

18 February 2020

## Statement on the Independent Care Review

“Scotland is at a crossroads.

Down one path, the Independent Care Review has given us both the rationale and impetus for a fundamental reform of how we respond to children and families in need of help, putting their rights and interests first, and empowering the people around them to make a positive difference.

The other path is a road much more frequently travelled. It's characterised by bold rhetorical commitments, ambitious policy, inadequate resourcing and collective frustration. We must not miss this opportunity to do things differently.

Social Work Scotland acknowledges the unparalleled effort which has been made by the Care Review to incorporate professional insight, academic evidence and international perspectives alongside the primacy of care experienced voices. Over 5,500 people contributed to the process. The outcome is conclusions which, while radical, are also self-evident.

**Our care system's primary purpose must be to nurture relationships, rather than prevent harm. And that this will only be possible if Scotland has carers and professionals who feel equipped, supported and encouraged to become the scaffolding around a child and family.**

The Care Review says 'Scotland must hold the hands of those who hold the hand of the child'. We agree absolutely. The people working with children and families need investment and support. They need time to develop and maintain relationships. As we stand at this crossroads, central and local government must understand what it will take to deliver the Promise.

The system envisaged by the Care Review is only possible if social work and others have the resources they need to dramatically reduce caseloads, restoring and expanding their capacity to undertake direct work with children, families, carers and communities. Only in this way can we create a culture which prioritises people over process.

Over the months and years ahead, Social Work Scotland will do whatever we can to create that critical, enabling environment. With the Scottish Government and our national partners, we look forward to reshaping legislative and regulatory structures,

ensuring that policy is fully resourced and focused on empowering people. With our partners in local government, we will work to better understand what professionals and carers need in order to provide the best support possible for children and families.

The building blocks of tomorrow's care system are already in place, in our people and our communities. The Care Review has made a Promise and provided a Plan; we must now work together to deliver real change for Scotland's children.”