



[Additional Support Needs](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Early Years and Childcare](#)

[Health](#)

[Justice](#)

[Looked After and Accommodated Children](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Other](#)

Additional Support Needs

[MSPs agree call for review of presumption to mainstream](#)

MSPs have agreed a parliamentary motion calling for a review of the presumption to place pupils with additional support needs in mainstream schools. Education Secretary John Swinney stressed the importance of inclusion and told Parliament that the education of young people in Scotland was “the better for our taking a mainstreaming approach”. He said the Scottish Government would take “a collaborative approach” to any review.

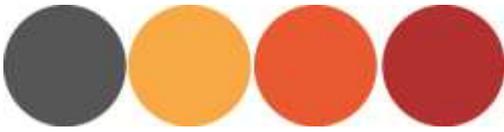
Child Protection

[Two thirds experience traumatic event before eight, study finds](#)

Two thirds of Scottish children experience a traumatic event before the age of eight, according to a study by the University of Edinburgh. The research, which looked at the incidence of adverse experience among more than 3,000 children, also found that one in 10 have experienced at least three traumatic events, such as domestic abuse or parental drug misuse, in their lifetime. According to the study, boys are at greater risk, along with those from low income households and those with younger mothers.

[Highland serious case reviews published, Press and Journal reports](#)

The Press and Journal has reported on serious case reviews published in relation to two children in the Highlands. Child T and Child S both suffered violent head injuries in unrelated cases.



[MSPs back Vulnerable Witnesses Bill at Stage 1](#)

The general principles of a Bill designed to increase the use of pre-recorded evidence for child and vulnerable witnesses in criminal trials have been agreed by MSPs. Provisions in the proposed Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Bill include that in certain proceedings the court must enable any child witnesses to give evidence in advance of the hearing. During the Stage 1 debate, SNP MSP Jenny Gilruth highlighted plans for Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to develop Scotland-specific standards for adoption of the Barnahus principles, calling for collaboration with education bodies in that work in order to avoid duplication.

Early Years and Childcare

[Parents delaying potty training claims new survey](#)

More children are being potty trained later, according to a new survey from charity ERIC and the National Day Nurseries Association. 68% of the 202 early years staff surveyed felt that over the past five years children were being potty trained at a later age, with 43% believing this was down to parents putting it off because they are too busy or at work for too long. Almost all staff (92%) believed toilet training should be a shared responsibility between nursery and home. In response to the survey results, NDNA have developed training resources for nursery staff, while resources for practitioners and families are being developed.

[Founder of pre-school playgroup movement dies aged 90](#)

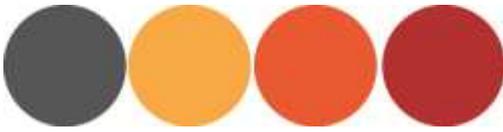
The woman credited with starting the pre-school playgroup movement in the UK has died at the age of 90, Early Years Scotland reports. Belle Tutaev wrote to The Guardian in 1961 calling for more nursery schools and play facilities for children under five and founding the Pre-school Playgroups Association (now known as the Pre-school Learning Alliance) later that year.

[Interim review of Regional Improvement Collaboratives published](#)

The Scottish Government has published an interim review of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs), focussing on the first phase of RIC development and planning. The review took place in mid to late 2018 with the aim of exploring how RICs had been taken forward in each region. Although all stakeholders indicated that it would take time to see an impact, regional stakeholders believe RICs have encouraged joint working between officers in different local authority areas, while some school staff gave very positive early examples of sharing best practice and skills development. The research will inform and support further development of the RICs and provide a baseline for future review.

[UK Government criticised in Westminster early years report \(England\)](#)

There is “little strategic direction” to the UK Government’s policy on early years, according to a new report by the Education Committee at Westminster. The report into tackling disadvantages in the early years describes the Government’s approach



as “confused”, criticising its flagship 30 hours childcare policy as “entrenching disadvantage”, while noting that the life chances strategy was never published and that the social mobility action plan did not fully address the role played by the early years. The report recommends major reforms to the free childcare policy and advocates for increased funding for maintained nurseries.

