



A Place to Call Home

Understanding home quality in the
children's social care system in Scotland

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Introduction

The latest Government statistics show on 31 July 2023, 12,206 children were 'looked after' in Scotland. 1,320¹ of these children are cared for in a residential setting, like a home for children. That's 11% of all looked after children. Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, 'looked after children' are defined as those in the care of their local authority. We have used this term above as it relates to the official government statistics, however throughout the report we will refer to children with experience of care as care experienced. This is because, rightly, the term 'Looked After Children (LAC)' is no longer used in Scotland. Instead, care experienced is the term used in Scotland as it puts the emphasis on the child or young person's experience of care and conveys that each child and young person matters. This important change in language shifts the focus to the roles and responsibilities of those caring for children and young people.

Residential care is part of the social contract – it is the state's legal duty to protect and support children. At Action for Children, we know children and young people living apart from their families face barriers in fulfilling the universal need to feel loved. Action for Children have a commitment to putting love at the heart of our residential care in a way that recognises personal and professional boundaries, power and rights and expectations.

Residential care is there to make sure children's needs are met when they can't live with their own family. It provides a home for children to develop and grow. And just like all homes, children should get food, shelter and a space for play and leisure in a loving and caring environment. In Scotland, young people access residential care through voluntary agreements or compulsory measures. These measures include on the recommendation of a Children's Hearing Panel² or on an emergency, short-term basis to guarantee their safety.

Action for Children

Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care, ensuring their voices are heard and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives. We run over 90 services across Scotland. Our 850 staff support, care for and love more than 38,000 children, young people and their families, across 30 of the country's 32 local authorities. We currently provide 16 homes for children.

We believe it should be Scotland's goal for everyone to live in a country where no child or young person is in care. Instead, they'd be living safely and happily with their birth parents and families. That's why we invest in family support and early intervention services. Of course, we recognise there are still times when residential care is needed and that it must ensure that children and young people feel safe, loved and supported to get the most out of life. There is a wide array of policy and legislation in Scotland that sets out what children and young people can expect from residential care. These expectations are referred to as standards and are scrutinised by the Care Inspectorate in Scotland.

The situation in Scotland so far

Scotland has legislation to safeguard the quality and standards needed to ensure children have appropriate residential care. All residential care homes for children are inspected by the **Care Inspectorate**³ to ensure they meet national standards. Since April 2018 these standards have been set out in *Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life*.⁴

Since April 2022 Care Inspectorate staff have been using **Key question 7**⁵ – “How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?” – to evaluate and rate homes for children. They also use two other indicators:

- **7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life.**
- **7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights.**

Each quality indicator provides an overall grade from 'unsatisfactory' (1) to 'excellent' (6).

Action for Children's residential services in Scotland have all been evaluated either (4) 'good' or (5) 'very good'. We continue to work hard towards 'excellent'.

Care home services for children and young people can be provided by local authorities, private firms, voluntary organisations and health boards. All children, no matter who provides residential support, have a plan for their care⁶. People need qualifications to work in registered residential care. For example, a practice qualification (often called a Scottish Vocational Qualification or SVQ) and an award of certificated knowledge (usually a Higher National Certificate or HNC). Every worker also must register with the regulator for the social

work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland – the Scottish Social Care Services Council (SSSC).⁷

Main legislation changes

- **In 2011** the Scottish government decided to incorporate the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC), established in 2000 to improve outcomes for children and young people in residential care, into the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (**CELCIS**)⁸ – a body with a wider scope. The SIRCC had helped to develop the residential childcare workforce by providing qualification courses and opportunities for continuous professional development. CELCIS' role is to be “the go-to organisation for specialist knowledge concerning the care and protection of children in Scotland”.
- **In 2013** the Scottish government published its **National Guidance for the External Management of Residential Child Care Establishments**⁹.
- **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**¹⁰ introduced provisions to better ensure permanence planning for care-experienced children. Permanence planning is to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging. This reinforced the Scottish government's ambition: ***to make Scotland the best place to grow up in***. It also placed the concept of Corporate Parenting, Continuing Care and aftercare to age 26 on a legal footing.
- **In 2015** the Scottish government published its **Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People strategy**.¹¹ This strategy set out the government's priorities to improve the lives of care-experienced children and young people.

