Call for review of Highlands’ named person scheme

The BBC reports on calls for Highland Council to review its version of the named person scheme, examining what is good about the scheme, what did not work, and duties placed on staff as a result of the scheme. Highland Council is reported as stating that, “Getting It Right For Every Child will remain a key principle behind our practice and we will work closely with national bodies to understand the implications of national policy on our current processes and consider what action and changes we need to make.”

Group discusses safeguarding of children in online games

A new group led by academics at Abertay University, Dundee, and including the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the National Crime Agency (NCA), as well as key games industry contacts, are discussing the safeguarding of children in online games, the BBC reports. Key issues discussed at the launch of the group include the UK government’s digital charter - a rolling programme of work which agrees on norms and rules for the online world, new standards for games designers by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), and the UK House of Commons report on immersive and addictive technologies.
Named person approach

The Deputy First Minister John Swinney has written a letter in the Scotsman newspaper on the Scottish Government’s named person approach. It is confirmed that the Scottish Government intends to repeal Parts 3 and 5 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, meaning that they will not be placing the named-person and child’s plan into law, but that the named person approach will “continue as an approach which is now well embedded and can be delivered within existing legislation in partnership with parents.” Mr Swinney has reportedly asked “officials to work with stakeholders to develop materials to support and promote proportionate and appropriate, information sharing practice.”

Disability

Communication with young people who have experienced care and have a disability

A Rights and Participation Officer with Aberlour has written a blog on a project looking the experiences of young people who have experienced care and have a disability, how they are supported to have their voices heard and be central in making decisions about their lives. Covering specific examples of good communication, such as specialist communication techniques, the blog highlights that the project will be continuing until spring 2020.

Early Learning and Childcare

UK Government to publish details of nursery funding (England)

The BBC reports on a decision by the Information Commissioner that the UK Government’s Department for Education must publish details of the calculations for funding for free and subsidised nursery places. The dispute has been raised by early years providers following claims that funding for these nursery places is too low, and they made a Freedom of Information request for the detailed information on how the rates for nursery places were calculated.

Health

Audit report on NHS in Scotland 2019

Audit Scotland has published their annual report on the NHS in Scotland for 2019. The key message is that Scotland’s NHS needs to refocus its priorities to speed up health and social care integration and system wide reform. The report covers how the NHS in Scotland is performing and ‘achieving a sustainable NHS’, commenting that despite the existing pressures, patient safety and experience of hospital care continue to improve, and new, innovative ways of delivering healthcare include increasing the care provided in the community and expanding multidisciplinary working, but that the ambitions within the Scottish Government’s 2020 Vision will not be achieved by 2020, and collaborative leadership is needed to focus on better partnership working, staff engagement and promoting positive workplace behaviours.
Diet and healthy weight monitoring report

Statistics on the prevalence of adults and children being overweight or obese, Type 2 diabetes, fruit and vegetable consumption, and sales of soft drinks, confectionary, etc, have been published by the Scottish Government setting out the latest results against the obesity indicator framework. Key points on children include:

- since 1998, the proportion of children aged two to 15 at risk of overweight (including obesity) has fluctuated between 26% and 33% (29% in 2018). In 2018, 13% of children aged two to 15 were at risk of overweight, with a further 16% at risk of obesity
- in 2018, 15% of children aged two to 15 met the five-a-day recommendation for consumption of fruit and vegetables

Consultation on age restriction for energy drinks

The Scottish Government is consulting on proposals to ban the sale of energy drinks, soft drinks high in added caffeine, to young people under 16 years old. They are seeking views on if action is needed to protect the health of young people, if the age restriction of 16 years old is the most appropriate course of action, if there should be any exemptions, how an age restriction policy could best be enforced and monitored, and the impacts of implementing such a policy. The consultation closes on 4 February 2020.

