Child Protection

Maureen McGinn appointed Convenor of Children in Scotland Board

Maureen McGinn has been approved to succeed Dame Denise Coia as the new Convenor of the Children in Scotland Board. Ms McGinn’s experience includes chairing the Scotland Committee of The National Lottery Community Fund and membership of the first Scottish Poverty Truth Commission. Jo Derrick, CEO of the Scottish Througcare and Aftercare Forum, has been appointed as Vice Convenor.

SCRA publishes annual report

The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) has published its annual report for 2018/19. The report includes details of SCRA’s accounts and achievements over the year.

Progress report on Better Hearings work

A report setting out the progress of a project to improve children’s hearings has been published by the Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP). The Better Hearings initiative is designed to help meet the standards set out in the research report Next Steps to Better Hearings. The progress report outlines the work of the first year of implementation.
Blog on learning from designing child practice review framework

Learning from the design and application of the Welsh Child Practice Review Framework has been set out in a blog on the CELCIS website. Barbara J. Firth had a key role in the design of the Welsh model and she shares the learning she gained in designing, applying and adapting the model in Wales, England and Jersey, and in helping to support the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee.

Family conflict among reasons for rise in protection cases, survey finds (England)

Domestic violence, family conflict and substance abuse are the biggest drivers of a rise in child protection cases in England, according to the Local Government Association. In a survey of councillors responsible for children’s social care, 64% of said the number of children and young people receiving child protection support or going into care has increased “to a great extent” since 2015/16. More than 80% said problems like domestic violence, substance misuse and offending were behind the rise in their area, while 70% said poverty, poor housing and debt played a part.

Child abuse inquiry to investigate leadership in child protection (England and Wales)

Effective leadership in child protection is to be investigated as part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales. The investigation will focus on practical experience of leadership and management. It will not focus on any individual case studies or particular institution but will consider evidence on institutional leadership themes from a range of sectors.

Children’s Rights and Equalities

Responses to consultation on UNCRC incorporation published

The Scottish Government has published responses to its consultation on incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law. The Scottish Government received 161 responses from organisations and individuals, with 146 of these available to read. An independent analysis of the responses will be published in due course.

UK Children’s Commissioners publish UNCRC mid-term review

Children’s Commissioners from across the UK have published a mid-term review of how the UK Government and devolved administrations are meeting commitments enshrined in the UNCRC. Scotland’s Commissioner makes a number of comments specifically relating to this country, including calls for comprehensive guidance on restraint and seclusion, a rise in the minimum age of criminal responsibility in line with international standards and full incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law.
Incorporation of human rights event – 19 November 2019

An event on the future of human rights in Scotland is due to take place on Tuesday 19 November. The University of Edinburgh is hosting the event with the Human Rights Consortium Scotland, Amnesty International and Together, and will focus on how international human rights law could work in Scots Law through incorporation. Civil society organisations are invited to take part in a broad discussion on incorporation and hear from experts in the field.

Survey highlights impact of gender inequalities on girls

A survey on the impact of gender inequalities on girls’ everyday lives has been published by Girlguiding Scotland. The Girls in Scotland report suggests a majority of girls and young women (8 in 10) feel they are treated differently because they are female. The findings also indicate a decline in girls’ confidence, wellbeing and happiness as they get older.

Early Learning and Childcare

Fourth round of ELC Inclusion Fund open for applications

The fourth round of the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) Inclusion Fund is open to applications, as highlighted by Early Years Scotland. The scheme, funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Children in Scotland, provides funding to ELC settings to support children with additional support needs in accessing their funded entitlement. It supports staff to receive appropriate training and fund resources, equipment and adaptations. The application deadline for the funding is 2 December.

‘Early Learning and Childcare in a Nutshell’ leaflet launched

A new leaflet with information on Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) ‘in a nutshell’ has been launched by the National Parent Forum of Scotland. The leaflet includes an overview of the options available to parents and information about funding.

SCMA highlights Bookbug for the Home courses

‘Bookbug for the Home’ courses have been highlighted as a learning opportunity by the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). The Bookbug for the Home approach is designed to be used to engage children and families in singing, rhyming, talking and book sharing in one-to-one interactions or in small groups. While sessions are taking place across Scotland, two have been planned for the Saturdays of 9 November in Edinburgh and 30 November in Glasgow.

