Additional Support Needs

**Parents asked to share views to inform ASL review**

Parents of children with additional support needs are being asked to share their experiences as part of a review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL). The review, being led by Includem Chief Executive Angela Morgan, is considering current evidence and engaging with stakeholders to identify good practice and areas for further improvement in the ways that children and young people with additional support needs progress in their learning, including in early learning and childcare and special schools. Findings will be submitted to the Scottish Government and COSLA by the end of February 2020.

Child Protection

**Call for evidence launched on Children (Scotland) Bill**

A Scottish Parliament committee is seeking views on a new Bill designed to strengthen the family law system and to ensure the best interests of children are at the centre of contact and residence cases. The Justice Committee has launched a call for evidence on the Scottish Government’s [Children (Scotland) Bill](#), which proposes a range of measures, including the objective to regulate child contact centres and appoint a body to oversee standards. Other measures in the Bill include amending the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 to put a duty on local authorities to place siblings under 18 years of age together when they are looked after away from home. The call for evidence is open until 15 November.
Research investigates innovative ways to improve safeguarding practice

A research project to find new ways to improve social care systems and practices for young people at complex safeguarding risk has been launched. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the £1.9m study will scrutinise six council areas to investigate how innovation could protect young people from the threat of child sexual exploitation, gang-association, peer-on-peer abuse, criminal exploitation and drug dealing. The research is being co-ordinated by the University of Sussex.

MSPs urged to pass Equal Protection from Assault Bill

Social Work Scotland is among a range of bodies calling for MSPs to pass a Bill to abolish the defence of reasonable chastisement or ‘smacking’. Stage 3 debate and voting on the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill will take place on 3 October. The open letter, also signed by charities such as NSPCC Scotland and Children 1st, urges all party leaders to “show their commitment to the health and wellbeing of Scotland’s children and to our country’s future” by supporting the Bill.

Children’s Hearings

SCRA publishes updated suite of fact sheets

Reviewed and updated fact sheets have been published by the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA). The suite of 15 documents provides facts, figures and information on a range of subjects, including: the Role of the Reporter, Child Protection, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, High Risk Young Offenders, Deprivation and very young children referred.

Refreshed and updated position statement on whole system approach

Social Work Scotland and their partners have refreshed and updated their position statement on the whole system approach (WSA) for children aged 15-17 in the Hearings system. The statement sets out the ethos of, and reiterates a commitment to, the WSA approach.

Early Learning and Childcare

Latest Out of School Care policy update

The Scottish Government has published its latest Out of School Care policy update. The newsletter focuses on the new Framework on Out of School Care consultation, as well as the recent Access to Childcare funding announcement.

Early Years Scotland publishes annual review

Early Years Scotland has published its latest annual review. The review is entitled Learning Together for Life and provides an overview of the organisation’s work across 2018-2019.
Storytelling campaign launched at Early Years Scotland Annual Conference

A national storytelling campaign was launched at the Early Years Scotland Annual National Conference on 14 September. Every Day’s a Story Day aims to promote the long-term benefits of children hearing stories from the very earliest days of their lives. Parents, children and Early Learning and Childcare settings can pledge their support by signing an online Story Scroll.

Labour announces plan to replace Ofsted with new inspection system (England)

The Labour Party has announced that it would abolish Ofsted and introduce a new two-phase inspection phase as part of its plans for a National Education Service. Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner said the Labour Party, if elected, will introduce a system of regular ‘health checks’ led by local government and a more in-depth inspection led by Her Majesty’s Inspectors in response to any concerns arising. Labour would also abolish Ofsted’s headline grading system.

Education

New website to strengthen education on relationships, sexual health and parenthood

A new website designed to strengthen the quality, consistency and relevance of education on relationships, sexual health and parenthood has been launched. Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood contains over 100 lesson plans for use in all education settings. The resource was developed by TASC (Scotland) in partnership with local authorities and health boards, and advice from Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Health

Quarterly update on immunisation uptake rates

A quarterly update on immunisation uptake rates for children has been published by ISD Scotland. Among the key findings, over 95% of children had received each routine immunisation by the time they were 12 months of age, apart from rotavirus vaccine, which had 93.5% uptake. The vast majority of children received their booster vaccines by 24 months of age; Hib/MenC (94.5%), Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) (94.4%), MenB (93.7%).

