Child Protection

Abuse inquiry begins hearings on child migration schemes

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has begun hearing evidence from those who were sent overseas as part of child migration programmes, The BBC reports. The latest phase of the inquiry will examine the alleged abuse of children who left Scotland for countries including Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Scottish and UK governments will also provide evidence to the hearings.

NSPCC highlights number of child cruelty and neglect crimes in UK

There were 20,024 recorded child cruelty and neglect crimes reported in 2018/19 across the UK, according to the NSPCC. The charity, having analysed police data, expressed concern that the number of offences has risen every year over the last five years.

Early Learning and Childcare

Education Scotland review numeracy and maths in ELC and schools

A review of current practice in numeracy and mathematics in early learning and childcare settings and schools has been published by Education Scotland. Multiplying skills, adding value sets out the findings from visits to a sample of establishments from the early learning and childcare, primary, secondary and special sectors across Scotland’s 32
local authorities. The report identifies what is working consistently well, what is improving, challenges and areas for improvement.

**New petition calls for statutory allergy care policies in nurseries and schools**

A new public petition has been lodged with the Scottish Parliament which calls for new legislation to make allergy care policy a statutory requirement for all nurseries and schools in Scotland. The petition also urges the Scottish Government to establish appropriate standards for nursery and school staff on medical training, education and care for children with anaphylaxis. The petitioner, Catrina Drummond, highlights the rising number of children who are diagnosed with allergies to food that were previously safe for them to eat. In background information, the petitioner talks about her personal experience in this area and highlights a “general lack of awareness and education” on allergy care. The petition is now open for signatures and the Public Petitions Committee will consider the petition at some stage.

**Coram highlights loneliness among parents of children under five**

Over half of parents with children under five experience loneliness at least some of the time, according to research published by Coram Family and Childcare. The study found that 56% of parents with children under five experience loneliness at least some of the time, with twice as many parents on the lowest incomes saying they often feel isolated from others as parents on the highest incomes (33% v 16%). The study also found that almost twice as many mothers than fathers said they often feel left out (30% v 16%) and that nearly two-fifths (37%) of parents aged 18-24 often feel a lack of companionship, compared to a fifth (21%) of parents aged 25-34.

**Education**

**Highlights from latest international education assessment results published**

A report providing highlights from an international assessment of Scotland’s performance in reading, maths and science has been published by the Scottish Government. According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Scotland’s own overall performance compared to 2015 improved in reading and was similar in maths and science. Scotland’s relative performance compared to other countries, including UK administrations, improved in reading, stayed similar in science and declined in maths when measured by the number of comparator countries that were above and below Scotland.

**Health**

**Chair announced for inquiry into hospital issues in Glasgow and Edinburgh**

The Scottish Government has announced that the Right Honourable Lord Brodie will chair the public inquiry into issues at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital campus in Glasgow and the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People in Edinburgh. The inquiry will examine how problems relating to key building systems and infrastructure occurred, and what steps can be taken to prevent these in future.
Justice

Act raising age of criminal responsibility comes into force

From 29 November 2019, children under 12 will only be referred by a reporter to a children’s hearing on care and protection grounds and not on offence grounds. This means that from this date, children younger than 12 cannot accrue convictions or criminal records. Once fully commenced, the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act will increase the age of criminal responsibility from eight to 12 years of age. Implementation of the Act will be undertaken as quickly and safely as possible, and progress is being made in developing the statutory guidance and drafting the secondary legislation required to commence the other Parts of the Act. The reform is based on evidence that responding to childhood behaviour in a criminalising, stigmatising way serves only to promote escalation and further harm. Scotland has proven approaches to confronting and correcting childhood behaviour that do not need a criminal justice response; with the great majority of children under 16 who commit offences being dealt with through the children’s hearings system, rather than by the criminal justice system.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

New quality framework for mainstream boarding schools and school hostels

We have published the new quality framework for mainstream boarding schools and school hostels. Since 1 April last year, we have been rolling out a revised methodology for inspecting care and support services. The changes build on approaches we have introduced in the past three years: an emphasis on experiences and outcomes; proportionate approaches in services that perform well; shorter inspection reports; and a focus on supporting improvement in quality. The revised methodology and framework reflect Scotland’s Health and Social Care Standards, which are rights-based, person-led and outcome-focused. The framework supports services to evaluate their own performance. It will also be used by inspectors to provide independent assurance about the quality of care and support.

