

Adoption Week Scotland 14-18 November

Promise-funded initiatives are being celebrated this Adoption Week Scotland.

Two projects are trying to transform the lives of adopted children and young people in Scotland.

Adoption UK Scotland's #E Project has helped dozens of young adoptees gain confidence and learn new skills since its launch in the summer of 2021. Older participants have also been given the opportunity to join the project's Youth Advisory Board, where they have had an input into the running of the charity's services and learned how to make their voices heard by decision-makers and politicians.

The Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption (AFKA) Scotland's Staying Connected project is working with six local authorities to create a Transitions Toolkit, which will enable social workers across the country to better support adopted children and young people through the adoption process and beyond.

Both projects are being highlighted during Adoption Week Scotland 2022, which focuses on adopted people's connection with family, past, present and future.

Angie Gillies, AFKA director, explained: "The landscape of care in Scotland is changing and the numbers of children requiring adoption outwith their birth family is reducing. However there are still children who cannot live within their family of origin and for whom adoption can provide family care

now and in the future.

“We hear from people with care experience how important it is to maintain connections to support healthy development and emotional wellbeing. It is therefore, imperative that we support children to understand their roots, their journey and their sense of future self. We must support them throughout their family life whether that be past, present or future. We must #keepthepromise to children, young people and adults to maintain the relationships that are important to them and to listen to their views throughout their journey.”

Carol Hunter, #E Project lead, has seen first-hand the positive impact of the project on young adoptees. She said: “In our #E community, our young persons’ voices are heard, fostering a sense of self-worth, belonging and promoting positive relationships, as well as providing the opportunity to build on skills for personal development, confidence and self-belief through opportunities and experiences that gain them lifelong transferrable skills.

“The project is designed to allow them to move through the age groups over the years, going into adulthood with a community of likeminded individuals. As an adoptee I appreciate that some adult adoptees felt unsupported growing up, and projects like ours address that gap in support.”

Fiona Aitken, Adoption UK Scotland director, added: “The existence of the #E project is crucial for organisations like Adoption UK Scotland to centre the experiences and voices of our children, young people and adults who have experienced the care system. We see it as a vital service for our community.”

The #E Project and Staying Connected were both funded through The Promise Scotland, which supports organisations working to implement the recommendations of the Independent Care Review that all children in Scotland should grow up loved, safe and respected.

Clare Haughey, Minister for Children and Young People, said: "Adoption Week is our chance to celebrate the positive difference that adoption is making to children and young people across Scotland. It is a chance to come together to recognise the importance of loving, supportive relationships throughout life.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved in these projects that are championing the voices of young people with care experience.

"We continue to work in partnership with the adoption sector to Keep the Promise by ensuring adoptive families get the right support at the right time."

