Child Protection

Views published on proposed Children (Scotland) Bill

Views on a proposed Bill to strengthen the family law system and to ensure the best interests of children are at the centre of contact and residence cases have been published by a committee at the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government’s Children (Scotland) Bill includes a range of measures, including the objective to regulate child contact centres and appoint a body to oversee standards. Other measures in the proposed 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. Those responding to a call for evidence by the Justice Committee include COSLA, Social Work Scotland and Children in Scotland, among others. The Committee has also published an academic report analysing how the balance of rights between the rights and interests of parents and children might change through the Bill.

Report on CPC practice in relation to child sexual exploitation

A report on Child Protection Committee (CPC) processes and practices in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE) has been published by CELCIS. The report, based on a survey of CPCs, aims to evidence improvements achieved over the duration of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle CSE. The survey is a follow up on a baseline survey carried out in 2016. The structure of the Care Inspectorate’s Quality Framework for Children and Young People in Need of Care and Protection is used to organise the questions in the report.
Rise in calls to Childline

The NSPCC has published figures on its Childline counselling service, showing a rise in the number of children and young people seeking help and advice about their mental and emotional health. Children & Young People Now reports that Childline delivered 109,136 counselling sessions on mental and emotional health and wellbeing in 2018/19 compared with 101,454 in 2017/18. Childline also delivered 4,500 counselling sessions around child sexual exploitation in 2018/19 – a 16 per cent rise on the previous year. In more than a third of counselling sessions about child sexual exploitation young people said they had been targeted online.

Children’s Rights

Bill to incorporate UNCRC into Scots Law to be introduced next year

A Bill will be introduced next year to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law, the Scottish Government has announced. Speaking on the 30th anniversary of the Convention’s adoption, Education Secretary John Swinney said a Bill, to be laid in the Scottish Parliament in 2020, will take a “maximalist approach” to incorporation and also allow for incorporation of provisions currently beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament, should they change in the future. The announcement comes after a consultation was carried out on UNCRC incorporation. An analysis of responses has been published.

Report updates on progress on children’s rights action plan

The Scottish Government has also published an update on progress made in taking forward its action plan for progressing the human rights of children. The report sets out progress in meeting the strategic actions included in the plan covering 2018 – 2021. Activities noted include ongoing development of Scotland-specific Barnahus standards and actions taken forward as part of the Child Protection Improvement Programme.

Early Learning and Childcare

Guide to recruiting men in early learning and childcare published

A guide to recruiting men in early learning and childcare has been published by the Men in The Early Years (MITEY) network. The guide, endorsed by the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), proposes measures such as: replacing ‘feminised’ job titles with more gender-neutral terms; keeping a ‘check on sexist workplace banter’; holding open days targeted at attracting male recruits; and working with Job Centres to promote early years careers to men.

NDNA highlights impact of Real Living Wage increase on Scottish nurseries

The recent increase in the Real Living Wage will have the biggest impact on Scottish nurseries, according to the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA). NDNA Head of Policy and External Relations Jonathan Broadbery told Nursery World that the
change was an “important benchmark” for pay in the sector but suggested that local authorities “must take this into consideration when setting their rates for nurseries [to allow them] to be sustainable and able to continue investing in quality of provision”.

SCMA highlights STEM Professional Learning Practitioner Survey

The Scottish Childminding Association has highlighted Education Scotland's annual STEM Professional Learning Practitioner Survey 2019. The information provided will help improve the access practitioners have to high-quality professional learning and also help track improvements in the provision of learning over the lifetime of the STEM Strategy (2017-2022). The deadline for responses is 16 December.

Date announced for out of school care conference

The Scottish Out of School Care Network has announced that its national conference for 2020 will take place on 23 March in Glasgow. The event, titled 'Celebrating Out of School Care in Scotland' will include workshops from Child Poverty Action Group, Care and Learning Alliance and Starcatchers.