[Playground deemed ‘too risky’ to insure \(England\)](#)

Concerns have been raised over the future of adventure playgrounds after underwriters Zurich took the decision to withdraw cover from some playgrounds that it said present “too great” a risk, Nursery World reports. Play charities, as well as London Mayor Sadiq Khan and the Children’s Commissioner Anne Longfield, have raised concerns that the decision could deter other insurers from covering adventure playgrounds, reducing the number of outdoor spaces for children. A spokesperson for Zurich said reports that they were withdrawing from the market were “inaccurate”.

Health

[Play Policy Forum launches policy statement to address ‘crisis in childhood’](#)

A policy statement identifying “a crisis in childhood” and calling for more children’s play opportunities has been issued by the Children’s Play Policy Forum. The Forum, which brings together play agencies from across the UK, including Play Scotland, is calling for action to ensure that “children and society are not fundamentally damaged by the lack of play in children’s everyday lives”.

[UK Chief Medical Officers issue commentary and advice on screen-based activities](#)

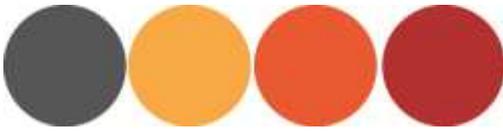
Commentary and advice on the impact of ‘screen-based activities’ on children and young people’s mental health has been issued by United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers. The report brings together research on screen-based activities, noting that “no causal effect is evident from existing research between screen-based activities, or the amount of time spent using screens, and any particular negative effect” but recommending a “precautionary approach” balanced against potential benefits. Advice in the document includes leaving phones outside of bedrooms, screen-free meal times and breaks after two hours of screen use.

[E-bug event for those working with children in a group setting](#)

Health Protection Scotland is hosting an e-bug event in Glasgow on 12 February, aimed at those working with children or young people in a group setting. E-bug is a free, online educational science resource developed by Public Health England, covering the topics of microbiology, hygiene and health.

[Tube teddies help children to understand their illnesses](#)

A Glasgow woman has started to make teddies with real fittings and tubes to help children with feeding tubes, stoma bags and catheters adjust to their condition and educate those around them. Fiona Allan, who has a genetic condition that requires



her to use a nasal feeding tube and a surgical catheter, said she came up with the idea of making the teddies after struggling to adjust to her new appearance. She wanted to help children in a similar situation understand their conditions and interact with their “non-sick” siblings. She said: “For those children going to nursery they can play with the teddies and touch and pull the tubes without causing any harm to the child.” International tube awareness week runs 4 - 8 February.

[Resource launched after survey finds one in four unsure how to wean \(England\)](#)

Public Health England has launched a new weaning hub on the [Start4life](#) website, after a survey of 1,000 mothers of young children found that one in four did not feel confident in introducing solid foods, Nursery World reports. The website includes advice and tips for each stage, with recipes for each age group and videos highlighting the signs that a baby is ready to be weaned and how much food to give.

Justice

[Scottish Government publishes new Criminal Justice Social Work Statistics](#)

Annual statistics on criminal justice social work have been published by the Scottish Government. The figures cover 2017-18 and show: 19,400 social work orders, a fall of 6% compared with 2016-17; 17,800 community payback orders, a fall of 7%; and 570 drug treatment and testing orders, the highest level since 2013-14.

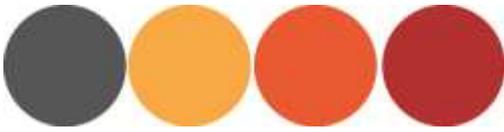
[National Preventive Mechanism publishes annual report](#)

The UK National Preventive Mechanism has published its annual report, providing an overview of the inspection and monitoring findings of its 21 member organisations. The report notes the work of the Care Inspectorate in relation to the inspection of Scotland’s five secure care units for young people and joint work with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland on prison inspections.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Three year review of care services for children and young people published](#)

Fewer children and young people are being placed in foster care, independent residential school care and secure care services in Scotland, according to a new report. But at the same time, there has been an overall increase in children placed in care home services, the Care Inspectorate has said. The findings were published in a review which looked at a wide range of data collected by the Care Inspectorate over a three year period. In their report, inspectors said: “Trusting relationships between staff and the children and young people they cared for led to more person-centred planning, support and improved experiences and outcomes. Consistent staff teams enabled positive experiences for children and young people through the development of secure relationships based on empathy, compassion, love and fun. It is also noted that “within some care homes, school care accommodation services, and fostering services, we found that a small number of children and young people had been inappropriately placed”.