Latest Scottish Health Survey findings

The latest edition of the Scottish Health Survey has been published by the Scottish Government. Key findings from the 2018 survey include: 94% of children described their health as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, with little change from previous years; the prevalence of children at risk of obesity remained relatively stable at 16%; 70% of children (aged 2-15) were of healthy weight.
Justice

Resources to help young people through justice system updated for 2019

Two online interactive resources aimed at helping children and young people to understand the journey through the justice system have been updated and revised for 2019. Youth and Criminal Justice in Scotland: the Young Person’s Journey and Journey through Justice were designed by the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ) and Iriss to help young people who have been charged with an offence by the police, and their families/carers, to understand the criminal justice system.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

Young people with care experience to evaluate care leaver project

Young people with care experience are being recruited to design and deliver the evaluation of a project to support care leavers when they move into new homes. Children in Scotland and the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum will work alongside 12 young people who have care experience to develop an evaluation approach for the Home and Belonging scheme. The Life Changes Trust initiative funded 12 innovative projects to help care leavers thrive in their homes.

Moray Council launches new fostering scheme

A new fostering scheme has been launched by Moray Council. Designed to retain existing foster carers and attract new ones, the scheme will include four skill levels, with the opportunity for foster carers to gain qualifications and advance through skill levels, with fees to reflect skills progression and the number of children cared for.

Guide for lawyers representing looked after children at police station (England)

A guide for lawyers representing looked after children at the police station has been launched by the Howard League for Penal Reform. The charity worked with the Youth Justice Legal Centre at Just for Kids Law to produce the document, which offers guidance on practical steps that lawyers should take to ensure that looked-after children receive the support and assistance they need and are entitled to. The guide refers to English law and provisions, but the principles and advice may apply elsewhere.

National review of care homes for children (Wales)

A national review of care homes for children has been published by Care Inspectorate Wales. The review was conducted between July 2018 and March 2019, evaluating the quality of care provided and reflecting the views and experiences of children who have experienced residential care placements.
Mental Health

Youngest children in school year at higher risk of depression, study suggests

The youngest children in a school year may be more likely to be diagnosed with depression by the age of 16 than older children in the year, according to a study led by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. The research, published in JAMA Paediatrics, used the electronic GP records for a sample of a million school-aged children in the UK and found that children born in the last quartile of the school year were estimated to have a 30% increased risk of depression compared to the first quartile. The authors said the number of children diagnosed with depression remains low but more research is needed into the causes of depression in children and how to prevent it.

Social Work

BASW survey to inform 2025 Vision

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has launched a survey to inform its 2025 Vision. BASW is reviewing and refreshing its five-year 2020 vision ahead of the launch of the 2025 Vision in June 2020.

English councils testing ‘kitbag’ as part of four nation social work research project

Seven local authorities in England are testing the use of a ‘kitbag’ of resources to help social workers communicate with children, Nursery World reports. The kitbag was designed as part of Talking and Listening to Children (TLC), a four nation UK research project exploring how social workers communicate with children in their everyday practice and how children involved in these encounters experience and understand them. The kitbags were designed by Scotland-based educational charity International Futures Forum and contain finger puppets, human qualities cards, a Talking Stick, calming oil, and a one-minute timer for presence exercises.

Other

Information required to make a fitness to practise referral

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is highlighting the information they require when people make fitness to practise referrals about a registered worker. The more information people can provide, the quicker and easier it is for the SSSC to decide whether a matter meets their threshold for investigation, which in turn shortens the length of time it takes to investigate.

Voluntary organisations receive funding to support implementation of Carers Act

Over 20 organisations have been awarded grants to support their role in implementing the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations has announced. This is Round 3 of the Carers Act Transformation
Support fund, which is designed to develop local capacity through improvements to systems or technology, rather than delivering direct services or support.

**Disclosure Scotland providing free Scotland Works for You training**

Disclosure Scotland has developed free employer training with Scotland Works for You partners Access to Industry and The Wise Group. The training, taking place in Edinburgh (24 October), Glasgow (14 November) and Stirling (10 December), is designed to provide employers with a structured approach to making defensible, risk-based decisions while ensuring fair opportunity is given to job applicants with past convictions. The partnership between the bodies is part of a commitment to supporting rehabilitation, including closer working with Police Scotland’s Violence Reduction Unit and other partners in this area of work.

**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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