Carers

Young carers: Review of research and data

The Scottish Government has published a review report which discusses the held data and evidence on young carers and young adult carers. The paper combines an analysis of data on young carers from Scotland’s Census 2011 with the findings of a review of the evidence on young carers over the period 2005 – 2015. The aim of the review is to provide an increased understanding of the existing evidence on the effects of young caring and the available support.

Child Protection

Named Person statement

In a speech to Parliament, the Deputy First Minister John Swinney stated that the Scottish Government will bring a Bill forward which will include new provisions around information sharing so as to comply with all data, confidentiality and human rights legislation. Mr Swinney stated that these new provisions will bring ‘consistency, clarity and coherence’ to the practice of information sharing. The full speech can be found here.
Facebook failed to take down sexualised images of children

The chairman of the UK Parliament’s Commons media committee has criticised Facebook for its handling of reports about sexualised images of children on the platform, the BBC News website reports. The chairman, Damian Collins, made the comments after Facebook failed to remove 80 per cent of sexualised images the BBC alerted them to during a previous investigation.

Children’s Rights

First Cabinet meeting with children and young people

The first Scottish Cabinet meeting took place with children and young people to discuss the issues that affect them within policy, legislation and practice. The children and young people participated through the Children’s Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament. A short film detailing children’s experiences from Scotland was created and relayed to Ministers and can be viewed here.

Early Years and Childcare

Roundup of Early Years and Childcare in Parliament

There has been a range of correspondence in the Scottish Parliament around Early Years and Childcare. The Minister for Childcare and Early Years, Mark McDonald, answered questions on: reports that inexperienced volunteers and parents are permitted to run childcare businesses; that the organisations who oversee playgroups may not be held accountable for their quality of care and education; and the levels of support available to voluntary playgroups to recruit specialised staff. The role of the Care Inspectorate was highlighted in some responses.

Drivers and barriers to Early Learning and Childcare report

The Scottish Government has published a report which explores the drivers and barriers to the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare amongst 2 year olds. The report was carried out by Ipsos MORI, under commission from the Scottish Government, in order to understand the practical issues that influence uptake rate and therefore to influence policy development. The study examines: parental awareness of ELC provision; why parents engage or do not engage; and the barriers and facilitators for local authorities.

European report on equality in childhood education

A study conducted by researchers from the University of Konstanz in Germany has found that around three quarters of experts taking part in the survey believed that there was pressing need to ensure equal opportunities in early childhood education across Europe. The UK was found to be at the lower end of reform performance, ranked in last place in the survey’s assessment of social reforms and the lowest in the EU for the quality of its education reforms.
Research invitation for early years programme (England)

A large scale independent research project is aiming to recruit a representative panel of 3,000 PVI non-domestic settings and 1,000 childminders in order to respond to concerns that government commissioned research may not be effective, the Nursery World website reports. The research will be undertaken by the agency Ceeda, who believe that major early years programmes, such as new funding models and the 30 hour childcare offer for working parents, have been introduced on the basis of ‘limited evidence with no long term strategy to monitor impact’. More details about the research can be found here.

Education

Charities publish Committee briefing on Personal Social Education

Barnardo’s Scotland and NSPCC Scotland have made available their joint briefing for members of the Scottish Parliament’s recent Education and Skills Committee on Personal Social Education (PSE). The key points in the briefing state that: high quality, age appropriate PSE is critical to the ‘prevention of abuse and the supporting of good mental health and wellbeing’; PSE should be supported by a whole-school approach; and there should be ‘on-going scrutiny’ of PSE in relation to positive outcomes for children and young people. The briefing argues that PSE is critical to the Scottish Government’s preventative agenda for social services.

End of Life/Palliative Care

Edinburgh event to outline palliative care research and identify gaps

An event on palliative care research is to be held by Marie Curie in Edinburgh on 11 May. The event will look at what research exists in Scotland, what gaps there are and how this can help inform and improve the reach and quality of palliative care. The event follows a comprehensive scoping review of palliative care research undertaken by researchers from Marie Curie, the University of Edinburgh, NHS Lothian and the University of Glasgow, as part of the new Scottish Palliative and End of Life Care Research Forum.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

Minister replies to Committee question on kinship care

Mark McDonald, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, has responded to the chair of the Education and Skills Committee regarding questions about support for looked after children and kinship care. The letter covers the developments around the work between the Looked After Children Unit, the Department of Work and Pensions and HM Treasury to ensure that UK welfare benefit policy guidance does not disadvantage kinship carers in Scotland. It also confirms that the entitlement for support for looked after children and young people is based on their legal status and not their care setting.
Justice

**Guidance on monitoring isolation published by the National Preventive Mechanism**

Guidance on monitoring the use of isolation in various settings has been published by the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). The guidance was developed on the basis of the findings of a review of isolation and solitary confinement across detention settings conducted by NPM members in 2014–15, and draws from international standards and best practice. The guidance provides a framework that NPM members should apply when examining isolation and making recommendations, and aims to improve consistency of approach.

