

Shetland Children's Plan 2021- 2024

Building a Brighter Future Together for Shetland's Children and Young People

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Introduction

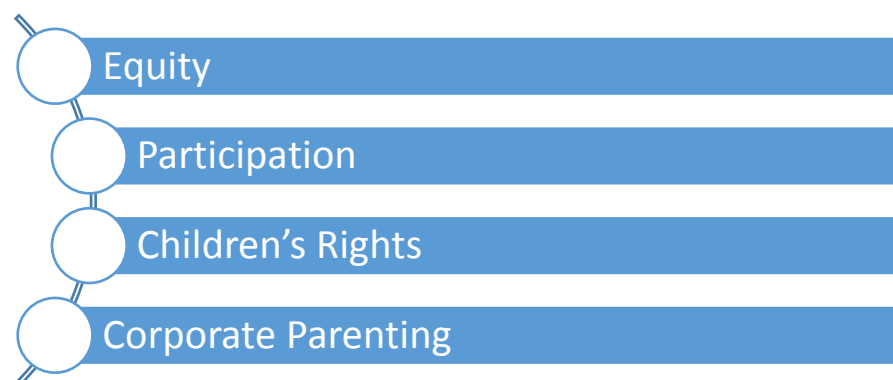
Our overall aim is that Shetland's children grow up loved, safe, and respected so that they realise their potential.

For most of our children and young people, Shetland provides a safe and nurturing environment within which they can grow and flourish. We have high standards of educational and health provision, with strong community resources and a rich heritage and culture. However, Shetland is not immune to a raft of social, economic and environmental factors which may cause our young people not to get the best start in life, and not to reach their full potential. We recognise that. As partners, we are committed to working together to improve the outcomes for our children, and their families, where our services and interventions can help and support them. Keeping our young people safe from harm will always be our number one priority. For our care experienced young people, we are committed to #KeepThePromise.

We have listened to the views of children and families. They have said to us that: the current system of support is confusing and difficult to navigate; different parts of the system do not communicate with each other; and families are often 'referred' to various services resulting in them having to speak to multiple people to get the help they need. We want to create a community which holds onto and supports people until they no longer require it, and to deepen our understanding of delivering effective support for the whole family.

We feel that we are on the cusp of achieving significant change, to ensure whole family support is enabling and kind, tailored and flexible, and people are listened to. We know that establishing trusting relationships with children, young people and their families is fundamental to achieving this and we are passionate about working in this way. Our approach will be informed by any trauma that might have occurred in that family and we will support them through their recovery choices.

This Plan sets out where we intend to focus our efforts over the next 3 years. We will describe our intentions under 4 key themes:



What is the Plan for?

Our longer term ambition is to work together to improve children and young people's life chances by:

Promoting the social and emotional resilience of our children and young people so that we can help them be happy and content members of our community.

Providing support so our children and young people have a healthy, safe and memorable childhood.

Providing positive learning opportunities to enable them to move forward into adulthood with the skills, abilities and ambitions necessary to serve them and their communities well in the future.

Tackling inequality for our children and young people.

Ensuring that our attention and resources are focused on the task of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our most vulnerable, including looked after children and young people, and care leavers.

Ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life and that the early stages in a child's life, from before they are born until they begin primary school, are as positive as they can be.

Delivering a people-centred approach with a focus on early intervention and prevention, and a move away from fragmented interventions.

Improving the experiences of our children and young people of school age, as we seek to understand the fundamental barriers to attainment and achieving positive destinations in adulthood.

Working closely with all our partners in the areas of mental health, domestic abuse and alcohol and substance recovery services to understand the issues affecting families, and to reduce the impact of these.

Listening to the needs, fears and wishes of children and young people, and being proactive and determined in our collective efforts to address these.

This 3 year plan sets the journey we are on towards these longer term goals.

Why are we doing it?

We have a legal duty through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to:

“articulate how various services will work together to best safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of all children in the area concerned; have a local workforce that is trauma-informed; ensure that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent needs arising; be most integrated from the point of view of recipients; and constitute the best use of available resources”.