Residential care and the Promise

In 2017, the Scottish government set up the Independent Care Review (ICR). The review:

- Lasted three years.
- Listened to over 5,500 people.
- Met with over 500 organisations.
- Reviewed 943 sources of evidence.

It also identified and considered 44 pieces of primary legislation, 19 pieces of secondary legislation and three international conventions.

In 2020¹² the ICR published a series of reports which found that care in Scotland was ***“fractured, bureaucratic and unfeeling”*** and did not ***“adequately value the voices and experiences of those in it”***. They found the ***“‘care system’ and its associated elements did not enable children to feel loved, safe and respected”***.

In response, the government set up Promise Scotland. It made a promise to Scotland's infants, children, young people, and their families that in ten years (2030), ***“every child would grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential”***.

The ICR and the Promise highlighted problems in residential care – and the changes needed to address them¹³.

The Promise said that residential Children's Homes and Schools can be the right place for children or young people, specifically those who would find the intensity of family settings overwhelming and prefer residential care as it can put fewer demands on them. **It was clear that what must be prioritised are the quality of relationships that children experience in residential settings.** Below is what the Promise set out what should happen with regards to residential care.

1. Residential settings must operate with a cohesive set of values that uphold the rights of the children they are caring for.
2. Those values must be therapeutic, recognising that children require thoughtful, supportive relationships as a basis on which to heal and develop as young adults. For example, the needs of the children living in a residential home at the time must inform any rules as opposed to a blanket set of instructions and restrictions.
3. Recognising that children and young people may have supportive, kind relationships with sessional staff as well as core staff, the residential provider must be supported to find the right balance between having consistent core staff along with the flexibility of additional support that works for the children and young people.
4. Young people who leave residential care may wish to maintain relationships with workers and this must be supported and given time. Blanket policies that prevent the maintenance of these relationships must be removed.
5. Staff must be recruited on the basis of their values rather than educational levels.
6. Children must not be further stigmatised, and any rules that do so must end. For example, staff should be allowed to use their own cars to take children to school, rather than relying on taxis. This would allow the opportunity for supportive relationships to develop while driving a child or young person to school or college.
7. Residential care settings must be supported and resources to keep places open for young people in line with continuing care legislation. Scotland must ensure that this is not brought to an end when young people do not want to and are not ready to leave.
8. The inspection of residential settings must focus on the children's experience of the relationships. Inspection must be led primarily by what those who live in residential homes say and how they feel they are being cared for.

How the language we use affects children

Children told the review's authors that stigmatising 'system language' used about care increased their feeling of being different and affected their self-esteem. These included words used by professionals to describe their lives like 'unit', 'placement', 'contact', 'respite' and 'LAC' (looked after child). This isn't the same language used by children without care experience.

This kind of 'professionalised language' may help some professionals detach to deal with what can be emotionally difficult work. However, for the children, this language can feel belittling and affect their sense of self.

The review avoids these words and urges everyone else to do the same. It built on the work in this area undertaken by Who Cares? Scotland. It's clear that in Scotland we shouldn't use words like 'placement' and 'contact' to talk about a child's home and spending time with their family.

At Action for Children, we use 'your home, your house or where you live' instead of 'placement'. Instead of 'LAC' we use 'care experienced' and we use 'short breaks, short stay or a sleepover' rather than 'respite'. We have an ongoing commitment to continually explore and evolve language with all our young people.

We urge everyone to follow the lead of the review and Who Cares? Scotland and change the way we talk about children in care.

How the UNCRC is shaping Scottish law

In **December 2023** the Scottish Parliament passed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024¹⁴ without opposition. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stresses the importance of family, recognising that children "*should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding*"¹⁵. On 16 July 2024, the act came into force in Scotland. This means that children's rights, set out in the UNCRC, will be legally protected in Scotland.