Health

**Scoping exercise on youth participation in health and social care delivery**

The Scottish Young Council has commissioned a scoping exercise of the ‘rational, appeal and feasibility’ for the establishment of a collaborative approach to youth participation in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. The exercise will aim to map existing structures for young people’s participation and evidence whether there are any engagement ‘gaps’ with young people in planning and delivery of services. The research includes a short survey of stakeholder views, with the adult (targeted to practitioners) being found [here](#) and the survey for young people found [here](#).

**Calls for increased Group B Strep screenings**

The Group B Strep Support charity is calling for all mothers to be screened for Group B strep in order to prevent babies being left with disabilities, the BBC News website reports. Early Onset Group B Strep is bacteria carried by mothers and can pass on their babies, causing meningitis, sepsis and pneumonia in the first week of a baby’s life. The website has a published a video which details a case of a mother whose child was left disabled after being exposed to the bacteria.

**Review of school food nutrition regulations**

The Scottish Government has confirmed that a review of school food and drink nutritional standards has begun. Scotland already has very strict regulations governing food and drink served in schools but experts from Food Standards Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and Education Scotland are considering whether school food provision can be improved further. The short life working group will examine scientific and technical detail of the latest evidence and advice regarding nutritional standards and report back to the Scottish Government by summer 2017.

Mental Health

**Statistics published on CAHMS waiting times**
NHS Scotland’s Information Services Division has published its report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health waiting times. The data shows that some children had waited 53 weeks or more to receive specialist mental health care. The data is derived from the last quarter of 2016, and details that of the 4,222 patients who started treatment, 101 had waited more than a year to receive their specialist help.

**Campaign launched to help boys speak about suicidal feelings**

The NSPCC has launched a campaign to encourage boys to seek support for issues and problems they face. The campaign, Tough to Talk, was created in part due to Childline data that found that boys were 6 times less likely than girls to talk to Childline counsellors about suicidal thoughts. Over 2015/16 1,934 Childline counselling sessions were delivered to boys compared to 11,463 with girls. However, the suicide rate for boys aged 10-19 was more than double that for girls in the same period. A video supporting the campaign can be found [here](#).

**Suicide rates up to three times higher in deprived areas, says Samaritans report**

Suicide rates are two to three times higher in the most deprived areas compared to the most affluent, according to a report published by Samaritans. ‘Dying From Inequality’ presents a range of research examining socioeconomic disadvantage as a key risk factor for suicidal behaviour and sets out actions to address this, including the protection and improvement of mental health services.

**Rural mental health forum launched**

A new forum to improve mental health provision and awareness in rural Scotland has been launched, the Press and Journal reports. The National Rural Mental Health Forum follows a survey and workshop, organised by Support in Mind Scotland and SRUC, which found 67% of those surveyed in rural areas had experienced depression. It is hoped the forum will help rural organisations to raise awareness of mental health and encourage people in rural Scotland to ask for help.

**No persuasive evidence that social media causes depression, research finds**

Writing in the Independent news website, Niall McCrae, lecturer in mental at King’s College London, discusses recent research led by researchers from the College that found only a ‘weak’ correlation between teenager’s use of social media and depression. The research examined social media use in young people over eleven studies with a total of 12,646 participants. The results of the study found a ‘small but statistically significant’ relationship between online social interaction and depressed mood. However, depression was not diagnosed in any of the studies and they could not determine whether the mood was cause or effect.

**Other**

SIGN highlights recent guidelines in Spring 2017 newsletter
The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) has published its Patient and Public Involvement Newsletter for Spring 2017. The newsletter includes details of recent publications, such as guidelines on assessment, diagnosis and interventions for autism spectrum disorders, as well as booklets for children, adults and families on autism.

**SSSC asks workers employed in more than one role to register both**

Those employed in more than one social service role on two different parts of the register need to register both roles, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has clarified. Previously, workers employed in two roles in the same type of setting were told to register on the ‘higher’ role. The SSSC has encouraged workers to check their MySSSC account for details of current registration and register the additional role if they have two different jobs.

**Audit Scotland reports on challenges facing local government**

A report on the challenges faced by local authorities has been published by Audit Scotland. The report highlights challenges around a long-term decline in funding and an ageing and growing population, noting the ways in which some councils are adopting new ways of working in response. The report makes a number of recommendations, based around the need for effective, strategic leadership, comprehensive long-term financial strategies, and the involvement of local communities.

**Annual report on human rights action plan published**

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has published the third annual report on Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP). The report summarises activities during 2016 and sets out future ambitions and plans for the final year of the four-year plan. Case studies showing human rights in practice have been published alongside the report.
Disclaimer

This weekly bulletin is produced as an update on the key issues concerning children and young people.

Each item in the bulletin has a hyperlinked headline that will take the reader to the original source.

We collate items from our parliamentary and Scottish Government monitoring covering health and social care news from throughout the UK, and current research and policy development. We use a variety of sources for the bulletin, including alerts from Newsdirect, Community Care, Children & Young People Now and ISD Scotland.

We aim to be representative rather than comprehensive, so we try to cover only the main Scottish stories, along with some stories from the rest of the UK. The purpose of the bulletin is to alert readers to items of interest. It should be noted that these items are the works of others and are neither authorised nor endorsed by the Care Inspectorate, with the exception of publications which are identified as Care Inspectorate publications.

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