More so, Shetland Children's Partnership want to work together, because it is only through our combined efforts, and combined skills and resources, that we will make a difference. We want to face up to the difficulties which children and young people might face and provide the support and services they need, and their families, when they need it. This will be through a combination of making sure our universal services are effective and responsive, as well as targeted action in areas where we feel that more effort is needed.

A current work stream, known as the Anchor Early Action Systems Change project, was created to investigate a format for early intervention and prevention to support families. So far, it has found that too many of Shetland's residents are experiencing complex crisis before they receive support. The ambition is therefore to move toward a people-centred approach with a focus on early intervention and prevention, and a move away from fragmented interventions, often in response to household crisis.

Our work is underpinned by the Shetland Partnership Plan, where the key focus is to reduce inequality of outcome in Shetland that means some people and groups have a poorer quality of life than others.

From our experience in dealing with the Covid-19 emergency pandemic, we have found that we can very quickly respond and change the way we work. People have taken time to clearly understand each other's roles, and what their contribution can be so there is less 'silo-ed' working through good multi-disciplinary working. Decision-making has been slicker and more agile, with resources able to be quickly applied to areas of most need. Sometimes this has meant spending money; more often it has meant asking staff to work in a different way and sometimes in a different service. New services have been introduced, where it was necessary to do so, with a specific focus on early intervention and prevention. Core working practices, such as GIRFEC, have been embraced. Staff trust that the systems and service in place are effective, which has enabled them to step back when the initial response was no longer required. Use of digital technology has been transformative in supporting different ways of working, and in developing online services. We want to hold onto all that was positive from the pandemic, and build on them, in this Plan.

However, we also recognise the difficulties that the pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, for some people. In January 2021, The Social Renewal

Advisory Board Report reported on initial findings from the Covid-19 pandemic with a call for action under the title, 'If Not Now, When?' They wrote:

“This pandemic has brutally exposed the inequalities that still blight the lives of too many, limiting our ability to flourish, control our own lives and contribute our talents to create an inclusive, fairer Scotland. Disabled people, minority ethnic communities, people on low incomes, older people, younger people, and women are amongst those who have experienced disproportionate impacts, with multiple disadvantage making things even harder for many....But social renewal will not be real unless communities of people, of identity and of place have more say, power and influence; unless we “super-charge” how we address the structural inequalities that still hold us back ... so let's start the journey now. If not now, when?”

In Shetland, there are, still, significant health, learning, social, economic and financial factors to consider which may cause our children and young people to not be able to realise their full potential. The Coronavirus has not gone away and as a society we are learning new ways of living and working to accommodate the risks and challenges. There is evidence of significant downward economic activity, causing a concern around the financial resilience of families and the possibility that the poverty and deprivation gap may widen. The wider economic impact may reduce planned training and employment opportunities for our school leavers. The reliance on technology should not be progressed at the expense of those who do not have access to robust and reliable broadband and the necessary equipment. Not all areas of Shetland have effective broadband coverage. Not all families will have all the equipment they need to fulfil work and study needs for the whole family. The so-called 'digital divide' cannot be allowed to exacerbate the poverty and deprivation gap, which we already know exists.

Positive Mental Health is important at all ages. There is emerging evidence of an increased need for support, not just from a health specific perspective but also more generally to help people, including our staff, to cope in these unprecedented times.

“Some people don't show how they are feeling or people think they are pretending. We need to acknowledge mental health more”.

Participant feedback from Health and Wellbeing Listening Event

This brings us to:

What will we do next?

Equity

Why this is important

There is wide recognition that many aspects of inequality can cause challenges for children, families, specific groups of people, or even particular communities. This can cause gaps in health outcomes, unequal access to opportunities, differing education outcomes, and a sense of stigma, loneliness and isolation for some in our community.

As providers of public services, delivering a range of services for children, young people and their families, we have a responsibility to ensure that our resources are distributed fairly and equitably, that people have equal access to services and that we positively promote targeted interventions to reduce any real, and potential, risks factors.

Childhood inequality can happen when certain children are more disadvantaged and do not have access to the same opportunities as many of their peers. When children are faced with inequality, evidence would show that this can impact across all aspect of their lives.