It is clear children shouldn't passively receive care and that any care system must uphold their rights at every opportunity. Incorporating the UNCRC into Scottish law is a vital step to make sure children and young people's rights are recognised and protected. This affects children in residential care, for example:

- **Article 3** (best interests of the child). The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- **Article 20** (children unable to live with their family). If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that's continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

- **Article 25** (review of treatment in care). If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.
- **Article 27** (adequate standard of living). Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development.

The act creates obligations which everyone including , public authorities and children should be aware of. The legislation means local authorities have to be consistent with the UNCRC and explains how they can achieve this. Section 6 of the legislation says that an act of a public authority incompatible with the UNCRC will be considered “unlawful”.

This has consequences for residential care. If a public authority acts in a way that’s inconsistent with the UNCRC, a child, young person, or someone acting for them can challenge their actions through a judicial route. They can ask for a remedy for the “unlawful act”. For the first time, children and young people have legislation they can use to challenge authorities when their rights are threatened.

We hope incorporating the UNCRC will encourage a culture change in Scotland. This change will mean children are increasingly recognised as rights holders who should be involved in decisions that affect them – not just passively receive care and protection. The whole of Scotland, not just national and local governments, should invest in protecting and acting upon children’s rights. This includes driving positive change and increasing standards in residential care.

The right staff matter: voices of frontline staff

The Promise says, *“the purpose of the workforce must be to be caring above anything else. That starts with recruiting people with the right ethos and qualities...”*.

Action for Children know that social care staff are experts in children’s care. To provide that vital care requires staff to have the right values and use clinical, emotional and academic skills while also collaborating closely with other professionals.

We recognise that having the right people is essential to getting it right for every child. We look for qualities that include empathy, commitment and kindness to ensure our children feel they belong, are safe, loved and valued.

For too long people have considered social care work as a low-skill profession. This needs to be challenged and changed.

In Scotland, Action for Children:

- Focus on investing in our staff.

- Are dedicated to building a diverse, inclusive and authentic workplace.
- Pay the Real Living Wage as a minimum (we have a pay scale that recognises the fact that residential care is skilled work and allows for career progression) and embrace the Scottish government's Fair Work agenda.
- Offer excellent training and development opportunities and we help staff gain professional qualifications and offer flexible working hours.
- Encourage young people into our workforce, including employing care experienced staff, highlighted by our Platinum Award from Investors in Young People (IYYP).

Our research from our frontline staff

We asked our children's residential care staff what makes a good home for children – and what the sector needs to avoid.

Using focus groups and survey feedback we captured the voices of 16 staff members to represent our 16 residential services in Scotland.

This builds on our nearly 70 years of experience supporting, caring for and loving young people and families across Scotland. Some staff offered feedback based on their 20 years of service.

Thank you to our dedicated staff who gave up their time to share their insights into children's residential care in Scotland.

Our findings

Q1: What makes a good residential home, house or place to live?

Staff's views focused on three main themes: **developing and building relationships; creating a home environment with love; and having the right staff.**

Developing and building relationships



“Make it really like a home. That means providing opportunities for building and developing relationships, being creative with activities and establishing a stimulating environment.”



“We look to engage every young person regardless of additional needs or complexities to their best of their abilities.”



“I think communication is a key factor in a young person's care, taking a consistent approach and ensuring we are sticking to boundaries. I think the [number] of young people who have moved on from our care that still come back to visit or keep in contact shows the family-like home we have here.”



“Establishing boundaries at the start of the relationship, to ensure the young person has consistency and structure.”



“Not placing personal expectations on the young people, [like] education, employment [or] developmental stages. Instead celebrating small changes and accomplishments.”



“Understanding each young person is very unique and should never be compared to another young person.”



“Not shaming, judging, expecting a young person to do better! Just guiding it when they need it.”

“

“Allowing the young people to feel cared for and wanted allows them to believe in themselves and be supported to reach realistic goals.”

Creating the home environment with love

“

“We look to make the environment as much of a home as we possibly can to enable young people to get involved with activities.”