Healthy Body Image for Children and Young People Advisory Group minutes

Minutes from the second meeting of the Healthy Body Image for Children and Young People Advisory Group have been published by the Scottish Government. The attendees at the meeting discussed ongoing work on definitions for healthy body image and positive body image, current policies and work targeting body image issues within the UK, existing research evidence around risk factors for poor body image, and equality groups and social media influencers, who may provide examples of good practice on engaging the public which the group could learn from.

Justice

Early intervention project to be rolled out across UK

Action for Children's Serious Organised Crime Early Intervention service is reportedly to be rolled out across the UK following the instigation of the 'peer mentor' programme in Glasgow in 2013. The service will now be rolled out to Edinburgh, Newcastle and Cardiff, funded by £4.6 million from The National Lottery Community Fund. Action for Children, together with police, crime and council partners, work with families and schools in communities to target vulnerable young people on the cusp of serious organised crime such as drug supply and distribution, money laundering, stealing to order and illegal enforcement, and the service also offers targeted support
to 11 to 18-year-olds through intensive one-to-one support, peer mentoring, education and employment training.

**Looked After and Accommodated Children**

**Updated guidance on admission of young people into residential establishments**

The Care Inspectorate has published an updated version of ‘Matching Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services’. Previously published in November 2018 setting out the Care Inspectorate’s expectations for services to plan for and assess the needs of children and young people before a placement begins, to consider how the needs of individual children and young people will be met, the updated guidance includes the following statement:

- It must be noted that English local authorities have no power to place a non-consenting child (regardless of whether they do or do not have sufficient understanding) in residential accommodation in Scotland, as specified in the provisions of paragraph 19, Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989.

**Reported barriers to a Coordinated Support Plan**

The Children & Young People’s Commissioner Scotland is focusing on human rights to education during Care Experienced week, and discusses the barriers that may prevent both looked after children and other children with additional support needs from accessing their right to Coordinated Support Plans (CSPs) in Scotland. The blog post discusses capacity and wellbeing tests, and how they can be barriers, and concludes in a call for action to ensure that children are receiving their rights to CSPs.

**Comparative study on kinship care in Scotland and Ireland**

The Centre for excellence for Children’s Care and Protection (Celcis) and Trinity College, University of Dublin, have published a comparative study on kinship care in Scotland and Ireland, tracing key policy developments in how formal kinship care has evolved. The study reportedly examines how formal kinship care has emerged as a “critical part” of care systems, as the first option for children who can no longer live with their parents.

**Other Health and Social Care**

**Annual report by Children’s Commissioner**

The Children & Young People’s Commissioner Scotland has published ‘Our Annual Report: A Journal for 2018/19’, covering their work over the last year. Amongst other work reported, the Children’s Commissioner used their investigation powers for the first time and published a report into restraint and seclusion in Scotland’s schools, worked on a programme supporting and encouraging children and young people acting as human rights defenders, and hosted their Young People’s Human Rights
Gathering in the Highlands bringing together young people from across Scotland to a three-day residential to help them review their work and inform future plans.

**SCIE Chief Executive to step down**

Chief Executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Tony Hunter, will step down from his post next year. Mr Hunter, who will officially stand down on 31 March 2020, has led the organisation for six years. SCIE is now seeking a new Chief Executive to work closely with the Chair, Paul Burstow, and the Board, to lead the organisation.

**Consultation on new whistleblowing standards**

The Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee has issued a call for views on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Whistleblowing Order. The Committee is interested in two areas: views on the order, principles and standards and whether there are any outstanding issues. The Public Services Reform (The SPSO) (Healthcare Whistleblowing) Order 2019 amends the SPSO Act 2002 to insert ‘healthcare whistleblowing’ as a matter the SPSO is entitled to investigate. The Order creates a new route for whistleblowers in the healthcare sector to bring complaints to the SPSO and extends the list of bodies to whom the Ombudsman can disclose information obtained in the course of an investigation to include certain bodies that have a role in improving healthcare in Scotland. The Committee has also highlighted the Draft National Whistleblowing Standards produced by the SPSO and the whistleblowing principles. The deadline to respond is Tuesday 12 November.
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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