views in a way that is best for them. It also says that when adults are making decisions that affect children they should ask them what they think.



Themes in Voice

- Documenting decisions
- Listening
- Participation and engagement

NHS Lothian Completed Actions:



Impact Assessment for Health Services Changes

When a health service is changing, NHS Lothian gathers people who work on and with the services to talk about how these changes might affect different groups, like care experienced children and young people. They work together to find ways to try to keep everyone safe.

Ongoing work in the Corporate Parenting Plan to be completed by March 2026 includes:



Data to Better Understand Care Experienced Children's Needs

We are working with teams that collect data to pull together information that will help us understand how our services are helping care experienced children and young people. This plan will help us see what is working well and what needs to get better, so we can make our services better for everyone.



Language and Care that Matches The Promise

The way we talk about care has changed, so we are working with our staff to make sure they have the right resources to deliver on The Promise.



Opportunities for Consultation with Care Experienced People

We are working to create ways for care experienced children and young people to share how they think we can make health services better. We are talking with groups like Champions Boards to learn from their ideas and experiences.



Scotland's Infant Pledge

We are working with staff and managers who care for infants in care to make sure they understand and properly use the Infant Pledge to provide the best care to babies.

People

This foundation is about supporting the workforce that care for care experienced children and young people. The Promise says that these professionals should be supported and have the skills they need to do their job. The workforce should also be able to build relationships with care experienced children and young people, families and carers so they can practise compassionate decision-making



Themes in People

- Leadership
- Recruitment and retention
- Rules, processes and culture
- Workforce support

NHS Lothian Completed Actions:



NHS Lothian Staff Referral Assistance

We created a staff web page so staff know about community and government supports available for care experienced children and young people. We also created a [Ref Help](#) page, which helps health providers make the best decisions when referring care experienced children and young people to additional services.

Ongoing work in the Corporate Parenting Plan to be completed by March 2026 includes:



Delivering The Promise

We are developing ways to help our staff understand how to care for care experienced children and young people. We are creating a training programme for staff to learn what it means to be a good corporate parent. We are also coming up with new ways to share information across NHS Lothian on how to keep The Promise and support children better.



The Promise Prioritised

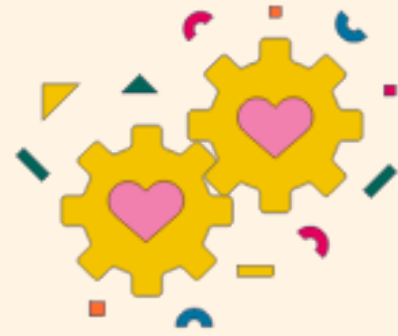
We are looking over and updating all of our guiding documents to make sure they match up with The Promise. This is important because these guidelines help shape the way we provide care.



Staff Support through Teamwork

The services that help new mums and keep children safe have teamed up to help workers talk to their bosses about how they feel about the problems their patients experience. By understanding these feelings better, they can make better choices to help their patients. We call this process “reflective supervision.”

Care



This foundation is about making sure the 'care system' works and children, young people and families experience it as positive and supportive. When The Promise is kept, the relationships that are important to children will not be affected by being in different care situations and they should be able to keep in touch with family and those important to them when it is safe. We want to help make sure that when a child may be moved from care, the support they have will not end.

Themes in Care

- Advocacy and legal advice
- Decision making
- Moving on and lifelong support
- Relationships
- Stability
- Where children live

Ongoing work in the Corporate Parenting Plan to be completed by March 2026 includes:



Staff Training on the Government Policies

Staff that work with children and young people get trained in how to best keep them safe. We are working to add information to that training from a new Government plan so those workers know changes designed to improve children and young people's experiences if they need to move from their current home or go to court.



Family

This foundation helps families stay together. When The Promise is kept, families get the help they need so children can stay with family as long as possible so long as it is safe. The Promise make sure to try everything we can to keep families together before deciding if a child needs to go live somewhere else. If a child can't stay with their family, we still help the family so they can stay connected and have what they need.



Themes in Family

- Intensive family support
- Income maximisation
- Universal family support

NHS Lothian Completed Actions:



Resources for Care Experienced Mothers

Care experienced young people pregnant with their first baby are able to get special support through a programme called the Family Nurse Partnership. This programme offers special care for young parents and their children from nurses that are trained specifically to help families that may need extra support.



Income Maximisation Services for Care Experienced Children and Families

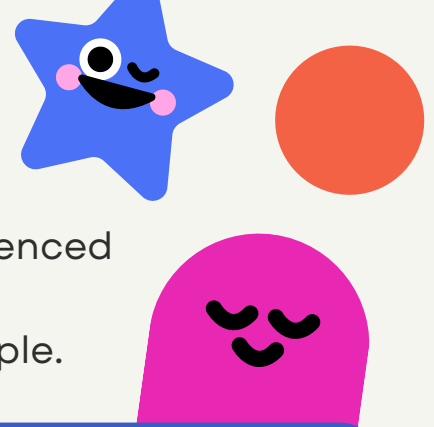
Income maximisation means making the most of the money you have and getting the benefits that you are entitled to. Our Care Experienced Nursing Team has been trained to connect care experienced children and young people, families and carers to services that help them plan the best way to use their money. We also made it easier for other health care workers to refer families to these services.



Corporate Parents Working Together

NHS Lothian is working with Corporate Parents to make sure care experienced children and young people grow up feeling loved, safe and respected. We do this by making sure our staff are regularly meeting with and connecting to other Corporate Parenting Boards across Lothian.

Service Highlights



Below is an example of how NHS Lothian's Care Experienced Children's Nursing Team has worked to improve their services for care experienced children and young people.

The Care Experienced Children's Nursing Team is part of NHS Lothian's Child Protection Team. If a young person is care experienced and under 18, this team is there to support their health and wellbeing—whether they live at home, with family (kinship care), or in foster or residential care.

The team offers a full health check to make sure care experienced children and young people feel their best, both physically and emotionally. Their goal is to support care experienced children and young people to stay healthy and reach their full potential.

Alongside this core work, the team has been making positive changes to improve the way they connect with care experienced children and young people. They've developed new ways to talk about health needs and wishes, making sure each person's voice is heard. Nurse-led clinics were also introduced, giving more options for where and how young people can meet with the team. These clinics add flexibility and help create comfortable spaces to talk about health and well-being.

The team is also reviewing their health documentation to make it clearer and more helpful. Care experienced children and young people will be invited to give feedback and help shape the changes.

To support learning and healthy living, the team is working with partners in health to run sessions that promote well-being. They're also teaming up with other services to make sure care experienced children and young people have access to fun and meaningful physical activity and leisure opportunities.

Importantly, the team continues to be part of children's rights networks. Listening to the voices and views of care experienced children and young people remains at the heart of all they do.

Through these efforts, the team is continuing to grow and improve, always aiming to provide the best possible support for the young people they work with.



Acknowledgements

The NHS Lothian Corporate Parenting Board extends a heartfelt thank you to all our services and partners. A special acknowledgment goes to our strategic partners in East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian.

We also want to thank the remarkable children and young people of Lothian, particularly those with care experience. Your perspectives and feedback inspire us to thoughtfully enhance our services to ensure we meet your needs and expectations. Thank you for being our motivation to grow and improve!

Contact Us

If you have any questions, comments or feedback about this report or our Corporate Parenting work, please reach out to our Strategic Programme Manager, Michelle LeBlanc, at michelle.leblanc@nhs.scot.

You can also find more information about our work at <https://org.nhslothian.scot/equality-human-rights/corporate-parenting>.