“

“[We do] day-to-day activities in the house like you would in any ‘normal’ home environment. [Through these we try to] make the young people feel safe, cared for and loved. [But we] also [provide them] with essential skills for when they move on.”

“

“We refer to it as their home, cause it is! We have monthly meetings with the young people.”

“

“We say: ‘this is your home, look after it’. It’s about ownership, having accountability and discussions.”

“

“A warm home with washing, cooking and internet as we know some children might not have had this before.”

“

“A garden to play in, grow food in, plant things, maintain and relax in.”

“

“Routines in the home such as cleaning routine, washing routine, room checks, mealtime routine.”

“

“Being able to get involved in running the home, [with activities that are] age and stage appropriate – cleaning, menus, cooking, washing.”

Having the right staff



“[With] the right staff, we can and do give that high-quality support, love and care that they might have missed or not got at all.”



“It’s not glorified babysitting. You need the skilled workforce to make a good place where children can live.”



“[We have] adults and a team who are safe, supporting and nurturing.”



“I feel [we have] a strong team that mostly enjoy being here and enjoy the job they do. [They feel] valued and respected.”



“Staff keep up to date with the generational change – for example the way the children and young people view/experience the world is very different to how I did at their age. I think understanding this provides a greater opportunity to connect with them.”



“Providing authentic support when working with young people.”



“Assessing risk and need on a professional capacity, not on personal views.”



“Sharing the right information and having a consistent staff team.”

Q2: What helps children feel at home?

Our staff's views covered three main themes: **matching; co-decisions, boundaries and routines; and environment and relationships.**

Matching

“There is a real and pressing need to match young people with the service to see if it's compatible for them. In an ideal world young people would have initial visits.”

“[Carrying out] appropriate and timely risk assessments [is important]. to ensure everyone is supported and safe and how the young person gets the best home they need and want, this includes helping manage and develop relationships especially with other children at the home We understand if it's an emergency you won't be able to carry out full assessments, but in that case the more information you have about the young person the better.”

Co-decisions, boundaries and routines

“Allowing them to be part of the decision-making process of their care and planning.”

“Making decisions with them not for them.”

“Providing them as much choice as protocol will allow.”

“Giving young people the opportunity to express themselves, even if staff don't necessarily believe in their choice of expression.”

“Like any family there will be routines and rules. Young people appreciate these especially if they are jointly drawn up and agreed – or [we] at least explain why

these routines and practices have been set. Co-ownership yet again is key, that sense we are all part of it."

“

"Again, sticking to boundaries...like bedtimes and times to be in the house (if the young people adhere to these or not). I think this is sometimes easily missed.

Environment and relationships

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"Making it a place of safety. One of the main aspects of home is when you close that door you are, or should be, in a safe space where you can replenish, refresh and rejuvenate."

“

"It's all about relationships."

“

"Remember we work in their home, the young people don't choose to be looked after. So, letting them decide what food they want, what they want to watch on TV, what time they want to get up (within reason)."

“

"Being authentic, don't try to pretend to be someone you aren't, children are smart they will know. Being yourself adds trust and any positive relationship built is then honest and will come naturally."

“

"Keeping the home tidy and home-like, giving them a nice [space] to walk back into."

“

"The use of language is an essential factor in our practice – to attempt to break down unnecessary barriers between young people and service workers."

Q3: What stops children expressing their feelings about residential support?

Our staff's views mainly covered three main themes: **vulnerability and trauma; personalisation and relationships; and time.**

Vulnerability and trauma



“Many children here [and others who live in homes for children] have experienced various aspects which have made them vulnerable. [These include] neglect, abuse or trauma, complex disabilities and behavioural difficulties, or substance misuse. This vulnerability can limit young people expressing their feelings. Having a trauma-informed approach has always been a necessity. If you don't work that way many young people will [feel they have] lost their voice.”



“Some of our young people can't communicate because they are nonverbal/not fully verbal or there is a language barrier. We try to facilitate the best communication we can through technology such as translation apps and a Picture Exchange Communication System.”