For Shetland, the impact of our geography needs careful consideration. Young people accessing services from the more remote islands and from more rural areas may find they cannot access the same services, or in the same way, as their peers on the mainland. The availability of transport to access opportunities can be a barrier to inclusive access and participation, such as young people engaging in out of school activities and families getting their children to appointments,

We acknowledge that we need to consider poverty, including health poverty, as a children's rights issue and which is woven throughout all our thinking and our work.

One specific focus is on offending behaviour, which can cause difficulties with future employment opportunities and social interaction. The Scottish Government is committed to, "preventing offending is key to our vision of Scotland as the best place to grow up." There is therefore a need to focus on tackling the causes of offending by young people and supporting them to change their behaviour, with the aim of avoiding them entering the criminal justice system.

Two-thirds of children in poverty in Scotland (66%) are living in families where someone was working.

Families with a disabled adult are disproportionately affected by poverty, with one in three children with a disabled parent living below the poverty line. Children with disabilities are also more likely to experience poverty and evidence suggests that 31% of families with disabled children are going without essentials such as food.

Poverty is the leading cause of inequalities in children's early development, including in their educational attainment. Food poverty is a significant concern.

Poverty affects children's social and emotional wellbeing as well as their relationships with friends and family members.

Improvement Service Presentation, February 2021

Our commitment to you

We want our children and young people to be safe from harm and all forms of abuse.

We want everyone to be able to thrive and reach their full potential.

We are committed to doing all we can to reduce poverty and inequality within Shetland.

We are committed to improving outcomes for any children and young people who may be at risk of not fully achieving their potential.

We will work with families and young people to identify any issues at an early stage, and build a support network around them to enable them to experience sustainable improvements in their lives.

In situations where children and young people are at risk, we will apply Child Protection procedures - in specific cases and for wider safeguarding work.

For health services, we will look at ways of ensuring that children living in more remote parts of Shetland have increased access to advice and health care in general by using technology.

We recognise the impact health has on a child's life when they have complex needs and, acknowledging that some care will need to take place on school days, we will carefully consider how we might compensate for that.

What we are going to do about it

- meet our obligations on acknowledging and implementing Children's Rights;
- promote community understanding that child poverty is a children's rights issue;
- further develop transitional pathways for young people with complex needs moving into adult services including mental health;
- further develop early intervention and prevention services;
- develop a holistic approach to promoting family wellbeing and the importance of normalising support to families who may be struggling;
- create trauma informed organisations and community where every encounter matters, preventing re-traumatisation through relationships that offer collaboration, choice, empowerment, safety and trust.
- develop an holistic Early and Effective Intervention approach for people in the youth justice system;
- deliver the Pupil Equity Funding Improvement Programme; and
- develop our knowledge of the 'Cost of the School Day' and build our equity practice in schools through the 'money-proofing' principles and staff development.

Participation

Why this is important

Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, education about and access to their civil rights.

Participation and engagement, through the Youth Participation Pathway, is becoming the way to work for some services, but we recognise that this does not yet apply to all services.

Recently, consultations with children and young people have included:

- Lockdown Lowdown reports that has been conducted with young people across Shetland, showcasing the impact COVID is having on them.
- The Social Renewal Advisory Board, held two listening events where 21 young people participated in two groups – one featuring young people in school and the other for those who had left school.
- Scottish Youth Parliament Bounce Back.
- The Emotional Well Being project – OPEN peer education project.

From listening to our children and young people, the main priorities they have identified are:

School, money and the future

Relationships and friends

Environment and space

Social media

Peoples rights and advancing equality.

Source: Recent Consultation and Listening Events

The mechanisms for active participation are in place but there is as yet no strong evidence on how the views of young people have actually been 'heard' and made a difference. We want to make those connections more explicit so people who take time to share their views can see what difference it made.

Our commitment to you

The partners agree that participation is a fundamental right so we will work together to provide a range of opportunities for children, young people, families and carers voices to be represented, heard and influence how services are delivered.

