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Additional Support Needs

[SCSC calls for review of support for children with complex needs](#)

The Scottish Children's Services Coalition (SCSC) has called for a review of how local authorities support children and young people with complex needs. The SCSC has highlighted statistics suggesting a decline in the number of children with additional support needs receiving a co-ordinated support plan (CSP) and raised concerns that local authorities are more reluctant to provide a CSP than previously.

Child Protection

[Resource to be developed to support children at risk of going missing](#)

A resource to educate children about the dangers of going missing is to be developed by the charities Missing People and Barnardo's, the Scottish Government has announced. Funding of £30,000 has been awarded for the resource to be developed in consultation with children and young people and Education Scotland.

[Scottish Parliament committee supports Vulnerable Witnesses Bill](#)

A Bill to increase the use of pre-recorded evidence for child and vulnerable witnesses in criminal trials has been supported at Stage 1 by a committee at the Scottish Parliament. The [Vulnerable Witnesses \(Criminal Evidence\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) includes provision that in certain proceedings the court must enable any child witnesses to give evidence in advance of the hearing. The Justice Committee has endorsed the Bill but called for the Scottish Government to fully adopt the Scandinavian



Barnahus, or Children's House, principles, noting work between Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to develop Scotland-specific standards for this.

[New SIGN guideline on prenatal alcohol exposure](#)

Clinical guidance on prenatal alcohol exposure has been published by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN). The guideline provides evidence-based recommendations on measurement of alcohol consumption in pregnancy and consensus-based recommendations on issues such as identification of children at risk of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), criteria for diagnosis of FASD and management and follow up of children and young people affected by prenatal alcohol exposure.

[Child Abuse Inquiry publishes latest newsletter](#)

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has published its Winter Spring 2019 newsletter. The newsletter provides information about the work of the Inquiry so far, including an update on the Phase 4 hearings which will focus on evidence relating to residential child care establishments run by male religious orders.

[National Audit Office reports on children's social care pressures \(England\)](#)

A report setting out recent trends in pressures on children's social care demand and activity in England has been published by the National Audit Office. The report covers: the pressures on children's social care; the response of national and local government to increasing demand; and analysis of what is causing variations in demand between local authorities

Early Years and Childcare

[Rescue package agreed for childcare charity](#)

A rescue package for a charity which provides childcare to more than 100 children in the Highlands and Moray has been agreed, Nursery World reports. It was announced in December that Direct Childcare was to close due to lack of funding. However, a rescue package provided by One Parent Families Scotland will allow the charity to continue its work and will secure the jobs of the charity's eight contracted staff members and 40 casual workers. The two groups plan to work together on a plan to ensure the long-term viability of the Direct Childcare service.

[Edinburgh Council proposes replacing teachers in nurseries](#)

A proposed 'Change Strategy' published by City of Edinburgh Council suggests that teachers attached to nurseries in the city could be replaced by early years practitioners. The proposals, out for consultation, state that analysis of Care Inspectorate findings "indicates no difference in quality between nurseries which



have qualified teaching staff on site permanently and those are supported in other ways”.

[Bookbug app launched](#)

An app designed to share the benefits of the Bookbug programme with more families across Scotland has been launched by the Scottish Book Trust. The app, including features such as a library of songs and rhymes and personalised playlists, is free to download from the App Store and Google Play.

[SCMA launches annual membership survey](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has launched its annual membership survey. The survey closes on Friday 22 February.

[Ofsted consulting on new inspection framework \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has launched a consultation on changes to its education inspection framework from September 2019. Nursery World has set out the key changes for early years settings [here](#).

Health

[Report assesses child health progress since 2017 state of the nation report](#)

A report assessing progress in child health since 2017 has been published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). The report highlights positive plans proposed by the Scottish Government since the RCPCH's 2017 State of Child Health report, particularly in relation to child poverty, obesity and mental health. However, it calls for 2019 to be “the year for action and implementation”. Topics covered in the report also include child death numbers and integrated health and care statistics.