Child-friendly version of UN alternative care for children guidelines

A child-friendly version of United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children has been published. CELCIS has highlighted the guide, which was developed with over 500 children from 26 different countries and uses accessible language and visuals to inform children and young people about their right to live in a supportive family environment. It explains what needs to happen in case they cannot live with their parents or are at risk of being separated from them.

Report on looked after children’s access to mental health services

Barnardo’s Scotland has published a paper on looked after children and care leavers’ access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CELCIS has highlighted the Care in Mind Paper and its findings that children with care experience and care leavers are disproportionately affected by rejected referrals to
CAMHS. This is attributed to two main reasons: the types of therapy available is not suitable for the needs of the care experienced population who are more likely to have mental health problems as a result of trauma; and aspects of policy and practice within CAMHS create additional barriers for care experienced and care leavers. Barnardo’s raises a number of concerns about services, including a lack of engagement, lack of stability and not enough clarity around referral criteria.

Blog highlights use of Three-Phase Model to support foster carer recruitment

A three-phase model to support organisations in rethinking how they practice and evaluate the recruitment of foster carers has been highlighted in a blog published by Iriss. In a guest article, Edinburgh University PhD student Dorothy Neriah explains how the Three-Phase Model synthesises current research and practice to give a better understanding to a complex process, supporting use of the right resources, the right expectations and achieving the right results at the appropriate stages.

Mental Health

Funding allocated for perinatal mental health services

The Scottish Government has announced details of funding to be allocated to 11 organisations who provide perinatal mental health services for mothers and families. A grant of £225,000 has been provided for third sector bodies who provide peer-to-peer support, counselling and befriending services for mums at risk of poor mental health during and after pregnancy and their families. All of the organisations will also be offered additional perinatal mental health training for staff.

Latest CAMHS waiting time figures published

New figures on waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have been published by ISD Scotland. According to the figures, 3,901 children and young people started treatment at CAMHS in the quarter ending 30 September. More than six out of ten (64.5%) were seen within 18 weeks, compared to 69.7% for the previous quarter and 69.0% for the quarter ending September 2018. Half of the children and young people seen started their treatment within 13 weeks.

Annual report for Mental Welfare Commission

The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) has published its annual report for 2018-19, covering key projects, visits carried out by the MWC, publications published, and improvements in their own practice.

Other Health and Social Care

Report on social prescribing of physical activity

The Scottish Parliament committee has published a report setting out the evidence and conclusions of a short inquiry into the social prescribing of sport, exercise and physical activity. Amongst other conclusions, the Health and Sport Committee report
states that social prescribing and primary prevention approaches can help in preventing long term conditions and dependence on pharmaceutical prescriptions, and there is no further evidence needed in relation to the efficacy of physical activity on improving health and wellbeing. It also has the potential to ease the pressure on existing health and social care services, as well as reducing waiting times, unplanned admissions to hospital and delayed discharges.

SSSC Learning Zone gets makeover

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has highlighted a ‘makeover’ of its Learning Zone website. Improvements include a simpler layout, resources grouped by categories that match job functions and topics, and easier to find podcasts.

Good practice examples of health and social care integration

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (ALLIANCE) has published a new collection of case studies to demonstrate examples of good practice within health and social care integration. In partnership with a range of stakeholders, the ALLIANCE’s Integration Support team has collected seven case studies which demonstrate the good practice that is taking place within health and social care integration. The case studies consider the themes of: co-production and leadership; financial planning; strategic planning; accountability and transparency; information sharing; meaningful and sustained engagement.

Charity estimates 135,000 children will be homeless at Christmas

At least 135,000 children in Great Britain will be homeless and living in temporary accommodation on Christmas Day this year, Shelter Scotland has estimated. According to the charity, the number of children in Britain that are homeless and living in temporary accommodation has risen by 51% in the last five years.

Progress report on delivery of action plans to make Scotland fairer

Progress made on delivering an action plan to build a fairer Scotland and improving the lives of children and young people has been published by the Scottish Government. The Fairer Scotland Action Plan and Shifting the Curve set out a range of actions designed to help tackle poverty, reduce inequality and build a fairer and more inclusive Scotland.

New social work regulator goes live (England)

A new independent regulatory body to oversee social workers in England has become operational. Social Work England replaces the Health and Care Professions Council.
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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