How can we make sure children and young people know their views have been taken seriously and have made an impact?

- ✓ Be accountable
- ✓ Do not make promises you cannot keep
- ✓ Write it down
- ✓ Share information – in many ways
- ✓ Feedback – many times, keep an open and ongoing dialogue
- ✓ Hear the views of as wide a range of people as possible
- ✓ Do not be judgemental
- ✓ Take what is said seriously
- ✓ Share the responsibility

Public Protection Committee Workshops, the Young People's Participation Group

What we are going to do about it

Fully implement the Youth Participation Pathway to make sure that decisions about how to make services better at the design, commissioning and delivery stage are made with children and young people.

Develop a framework to ensure that we can demonstrate that the views of young people have influenced and shaped service delivery and future planning.

We will further develop our approach to ensuring that 'voices for the 'experts by experience' become an integral part of our approach to incorporating the views of our service users, when designing and delivering services.

Children's Rights

Why this is important

In November 2019, the Scottish Government announced their intention to embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ('UNCRC') ['Children's Rights'] into Scots Law. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

Our commitment to you

Shetland Children's Partnership will uphold and champion the rights of our children and young people.

What we are going to do about it

- Positively promote children's rights across all services and activities; and
- create 'child-friendly' public services across all sectors - health, education, arts and culture, leisure and social spaces – to welcome and support children and young people.

'What are the 3 biggest challenges in keeping children and young people safe in Shetland?' - Young people's Response:

No place for young people to hang out

Not enough love and care, supporting life skills and structuring your day

The meeting of criteria to fit into services; the need to raise awareness of services which are available

Public Protection Committee Development Day

Corporate Parenting

Why this is important

The community planning partners, the Shetland Partnership, are committed, as corporate parents, to ensure that our Looked After Children, "... feel safe, loved, supported and cared for. We will respect and listen to you and involve you wherever Young people in care are just like all other young people – except they also need to deal with being separated from their parents, being judged for living in a children's home and being viewed as 'different' because their families can't look after them. It is unsurprising that after these experiences, their outcomes in life can be much poorer than their non- care peers in the field of education, health, housing, offending behaviour and employment opportunities.

Recognising the particular challenges that can affect care experienced young people, in childhood and into adulthood, 'Keep The Promise' is a commitment made to care experienced infants, children, young people, adults and their families - that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, able to realise their full potential.

'Keep the Promise' covers all aspects of a care experience young person's life and includes fundamental principles around being listened to and involved in decisions affecting their life; supporting families to overcome difficulties; living in a loving environment; and building strong relationships outwith the family unit. The Promise also has wider implications in terms of early help to stop children coming into care as well as better long term support for those that do.

The Independent Care Review developed a list of practices that care experienced children said needed to 'Stop' and good practice which local authorities were encouraged to spread (the 'Go' list). These are known as the 'Stop: Go' principles Shetland Children's Partnership has embraced them and is committed to their implementation.

Our commitment to you

Corporate Parenting exists to try and improve these outcomes, and to improve the level of respect people have for the rights of care leavers and looked after children and young people. The partners are committed fulfilling their corporate parenting duties:

- Be **alert** to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of an eligible young person
- **Assess** the needs of eligible children and young people for any services or support provided
- **Promote** the interests of eligible children and young people
- Seek to provide eligible children and young people with **opportunities** to promote their wellbeing
- Take appropriate action to help eligible young people to **access** these opportunities
- Keep our approach to corporate parenting under constant review, seeking out **improvement** wherever possible

Shetland Children's Partnership commits to deliver on the Promise for care experienced young people, and their families. The Partnership recognises in making that commitment that systems and services that interact with children and families need to shift to deliver on The Promise. The general principles which apply to our work with all children and young people are aligned with the work we will do with care experienced young people.

In delivering this, we will be realistic. We recognise the potential for children to be in care who could have stayed with their families if the right long term support and alleviation of poverty had been in place for them. However, there are circumstances where children would be so seriously abused that they would not be safe in their family. We will work towards a future where no child has to come into care, but in doing so we will always assess each child's situation and their parent capacity for change on an individual basis.