“The young people [are sometimes not aware] of different feelings. I've seen this quite often, they don't know how to identify the feelings, which come out in anger.. I think the majority of the time young people have suppressed their feelings long before coming to us or have never had the space to name and feel them.”



“Some factors that can stop them are previous experiences of care and family life. If they've been let down in the past, they may expect this to happen again and struggle to engage or build relationships.”



“Some of the young people have experiences of trauma that can make it very difficult to reach out for help. It can take time to build relationships and trust to allow them to express themselves in a meaningful way. We help this by not dismissing feelings and encouraging and participating in transparency and honesty where appropriate.”

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“I know young people have a fear of consequences, a ‘what if I say this will it make it worse not better’.”

Personalisation and relationships

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“What stops children, is if they think it’s a one size fits all approach, that its done by numbers. We shouldn’t constrain people by placing everyone into a certain box or in a pigeonhole, thinking everyone’s the same so their support should be identical , we need to note the individual and be attuned to their needs. If the young person doesn’t feel that personal and individual support they won’t open up to you, they won’t feel that you care about them. [You] can’t treat people like a number.”

“

“Experienced staff can help and encourage young people to express their feelings.”

“

“There’s a big, big difference to being ‘heard’ and being ‘listened to’.”

Time

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“Time: both staff and young people need it. One young person said ‘people say time is money but it’s not. Time is care, you need to give people time to really be able to care for them’.”

“

“I think the biggest thing I can do for the young people is give them my time, attention and space to work through their emotions and never judge them when they’re struggling to regulate them.”

Q4: Do you see any trends in poor-quality residential support?

Staff's thoughts covered two main themes: **commissioning and funding**; and **matching and assessments**.

Commissioning and funding



“There’s an issue over ‘spot’ versus ‘block’ purchasing. [We’re] seeing more spot purchasing...meaning scrambling for care from the moment that a child is identified as needing a place. [There’s a risk that] some children are being placed where there is a place available rather than on the basis of their needs.”



“Children need quality, stable care. This is being jeopardised due to financial constraints and commissioning practices.”



“Some professionals [believe] that when a child turns 16 or 18 they’re going to magically not need support or be less vulnerable, but the fact we have continuing care recognises the importance that young people have to have more graduated transition out of care. We need to get continuing care right that needs to filter down to all aspects of commissioning and transitioning as a whole.”



“The sector as a whole is seeing high staff turnover in residential care.”



“[There is a] lack of therapies and teaching for young people with trauma. There’s also a common trend of choosing the path of least resistance – which is not always the best option and [means action isn’t taken] until things get to crisis point.”

Matching and assessments



“[Sometimes we are presented with] what a best day is like for a young person. We want to hear about this it’s great, but we also need to know about ‘worse days’ or have a more rounded picture so we really know what support they need. If we don’t have this it can mean the young person is not given the appropriate level of support and just as importantly the right sustainable funding needed to match their needs.”

“

“There’s a lack of thorough assessments.”

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“We keep seeing child plans have missing information, or the wrong information, especially when you speak to and get to know the young person personally.”

“

“I think we have to be careful when placing young people together where one can have a negative impact on the other. [There’s] not enough assessment and capability being undertaken.”

“

“I think in general there’s a lack of communication between the majority of childcare services. I have seen time and time again staff in other services [not from an Action for Children workplace] view one young person the same as the next. [They don’t] identify ways of communicating, interacting or getting down to their level to build that meaningful relationship.”

“

“I’ve noticed that young people who come from secure accommodation tend to display more challenging behaviours and seem to struggle adjusting to more family-like living arrangements, compared with young people who [experience] breakdowns in foster placements.”

“

“There has been a lack of joined-up approach. By that I mean we need school involvement to get the full picture, alongside home, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and other agencies involved with the young person.”

Q5: If you were advising a government decision-maker on how to ensure all children in care have high-quality residential support, what would you tell them?

Staff's responses to this question covered four key topics: **staff and workforce; funding; young people's voices; and a joined-up approach (in particular towards mental health provision)**. One staff member said that we should have "more parliamentarians from a care sector background."

