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Additional Support Needs

[New app could help reduce stress around autism assessment](#)

A new app could reduce the stress and anxiety associated with a potential autism diagnosis, according to its developers at the University of Edinburgh. Developed by the Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre, the Helping Hand app enables parents and carers of those referred for assessment to record relevant information, such as sleeping patterns and challenging behaviour, about their child. It is suggested that this could give clinicians a clearer insight into a child's behaviour and thereby reduce the stress on parents, carers and children. The app is currently being piloted in NHS Lothian but can be downloaded for free from all app stores and used by parents across Scotland.

[Young Inclusion Ambassadors make recommendations to ASL review](#)

A group of young Inclusion Ambassadors have made a series of recommendations to inform an independent review into the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL). The group of 20 young people, who all have additional support needs, have made a number of recommendations based around the need for greater knowledge, flexibility and consistent support. The group made their submission to Angela Morgan, Chair of the review, to inform her final report, which is due to be published in Spring 2020.



Child Protection

[Joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Orkney](#)

Inspectors have identified major weaknesses in the way children and young people in need of care and protection are supported and cared for in Orkney. The Care Inspectorate leads joint inspections which focus on how well services are working together to improve the lives of children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of abuse and neglect, and those who are, or have been, looked after by the local authority. The inspection identified strengths in the relationships that were built between children and key staff and carers, while the majority of care leavers were well supported in their transition to adulthood. However, it also found significant areas for improvement, with priorities identified including strengthening key child protection processes, fully implementing the GIRFEC approach and commissioning services to meet priority areas of need.

[Barnardo's report suggests lasting effects of domestic abuse experience](#)

Growing up with the experience of domestic abuse can put children at risk of sexual abuse and offending, according to a new report by Barnardo's. The charity's Not Just Collateral Damage report suggests that although children are not the intended victims, the effects of the trauma of living with domestic abuse can last long into adulthood if children do not get specialist support at the earliest opportunity. It found that half of children assessed as needing support from local authority children's services had experienced domestic abuse. It was also found that some young people affected by domestic abuse mirror their parents' behaviour and express the trauma they have suffered by being violent to the abused parent and also to their boyfriend or girlfriend.

[Review of police response to online child sexual abuse published](#)

A strategic review of Police Scotland's response to online child sexual abuse has been published by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland. The review makes a number of recommendations, including improving the means by which the scale and nature of online child sexual abuse is captured and assessed, undertaking an Online Child Sexual Abuse Strategic Threat Assessment, and working with the National Crime Agency to ensure better use and sharing of intelligence.

[Charity report highlights 'powerful' ACE narrative but warns of ignoring 'limitations' in evidence](#)

A report exploring the evidence relating to the prevalence, impact and treatment of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has been published by the Early Intervention Foundation. The charity, a member of the UK Government's What Works Network, highlights the "powerful and accessible narrative" which has increased awareness of ACEs, it adds that the "current popularity [of this narrative] should not lead us to



ignore the limitations in the current evidence base or be allowed to create the illusion that there are quick fixes to prevent adversity or to help people overcome it”.

Early Learning and Childcare

[New national guidance builds upon Pre-Birth to 3 and Building the Ambition](#)

New early years practice guidance has been published by Education Scotland. Realising the Ambition is designed to refresh and build upon the original principles and philosophy of Pre-Birth to 3 and Building the Ambition, providing key information about the characteristics of child development based on research and evidence. The guidance is aimed at anyone who works with and for babies and young children, and is designed to complement the current policy direction in relation to the expansion of early learning and childcare.

[Coram Family and Childcare publishes latest annual survey](#)

Coram Family and Childcare has published its latest annual Childcare Survey. According to the 2020 survey, parents in Scotland are paying 2% more for childcare for under-twos than they were one year ago. The report finds that parents are now paying an average of £111.26 per week, or almost £5,800 per year, for a part-time nursery place in Scotland. It also suggests that, though the majority of childcare categories have shown an increase in availability, 27% of local authorities have enough childcare for parents working full-time. The survey also found a decrease in availability of childcare for disabled children (4% in 2020 compared to 23% in 2019).

[Guidance on coronavirus for education providers, including ELC](#)

New guidance on coronavirus for education providers, including those in early learning and childcare (ELC), has been published by Health Protection Scotland. The guidance includes advice on preventing the spread of infection, what to do if staff or students become unwell, web links to teaching resources on good hygiene practices, and contact details for local health protection teams. It also covers what pupils or members of staff should do if they have returned from a higher risk area as part of a school trip.

[Longitudinal research on early education impact and financial returns published](#)

New research on the impact of early education and its financial returns has been published by the UK Government as part of the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED). An impact study on early education use and child outcomes up to age 5 found that:

- higher use of informal individual Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (with friends, relatives etc.) between age two and the start of school was associated with better verbal ability measured during school year one
- greater use of formal group ECEC between age two and the start of school is associated with negative effects on socio-emotional wellbeing in school year one



- there is evidence that the use of some individual ECEC (childminders, friends, relatives) mitigates the negative socio-emotional effects of high formal group ECEC use
- there was a positive association between formal group ECEC use and better verbal ability during school year one, but only for children from families in the lowest quartile of home learning environment score
- there was no clear evidence of associations between the quality of ECEC which children had attended between ages two and four and their developmental outcomes during reception year / school year one.