What we are going to do about it

- We will support a programme of work to address all of the recommendations of the 'Who Cares? Scotland' reports, including delivering on 'Keep The Promise', in line with The Promise national plan for 2021 – 24;
- We will implement the 'Stop: Go' proposals and specifically the priorities identified by local stakeholders.

“Implementing ‘Keep The Promise’

Ensure that participation is embedded in all interactions with children and families in and on the edge of care to ensure that they are meaningfully involved in all decisions about their lives.

All our work with families will focus on keeping them together wherever safe to do so and if this is in keeping with their wishes. This will include multi-agency, cross-sector work focused on the needs of the family.

We will make sure that all our local services that support children and families with a variety of challengers such as poverty, substance misuse, school attendance and housing feel coherent, holistic and relational. Local service providers know and understand the importance of doing everything to keep families together safely.

Families have a key role in the design of family support services.

Our workforce will be encouraged to develop trusting relationships with children and families. This will involve having the time and support.

Our organisation will adapt our approach to how we measure what we are doing so that it reflects what is important to children, their families and care experienced adults and work with The Promise on ‘early warning indicators’ to prompt action should things change or move off track. Priority would be placed on data and evidence which documents and monitors what is identified as important by children, their families and care experienced adults.

Currently funding and resources align with the way the system delivers support rather than what families need. We will make a shift by understanding need from the perspective of the whole person and whole family. It would result in new funding models designed and implemented involving collaborative working, pooled budgets and shared resources which can drive the resourcing of support and services which holistically meet the needs identified.”

Extract from The Promise Resources Pack

How will we work with you?

Shetland Children's Partnership plans to further enhance partnership working by reinvigorating the common ethos, principles and practices that underpin our work:

- participation is a right;
- embedding the Getting it Right for Every Child (and Family) as the tool that binds this work together;
- embedding a common purpose of supporting vulnerable individuals and families;
- ensuring a child-centred, family-led approach;
- making sure children, young people, their families and carers are genuine partners in the decisions which affect them;
- see child protection as a priority for everyone and ensure that child protection processes are used only when needed and when there is evidence of children being at risk of significant harm;
- where child protection processes respect rights and fully involve children and their families in reducing risks and building on family strengths;
- connecting projects and initiatives to universal and specialist services, through clear leadership and consistent messaging;
- building confidence and knowledge in the workforce to keep working in a flexible and connected way;
- investing in early intervention and preventative approaches, to avoid crisis situations;
- our workforce and services will be trauma informed and trauma responsive;
- embracing the concept of working in multi-disciplinary teams and the value derived from different skills and approaches;
- using evidence, rather than historical practice, to inform and influence how resources are distributed to have the greatest benefit to families, including how staff time is utilised;
- ensuring senior individuals lead the key projects, as they are a vital component in the capacity to inform and influence system change, through service models and resourcing decisions;
- adopting a willingness to engage with and learn from other service providers;
- welcoming the support of the broader community in resolving issues and finding solutions; and
- committing to active research that supports continuous improvement of service delivery, specifically maintaining an understanding of how service users are benefitting from the approach adopted.

How will we work together

We are committed to working together to make a difference to children and young people and families lives.

We are committed to delivering the principles from the Christie Commission to:

- empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use;
- work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and thus improve the outcomes they achieve;
- prioritise expenditure on public services which prevent negative outcomes from arising; and
- our whole system of public services – public, third and private sectors – must become more efficient by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible.

We will work with Shetland Partnership to address the broader inequalities in the community.

We will work with specialist partnerships, authorities, committees, groups and arrangements to target specific issues, predominantly around: Public Protection; Community Justice; Child Poverty; Domestic Abuse; Mental Health; Alcohol and Substance Misuse, Relationships, Trauma.

How will we know if it has worked?

We have in place a Needs Assessment, to monitor key services and activity levels. This helps to inform our plans for future work.

We have an agreed Planning and Performance Framework in place, set out below.

We will develop this further through a Logic Model approach, to clearly articulate activities and work streams to planned outcomes and impacts.

We report on our performance on a quarterly basis to the relevant committees, groups and partnerships.