Staff and workforce



"Staff must be supported to provide children with what they need to develop and live their lives to the full."



"All staff directly involved with children's care and support must be trauma-informed, this needs training and should be a requirement."



"[We need] a more rigorous interview process for staff, ensuring their values and intentions match the role they have applied for."

Better funding



"Local Authorities and national government need to be better and transitions from children support through to adult services, too often there are big cracks people fall through."



"Give us the ability [driven by both funding and recruitment] to call on and get psychological, therapeutic and/or behavioural speech and language support."



"Fund more preventative measures. From my experience many systems are reactive, which can mean sometimes any work is incredibly difficult and sometimes even impossible."

“

“I would tell them there needs to be more provisions, more money put into the sector.”

“

“High-quality care needs money and resources. It needs teams of people working together.”

Young people’s voices

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“Ask the children what they want from the very start (when applicable).”

“

“Allow young people to be the voice of change, take on their views, opinions and wants and implement them.”

A joined-up approach, particularly to mental health support

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“Cut waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. A lot of our young people may have access because they are at crisis point. [They] shouldn’t have to reach that point – children need early prevention.”

“

“Children must have better access to mental health and wellbeing support.”

“

“More wraparound support is needed.”

“

“They need to look at additional support education provision instead of just mainstream schooling. Without the right support it means we can set up young people to fail.”

Summary of findings

Through the voices of our staff we've highlighted what needs to change in the care sector. In June 2024, The Promise Scotland published the Promise Plan 2024-30¹⁶ which aimed to be Scotland's route map on who needs to do *what* by when to Keep The Promise by 2030. It lays out the progress to date on key issues and out action which needs to happen nationally and locally.

Our staff's insights echo the change called for by Promise Scotland. For children living in residential homes the plan states:

- The needs of the children living in a residential home at the time must inform any rules as opposed to a blanket set of instructions and restrictions.
- Children and young people will have supportive, kind relationships with all staff and the residential provider must be supported to find the right balance between having consistent core staff along with the flexibility of additional support that works for the children and young people.
- Young people who leave residential care will be able to maintain relationships that are important to them.

Based on our experience delivering children's residential care across Scotland and staff feedback, we have produced this spotlight report as a snapshot of the state of play in the sector.

The findings show the forward planning being undertaken and the vision set out by the Promise continue to be in line with the key areas highlighted by our staff about where system change is needed. For example, our staff's responses highlighted these points:

- The need for relationships and love to be at the heart of providing a home for children and young people. To achieve this we need more staff and a workforce with the right skills and values.
- Our staff know language can be a barrier in creating homes where children and young people can thrive. Getting language right will be key to driving positive change.
- Some current commissioning practices are not helping our children. Especially when it comes to having time and resources to ensure children are matched appropriately and have an assessment to make sure their support needs and preferences are met. This means young people, in particular those living with disabilities, need to be encouraged to share their views. Their voices must be listened to.
- There's a clear need for better mental health support and early intervention for young people.

- The changes needed to provide all children with the high-quality homes, love and support they need to thrive will come down to funding.

What we need to do next

Our research confirms that the most effective residential care for a child provides a high standard of care, meets their individual needs and gives them the tools to thrive in life.

In Scotland, we need to do more to make sure this happens for all our children.

We're calling for immediate action to ensure Scotland meets the Promise, starting with three key recommendations:

1. Accelerate commissioning process reform to provide enough time for every young person to be matched with the right home for as long as they need it.
2. Invest in sustainable long-term funding to make sure the right homes are available and staffed by caring, loving and skilled people who can build relationships with young people.
3. Guarantee better advocacy access and consultation processes to ensure the voices of those care-experienced children and young people with disabilities are heard, listened to and acted on.

Acknowledgements

We're very grateful to our staff with experience of providing homes for children in care in Scotland for sharing their professional insights with us.

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- ¹⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2024/1/contents>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.plan2430.scot/care/where-children-live/>



Safe and happy childhood

Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

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