[UK-wide strategy to eliminate measles and rubella published](#)

A strategy to eliminate measles and rubella has been published by the UK Government. The strategy focuses on four core components required to maintain elimination of measles and rubella: Achieve and sustain $\geq 95\%$ coverage in the routine childhood programme; Achieve $\geq 95\%$ coverage with 2 doses of MMR vaccine in older age cohorts through opportunistic and targeted catch-up; Strengthen measles and rubella surveillance; Ensure easy access to high-quality, evidence-based information.

[Young ambassadors highlight food poverty inquiry at Scottish Parliament](#)

Young ambassadors have highlighted the issue of food poverty at an event in the Scottish Parliament. The event drew attention to the cross party Children's Future Food Inquiry at Westminster, a UK-level initiative funded in part by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland.



Justice

[Lead and scope of mental health support in custody review announced](#)

The independent review of mental health and wellbeing support for young people in custody is to be overseen by Dr Helen Smith. Dr Smith, a Consultant Forensic Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and clinical lead for West of Scotland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, will work alongside the HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland and a working group made up of other stakeholders to review support arrangements at HM Prison and Young Offenders Institution Polmont. Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf has also announced the scope and terms of reference of the review.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Care Leavers Covenant Conference in Glasgow on 12 March](#)

The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant Conference 2019 will take place on 12 March. The Covenant was launched in October 2015 to support Scotland's corporate parents, practitioners, managers and decision makers to fulfil their duties to improve the life chances of all of Scotland's care experienced young people. The themes of the conference, taking place in Glasgow, will focus on home, connection and felt security. These will be addressed within the context of rights and wellbeing.

[National Confidential Forum seeks new Head](#)

The National Confidential Forum is recruiting for a new Head. The Head will have operational responsibility for the work of the Forum and will be answerable to the Board of the Mental Welfare Commission (Commission) for the effective and efficient running of the Forum.

[Analysis of consultation on continuing care amendment order](#)

The Scottish Government has published an analysis of responses to the fourth and final consultation on the continued increase of the higher age of eligibility for continuing care. The Continuing Care (Scotland) Amendment Order 2019 will increase the higher age to 21 to keep pace with the age of the initial eligible cohort. In its analysis, the Scottish Government notes universal support for the expected extension but also provides a summary of more general views on the policy.

Mental Health

[NICE suggests digital CBT as first-line treatment for young people with depression](#)

Children and young people with depression can be offered digital cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) as first-line treatment, according to updated guidance by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The recommendation emphasises the importance of personal choice in deciding on treatment for



depression and suggests digital interventions can play an important role. The guidance is out for consultation until 20 February.

Other

[Overview report on services for children and young people 2012-2017](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published the first ever overview report on a five year programme of inspections of services for children and young people in Scotland. Between 2012 and 2017 the Care Inspectorate led a series of 32 joint inspections of services for children and young people – one in each of the 32 local authority areas in Scotland – in partnership with other scrutiny bodies including Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. Inspections considered how well services met the needs of children and young people, including those identified as most vulnerable.

The report says: “With some exceptions, partnerships generally demonstrated improved outcomes, despite the pressure on available resources over the period...However, there are a number of areas where concerted effort is required to improve. For example, some children and young people were experiencing delays in accessing the right health service at the right time, including mental health services, and delays in planning for permanency had significant adverse impacts on the outcomes for children and young people.”

[Consultation on timescales for young carer statements](#)

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation on timescales for adult carer support plans and young carer statements for carers of people who are terminally ill. The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 extends and enhances the rights of unpaid carers in Scotland by giving carers the right to an adult carer support plan or young carer statement. The Act requires ministers to set timescales for preparing young carer statements for carers of people who are terminally ill with a life expectancy of up to 6 months. The consultation closes on 12 April.

[Update on human rights progress published by Scottish Government](#)

The Scottish Government has published an update on progress in implementing UN Human Rights Council recommendations following the third Universal Periodic Review of human rights in the UK in May 2017. The update covers five thematic areas: Domestic human rights framework, including the status of UN human rights treaties; Violence against women and girls; Tackling racial discrimination; Access to justice; Human trafficking and slavery.

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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](#).

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