[Fostering Network publishes State of the Nation report](#)

A State of the Nation report on foster care across the UK has been published by the Fostering Network. The report is based on a survey of more than 4,000 foster carers across the UK and, beyond the findings, outlines a range of recommendations looking at government investment and legislative change as well as practice issues at a local level. The report notes that six in 10 foster carers say that the allowance they receive does not meet the full costs. 58% feel that they are treated as an equal and valued member of the team by their fostered child's social workers, although the figure is 63% in Scotland. The report also finds that in Scotland and Northern Ireland foster carers were more positive about the support from their fostering service in general, with 61 and 62% respectively describing it as excellent or good.

[Call for new regulatory body for foster care](#)

A new regulatory body for foster care should be established to improve professional standards and to prevent "useless duplication" in processes across Scotland. Writing in The Herald, Jane Wright, Chair of the Scotland Foster Care Workers Branch of the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain, argues that "the altruism of foster care workers has been exploited for too long and it's time we are given the dignity of a properly regulated workforce". She proposes a Foster Care Workers Council be established "with the aim of maintaining, improving and, ultimately, enforcing professional standards and ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, universal best practices".

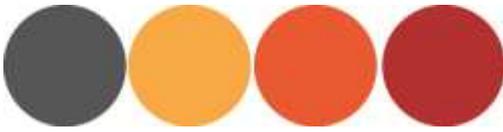
[VR helps professionals understand trauma and support looked after children, study finds](#)

Virtual reality (VR) technology is helping professionals gain a deeper understanding of the traumatic experiences of looked after children, according to a study highlighted by Children & Young People Now. Analysis of a pilot involving 30 councils and care organisations found that training using VR headsets helps provide a deeper insight into trauma while improving the support carers and professionals offer children in care. The VR project is being led by the social enterprise Cornerstone.

Mental Health

[Children's Mental Health Week \(4 – 10 February\)](#)

Children's Mental Health Week (4 – 10 February) continues, with a range of reports and resources launched to mark the campaign. Young Foundations Managing Director and Scottish Children's Services Coalition member Niall Kelly [wrote](#) in The Herald to mark the week, highlighting the cost-advantages of prevention and early intervention in relation to children's mental health.



[Study finds link between poor sleep and anxiety in children](#)

Lack of sleep is fuelling anxiety levels among schoolchildren, a survey by a mental health charity has found. The survey of 1,100 10-11 and 13-15 year-olds, carried out by charity Place2Be to mark Children's Mental Health Week, found that children and young people who usually get less than the recommended 9 hours sleep on a school night are more likely to feel that worries get in their way of school work (32% vs 22%), while more than half (55%) said they worry "all the time". The survey also found that those getting less sleep are less able to cope with worries and once they start worrying, they cannot stop.

[Social media placing 'overwhelming pressure' on young people, charity warns](#)

Social media is placing "overwhelming pressure" on young people, according to the Prince's Trust. The eBay Youth Index found that 57% of 16-25 year olds believe social media creates a pressure to succeed, while (46%) say that comparing their lives to their friends on social media makes them feel "inadequate". Almost half (48%) said they feel more anxious about their future when comparing themselves to others on social media. The authors of the report note that these figures come in parallel with findings that young people's confidence in their emotional health has dropped to its lowest level since the Index began, with a score of 64.

[Study explores genetic links with depression](#)

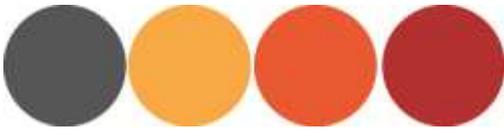
A University of Edinburgh-led study exploring the genetic origins of depression has been published in the Nature Neuroscience journal. The research team studied information pooled from three large datasets of anonymised health and DNA records, identifying 269 genes linked to depression. The study suggests depression could be a driving factor leading some people to smoke and also shows that neuroticism could lead some people to become depressed. The team is inviting people with depression or anxiety in Scotland to take part in a further study to understand more about the role of DNA in common mental health conditions.