Learning Disabilities and Additional Support Needs

Campaign calls for new guidance and protocol on restraint and seclusion

A campaign calling for new guidance and stricter protocols on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools has been launched by ENABLE Scotland. Launching its
Safe Hands? report, the charity suggests that the current system “puts children at risk of physical and psychological harm and denies them their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”. The campaign calls for stronger guidance, support strategies and training in every school, a duty of candour around reporting incidents and a working group to identify a single agency to take responsibility for restraint and seclusion.

Website launched to help children exercise their rights

A new website has been launched to support children aged 12 – 15 with additional support needs to exercise their rights to be involved in decisions about their support at school. My Rights, My Say is a partnership between Enquire, Partners in Advocacy, Children in Scotland and Cairn Legal.

Changes to inspection recommended in report on detention of young people with learning disabilities and autism (England)

A Westminster committee has called for changes to inspection and the Mental Health Act to protect children and young people with learning disabilities and autism from detention in mental health hospitals. The Joint Committee on Human Rights said the evidence received as part of its inquiry into the detention of young people with learning disabilities and autism that it has “lost confidence that the system is doing what it says it is doing and the regulator's method of checking is not working”. Among a range of recommendations, the Committee calls for “substantive reform” of the Care Quality Commission’s, including unannounced inspections taking place at weekends and in the late evening and, where appropriate, the use of covert surveillance methods to better inform inspection judgements.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

Final call for views to Independent Care Review

The Independent Care Review has highlighted the imminent deadline to share views as part of the Journey stage of the process. Following the deadline on 8 November, all the information submitted will be gathered and before a final set of conclusions are developed and peer-reviewed by people from the care community.

Information sheet sets out legal routes into secure care

An information sheet on routes into secure care has been published by the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ). The paper stresses the importance of professionals understanding the different legal routes into secure care. This should be supplemented by legal advice on a case-by-case basis.
Mental Health

MPs highlight benefits of movement for children’s mental health

A report on the benefits of movement for children’s mental health has been published by a cross-party group of MPs at Westminster. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood makes a range of recommendations, including that increased movement and physical activity should be positioned as a preventative approach to mental health support for young people.

Other Health and Social Care

SPSO publishes annual report

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has published Annual Report: Performance Report 2018-19. The report reflects on the SPSO’s recent work including the handling of over 4,000 complaints and 1,160 recommendations for redress and improvement to public services. The report states that 68 per cent of complaints were about the health sector and also reflects on its review of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure to improve public sector complaints handling.

Update on SSSC post registration and learning review

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has published an update on its review of the post registration training and learning process. It is currently gathering feedback on the current progress and hearing from registrants on their experiences to inform the design of a new approach to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse workforce. The findings of a survey on continuous learning have been published and show 90 per cent of people agree the new system should allow registrants more flexibility in how they record their learning. Meanwhile 88 per cent agreed registrants should submit a short verification form rather than their whole record of learning to the SSSC. The SSSC is now developing the new system which will be tested with a small group of participants in early 2020 before launching next autumn.

Learning resource for professionals working with carers updated

The Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) resource has been updated by SSSC and NHS Education for Scotland. EPiC is a learning resource for use by health and social care staff and helps them have better conversations and interactions with carers. Its core principles are based on six key outcomes for carers and young carers, support workforce education and learning and promote consistent understanding of how to work effectively with carers.

General Election guidance for civil servants issued

Guidance on the conduct of civil servants relating to the UK General Election on 12 December has been published by the Scottish Government. According to the guidance, civil servants should not undertake any activity which could call into question their political impartiality or give rise to the criticism that public resources
are being used for party political purposes. Application of this principle needs to be considered particularly carefully during election periods.

**Inspector guidance on closed cultures (England)**

The Care Quality Commission has published supporting information for inspectors about how to identify and respond to closed cultures in services. The information explains that closed cultures may put more people at risk of abuse and human rights breaches. It also includes risk factors and warning signs of closed cultures. The information has been released following the exposure of abuse at Whorlton Hall by the BBC this year. The CQC has also shared the guidance with Mental Health Act Reviewers and their managers.

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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](http://newsdirect), [Community Care](http://communitycare), [Children & Young People Now](http://youngpeoplenow) and [ISD Scotland](http://isdscotland).

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