

Rt Hon John Swinney MSP
An Fhìor Urr John Swinney BPA
First Minister of Scotland
Am Prìomh Mhinistear



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Douglas Ross MSP
Convener Education, Children and Young People
Committee
Scottish Parliament

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Douglas

As we head into the final year of the Parliamentary session I look forward to working collegiately with you and members across the Committee to drive forward the important work that will help ensure that our children and young people across Scotland grow up loved, safe and respected.

The Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise has previously shared with you the intention to introduce a Bill ahead of the Summer recess that will address legislative aspects relating to The Promise. I am proud to inform you that the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Parliament yesterday.

As I'm sure you will appreciate, the introduction of this Bill is a significant milestone in our ambition to keep The Promise and will be instrumental in accelerating progress toward Scotland's commitment to our care community. The eight key areas that the Bill addresses are:

- Extension of eligibility to receive Aftercare support to young people who have been in care prior to their 16th birthday.
- Introduction of a right to advocacy for children, young people and adults with care experience.
- Actions to improve the language of care, including a universal definition of 'care experienced'
- Legislative steps to tackle profit from residential care
- Strengthening the not-for-profit principle in relation to foster care
- Introduction of a national register for foster carers
- Redesign of the Children's Hearing's System, and
- Extension of the statutory responsibility to Integrated Joint Boards in the development of Children Services Plans

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

The Minister has provided significant leadership in relation to The Promise and will lead the work on the Bill. I know she will welcome the opportunity to engage with members from across the chamber and the committee as it progresses through Parliament.

The changes included in this Bill are of course only part of the wider work being undertaken across Scotland to keep The Promise. Work continues at both a national and local level and I welcome the committee's continued attention to not only apply appropriate scrutiny but also to actively champion progress as we move forward together.

My Government's commitment to keep The Promise by 2030 remains steadfast. In further demonstration of this I am delighted to confirm that I have recently re-appointed Fiona Duncan in her role as Independent Strategic Advisor for The Promise until 2030. No doubt the Committee will continue to engage closely with Ms Duncan and I look forward to her continued involvement in delivering this key priority for Scottish Government.

Let me thank you again for your role in ensuring that the Committee applies the appropriate scrutiny and accountability that is helping ensure the action Scotland is taking continues to impact and improve the outcomes for Scotland's children and young people.

JOHN SWINNEY