Justice

Study of youth transitions and crime to enter new phase

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime is to enter a new phase of data collection. The latest phase of the long-term study, beginning in in late 2019, will seek to understand how events and circumstances in childhood and adolescence have impacted on the lives of study members now that they are adults in their early 30s. In particular, it will look at different criminal justice pathways and how these have impacted on longer-term life-chances.

New Hearings and Evidence Suite launched ahead of video recording change

A new facility for children and vulnerable witnesses giving evidence has been launched in Glasgow. The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service’s Evidence and Hearings Suite has been established ahead of new regulations that will allow child witnesses to give their evidence via a video recorded before the trial from early 2020. The Evidence and Hearings Suite’s design incorporates child-friendly hearing rooms for the pre-recording of evidence, “live link” rooms for evidence given by TV link to court, waiting rooms and support spaces. It also includes a sensory room to help create a calm and supportive environment. Learning from the new suite will inform the ongoing work to develop the Barnahus model in Scotland.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

Latest issue of Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care published

The latest edition of the Scottish Journal of Residential Care has been published by CELCIS. The autumn 2019 issue includes articles on PTSD, team resilience, self-harm, alternative families, foster care and accessing care records.
Adoption Week Scotland continues until 23 November

Adoption Week Scotland continues with a series of events taking place until 23 November. The Adoption UK-led campaign is designed to celebrate and promote the best of adoption with awareness raising, information sessions and social events.

Charity raises concern over fostered children’s relationships with carers

The Fostering Network has published a report which suggests fostered children are being prevented from staying in touch with their foster carers when they move on from their care. More than half of foster carers feel they have no support in maintaining relationships with the children and young people who have moved on from their care; and one in four have been actively prevented from keeping in touch, most frequently by the local authority, fostering service or adoptive parents. The Fostering Network has raised concerns that the care system is not promoting fostered children’s relationships and suggests contact should be discussed during planning for every transition and enabled unless it is decided that it is not in a child’s best interests.

Other Health and Social Care

UNISON survey report on impact of austerity on social work in Scotland

A survey report on the impact of austerity on social work services has been published by UNISON. The report is based on FOI responses from local authorities and a Scotland-wide survey of members of the union working in social work teams. Key themes identified in the report include: a more reactive approach, with less time to focus on prevention; increased workloads as a result of cuts to admin/business support and staff shortages; and problems in providing support in crisis services. Responding to the survey, Social Work Scotland said it was important to also note “broader issues around social work and its profile in an increasingly complex integrated care landscape”, adding that a platform was being developed to “provide strategic responses to these interconnected issues and risks”.

New Iriss series on social services approaches

A new series of short papers on social services approaches and procedures has been launched by Iriss. The papers feature a practitioner insight and set out what the approaches are, why they are important, and how they can be used in practice. The first three include: Safe and Together approach; Recording practice in social work and Duty of candour.

Progress report on Health and Social Care Delivery Plan

The Scottish Government has published a progress report on the actions from the Health and Social Care Delivery Plan. The Plan set out a programme to increase the pace of improvement and change within health and social care services, and the progress report sets out what has been delivered and which actions are outstanding. Covering integration of health and social care, national clinical strategy, public health
improvement, NHS board reform, and cross cutting activities, the Delivery Plan will be updated to focus intent and sharpen activity, provide a further update on actions in progress, provide information on new initiatives and immediate priorities for the remaining lifetime of the delivery plan.

**New date for Scottish Government budget**

The Scottish Government has confirmed that its budget for 2020-21 will not be published until after Christmas due to the UK General Election and cancellation of the UK Government budget. A new date is to be agreed with the Scottish Parliament’s Finance Committee as soon as possible. The postponement means the Scottish Parliament will have a shorter overall timescale in which to approve the budget, which was originally scheduled to be published on Thursday 12 December.

**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](http://www.newsdirect.com), [Community Care](http://www.communitycare.co.uk), [Children & Young People Now](http://www.childrenandyoungpeoplenow.co.uk) and [ISD Scotland](http://www.isdscotland.org).

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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