[Free online course in understanding suicide and prevention strategies](#)

A free online course is to be launched to help those working with at-risk or vulnerable individuals to gain a better understanding of suicide and ways to prevent it. The University of Glasgow-developed course, delivered on FutureLearn, allows users to learn about the complex set of factors linked to suicide and explores suicide prevention strategies. The course, commencing on 4 March, has been endorsed by NHS Breathing Space, Samaritans, the British Psychological Society, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow.

[Self-compassion exercises have calming effect on mind and body, study finds](#)

Taking part in self-compassion exercises helps to calm the heart rate and switch off the body's threat response, according to a study by the universities of Exeter and Oxford. The research, published in Clinical Psychological Science, saw 135 healthy students divided into five groups, with each group hearing a different set of audio



instructions. The two groups whose instructions encouraged them to be kind to themselves reported feeling more self-compassion and connection with others, while their heart rates dropped and they showed lower sweat response.

[Highland research study aims to help mums](#)

A new research study in the NHS Highland area aims to improve the life chances of babies and mothers struggling with anxiety, depression or addiction, the BBC reports. More than 200 women and babies, aged between six and 18 months, have been sought for the Mellow Babies project. They will join groups that will work with each other as well as a variety of medical professionals, with the aim of improving their emotional state and their relationship with their babies. Part of the project will see mums record their own video footage at home of their interaction with their children which will then be discussed in the support groups.

Other

[Progress report on actions agreed with children and young people published](#)

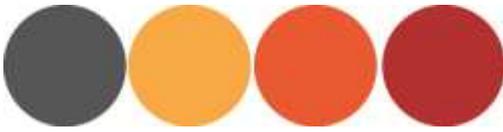
The Scottish Government has published a report setting out its progress on the actions agreed at the Cabinet meeting with children and young people in March 2018. Seven Members of the Children's Parliament and seven Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament met with Cabinet Ministers to talk about key issues that impact on their lives at home, at school and in the community, with the aim of informing the government's agenda over the coming year. An Action Plan sets out plans to strengthen children's human rights over the next three years.

[Findings of Young Carer Grant survey published](#)

The Scottish Government has published the findings of its social security experience panel survey on young carers' experiences and views on what the new Young Carer Grant should be like. The Young Carer Grant will be a grant of £300 which young carers can apply for each year when they are 16 and 17, and 18 if they are still at school. 61 young carers (up to the age of 25) responded to the survey, many of whom said they felt the grant would have a positive impact for young carers who met the eligibility criteria and open up opportunities for them that they wouldn't otherwise have. Other areas covered in the survey included how young people could apply, how the grant should be advertised and who the grant should be available to. The Scottish Government has also produced a [visual summary](#) of views expressed in the survey.

[Final report published following integration progress review](#)

The final report of a progress review on the integration of health and social care has been published by the Scottish Government. The review was carried out by the Ministerial Strategic Group for Health and Community Care and sets out a range of proposals to be carried forward on the basis of "joint and mutual responsibility to improve outcomes for people using health and social care services in Scotland". Proposals include: improved strategic inspection of health and social care to better



reflect integration; more collaborative delivery of improvement support and improved strategic planning and commissioning arrangements.

[New website to help people prepare for Brexit launched by Scottish Government](#)

The Scottish Government has launched a new website to help people prepare for Brexit, including the possibility of a 'no-deal' exit, has been launched by the Scottish Government. The site includes specific sections on education, EU citizens, health and social care, housing, justice and public bodies.

[COSLA publishes latest local government benchmarking report](#)

The latest Local Government Benchmarking Report for 2017-18 has been published by COSLA. The report outlines how much local authorities spend on particular services, performance and how satisfied people are with the services provided. Among the findings, the percentage of funded early years provision graded 'good or better' has improved from 87.1% to 91.0% since 2010/11 (a slight reduction in the past three years), while 80% of adult social care users provide a positive rating in relation to quality and impact, a decline of 5% across the last three years.

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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