**The Falkirk Family and Friends Team**

**Terms of Reference Notes**

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of the Falkirk Family and Friends Team (FFFT) is to ensure that the gap is narrowed between the outcomes of looked after children and care experienced young people, and those of their peers.

1. **Background**

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines corporate parenting as "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". A good corporate parent will want the best outcomes for their looked after children, accept responsibility for them, and make their needs a priority. The 2014 Act also introduced new duties and responsibilities for those Scottish public bodies defined as corporate parents, which came into effect in April 2015.

For some time, it has been known that the “care system” in Scotland needs to change. For over three years from 2016, the Care Review listened to care experienced children, young people, and families. In 2020, The Care Review set out, in a number of reports, how the country can make sure every care experienced child and young person is safe, loved and respected.

The Promise Scotland is an organisation that exists to support Scotland in keeping its promise to care experienced people - that they will grow up loved, safe, and respected.

The Falkirk Community Partnership has been awarded Whole Family Wellbeing Funding from the Scottish Government to facilitate change to Family Support Services. Using this funding a team has been established in Falkirk, The Promise Implementation Team, to carry out collaborative work over the next 3 years with partners to support and improve the effectiveness of Corporate Parenting and to Keep the Promise.

As an initial step The Falkirk Family and Friends Team is being established so we can work together to improve the outcomes of looked after children and care experienced young people. The team were initially known as the Promise Corporate Parenting Partnership Group, but that name was formally changed after input from the Falkirk Champs Board in October 2023.The Champs members felt that the term ‘Corporate’ felt cold and business like and didn’t sit well with ‘Parenting’ which embodies the opposite feelings of being caring and warm. The group then unanimously agreed to change the name to Falkirk Family and Friends Team which it was felt, better reflected its work and ethos.

1. **Remit**

The Promise Corporate Parenting Partnership Group duties will apply to all looked after children (aged from birth to when they ceased to be looked after) and care leavers, who were looked after on or after their 16th birthday, up until the age of 26.

**57 Application of Part: children and young people**

(1) This Part applies to— **Looked After**

(a) every child who is looked after by a local authority, and

(b) every young person who—

(i) is under the age of 26, and

(ii) was (on the person's 16th birthday or at any subsequent time) but is no longer looked after by a local authority.

(2) This Part also applies to a young person who— **Care Leavers**

(a) is at least the age of 16 but under the age of 26, and

(b) is not of the description in subsection (1)(b)(ii) but is of such other description of person formerly but no longer looked after by a local authority as the Scottish Ministers may specify by order.

A child or young person is considered to be “looked after” if they fall into one of the categories set out in Section 17 (6) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as amended by Schedule 2 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. These categories are:

* Subject to a supervision requirement set by a Childrens Hearing (including those on a compulsory supervision order and living at home with birth parents-‘looked after at home’)
* Accommodated by a local authority under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (otherwise known as a ‘voluntary agreement’)
* Subject to a permanence order granted by a court
* Subject to an order, authorisation or warrant made by relevant authorities under chapters 2,3 or 4 of Part 2 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995

It is the duty of every corporate parent to,

1. Be *alert* to matters which adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers
2. *Assess* the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,
3. *Promote* the interests of those children and young people,
4. Seek to provide *opportunities* which will promote the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers
5. Take action to help children and young people *access* such opportunities and make use of the services and support provided
6. Take any other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of *improving* the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

In addition,

1. Work towards delivering The Promise
2. **Membership**

Membership of the group must be representative of the Community Partnership

* 3rd Sector (Barnardo’s, Aberlour, etc.) (2)
* Falkirk Council (2)
* Police Scotland (1)
* Scottish Fire and Rescue (1)
* Forth Valley College (1)
* NHS Forth Valley (1)
* Childrens Hearing Scotland (1)
* Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership (1)
* Skills Development Scotland (1)
* Scottish Prison Service (1)
* Scottish Childrens Reporters Administration (1)
* CHAMPS Board (1)

1. **Meetings**
   1. **Chair**

Meetings will be chaired by the Promise Coordinator for the Falkirk Community Partnership. This will be undertaken by the Promise Coordinator until 2026 when the role expires. At this point, the partnership will select a new permanent chair to take on the role. When unavailable another member of The Promise Implementation Team will step in to chair the meeting, if appropriate.

* 1. **Guest Chair**

Group members will be given the opportunity to chair meetings, if they are happy to do so.

* 1. **Format**

Meetings will take place in person, but where infrastructure allows, hybrid meetings will be offered to allow others to take part in meetings that could not attend otherwise.

All meetings will follow an agreed agenda, provided in advance, and be recorded in the form of a minute with a list of actions and action owners.

* 1. **Admin Support**

Admin support for the Group will be provided by the Customer and Business Support Officer from The Promise Implementation Team.

1. **Frequency of Network Meetings:** The Group will meet a minimum every 8 weeks and can be scheduled more regularly, when required.
2. **Quorum:** A minimum of 60% of members, comprising of representation from at least 5 areas and representation from Falkirk Champs Board, is required for a Falkirk Family and Friends meeting to legitimately take place**.**
3. **Reporting:** The work of the Group will be reported twice a year to the Children and Young People’s Strategic Leadership Group.
4. **Review Terms of Reference:** These terms of reference will be reviewed by the Group annually, to capture learning and ensure the remit and membership is still relevant.