We make use of Case Studies in our work, to seek feedback from our service users as to what difference our work has made to them.

We collate all our work in an Annual Report, which is published each year.

Vision	We live longer Healthy Lives: Individuals and families thrive and reach their full potential					
Outcomes	We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination	We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely	We are healthy and active	We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society	We grow up safe and respected so that we realise our full potential	(shared) We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
Indicators	Care Experienced Young People	Participation Participation of those who may be excluded	Tooth Decay Physical Activity Levels Child Health Data	Attendance / Exclusions Attainment Sustained Positive Destinations	Child Protection Youth Offending Child Development Alcohol and Drug Misuse	Children Living in Poverty / Families on Low Income

Our Plan on a Page - throughout all our work we will listen to children and families and act on what they are telling us

Building a Brighter Future Together for Shetland’s Children and Young People						
<p>Working with you</p> <p>Participation is embedded in all interactions with children and families to ensure that they are meaningfully involved in all decisions about their lives. We will listen to children and families and act on what they are telling us.</p>	<p>Equity - distribute resources fairly and equitably, make sure that people have equal access to services and promote targeted interventions to reduce any real, or potential, risks factors.</p>	<p>GIRFEC promotes a shared approach that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - builds solutions with and around children and families; - enables children to get the help they need when they need it; - supports a positive shift in culture, systems and practice; and - involves working together to make things better. 	<p>Children’s Rights - we will uphold and champion the rights of our children and young people.</p>	<p>Working Together</p> <p>Working much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision and improve outcomes</p>		
	<p>Participation - provide a range of opportunities for voices to be represented, heard and influence how services are delivered through a co-production approach</p>		<p>Corporate Parenting – we will fulfil our corporate parenting duties and commit to delivering on ‘Keep The Promise’</p>			
<p>Shetland’s residents: access early support; receive strengths-based support; and find no door is the wrong door when seeking support.</p>						

Topic	Project Name	Purpose	Impact Assessed
Equity	Promoting Children's Rights	To meet our legal requirements on acknowledging and implementing Children's Rights	Delivery of Action Plan
	Child Poverty is a Children's Rights issue	To promote community understanding that child poverty is a children's rights issue	Community Engagement
	Effective Pathways into Adult Services for young people with complex needs	To ensure effective pathways and seamless transition for our service users, and their families and to ensure that as they enter adult life there is a better understanding of the young person's voice regarding their wishes for life after school.	Effective Pathways
	Early Intervention and Prevention	Access to early and effective, strengths-based support and our service users find no door is the wrong door when seeking support	Effective Pathways feedback
	Improving Family Support	Developing services, and ways of working, in support of vulnerable families.	Children's Social Work datasets
	Youth Justice	to implement a Holistic Early and Effective Intervention approach	Youth Justice datasets
	Pupil Equity Funding Programme	To remove any real or potential barrier to equal access to educational and learning opportunities	Narrowing the Attainment Gap datasets
	Equity in Schools	To understand the 'Cost of the School Day' and build equity practice in schools through 'money-proofing' principles and staff development so improving community understanding to then reduce stigma	
Participation	Youth Participation Pathway	Fully implement the Youth Participation Pathway.	Youth Participation Pathway datasets
	Evidencing Participation in Service Delivery and Design	Develop a framework to ensure that we can demonstrate that the views of young people have influenced and shaped service delivery and future planning.	
	Full participation of experts by experience.	Design and delivery of service models is informed by real life experiences	
Children's Rights	Promotion of Children's Rights	Design and delivery of all services are informed by Children's Rights.	Children's Rights datasets
	Welcoming and child friendly public services and spaces	Create an ethos around 'child-friendly' public services and spaces to welcome and support children and young people.	Service User Feedback
Corporate Parenting	Improving the life chances of our care experienced young people, and their families	We will fulfil our duties as Corporate Parents in a positive and proactive way.	Care Experienced datasets
		We will deliver on the recommendations of the 'Who Cares? Scotland' reports, focusing on 'Keep the Promise' and the 'Stop: Go' principles	