Research on financial returns from early education spending has also been published, suggesting that “the greater returns operate through verbal development rather than socio-emotional development and are higher for early education with childminders than other types of providers”.

[New apps to support parents for learning in early years](#)

Six new apps to support parents to engage young children in learning at home have been launched following a UK Government competition. Available on the Hungry Little Minds website, the apps cover a range of activities designed to help improve reading, writing and speaking in the early years.

[Daily moisturiser use does not prevent eczema in newborns, study finds](#)

Daily moisturiser use on newborn babies does not prevent eczema, according to a new study involving researchers from the University of East Anglia. While it was previously thought that parents regularly using moisturisers on newborns could prevent eczema, in a study of 1394 newborn babies born to families with eczema, asthma or hayfever, researchers found no evidence that the daily use of moisturiser during the first year of life could prevent eczema in the study children.

[Resources to support weaning highlighted in new campaign \(England\)](#)

A campaign to highlight the resources available to support confidence with weaning has been launched by Public Health England. The Start4Life website highlights a suite of tools to support parents, including the Breastfeeding Friend, accessible through smart speaker devices.

Education

[Terms of independent review of Curriculum for Excellence set out](#)

A framework setting out the terms of an independent review of the Curriculum for Excellence has been published by the Scottish Government. The review is to be led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and will cover Broad General Education, the Senior Phase and articulation between them. The review will run from February 2020 to February 2021, concluding with a report.



[Gender Equality Taskforce meets for the first time](#)

A taskforce aimed at tackling gender equality in education met for the first time this week. Jointly chaired by 17-year old Razannah Hussain and Education Secretary John Swinney, the Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning will work with education, youth and equalities experts and the Scottish Government to lead actions to improve gender equality from early years through to secondary school.

[Latest statistics on school leaver attainment and destinations published](#)

Statistics on the initial destinations and attainment of 2018-19 school leavers have been published by Scotland's Chief Statistician. According to the figures, 95.9% of school leavers gained one pass or more at SCQF Level 4 or better, (down from 96.2% in 2017-18); the proportion of school leavers attaining one pass or more at Level 5 or better decreased from 85.9% to 85.1%; the proportion of school leavers attaining one pass or more at Level 6 or better decreased from 62.2% to 60.5%; and the proportion of school leavers attaining one pass or more at Level 7 or better decreased from 20.2% to 19.1%. The results also show that 95% of school leavers were in a positive destination three months after leaving school, the highest rate since 2009-10.

[Labour MSP leads debate on inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint in schools](#)

A debate on the inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint in schools took place in the Scottish Parliament. The members' debate was led by Labour MSP Jackie Baillie, who made a number of calls for action, including dedicated guidance, a duty of candour and clarity on who is responsible for overseeing the issue. Summing up, Education Secretary John Swinney reiterated his recent announcement that the Scottish Government will produce new national guidance to be published in January 2021 following consultation in October this year.

[Major literacy study publishes latest report](#)

The largest literacy study conducted in the UK and Ireland has published its latest report. The What Kids are Reading study, led by the analysed the reading habits of 46,239 Scottish pupils, as well as a further 1.1 million young people across the UK and Ireland. The 2020 report suggests that Scottish pupils are now joint second in terms of reading comprehension, behind Northern Ireland and alongside England. Scottish pupils are also second place in relation to reading more difficult books. The report also found that reading for pleasure is key to children's literacy success and highlights the most popular books and authors among school children.

Justice

[Brain does not fully mature until at least 25, research for Sentencing Council finds](#)

The brain does not fully mature until at least the age of 25, according to new research. In order to inform development of a guideline on sentencing young people, the Scottish Sentencing Council asked the University of Edinburgh to carry out a



systematic review of the current neurological, neuropsychological, and psychological evidence on the cognitive maturity of younger people. The review found that the adolescent brain continues to develop into adulthood and does not reach full maturity until approximately 25-30 years of age, suggesting that the younger brain is less well-equipped to enable good life choices and exert self-control. The Scottish Sentencing Council will shortly launch a 12-week public consultation on its draft guideline for sentencing young people.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Latest issue of Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care](#)

The first issue of the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care in 2020 has been published by the Centre for excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS). The theme of the issue is 'looking forward' or thinking creatively about improving care conditions. The full transcript of Professor Manfred Nowak's Kilbrandon Lecture on the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty is also included.

[ICHA publishes latest State of the Market survey \(England\)](#)

The Independent Children's Homes Association (ICHA) has published the results of its sixth State of the Market survey. According to the report, "there are signs of improved financial performance overall" in the sector, but "levels of uncertainty about the future of the children's homes sector remain high". The report also states: "The profile of unregulated supported accommodation provision has been raised in the last year. Children's homes providers give a strong indication in this survey that they would consider investment into this type of service only if it becomes more regulated."

[Concern over independent children's placement provider debts \(England\)](#)

Six of the 10 largest independent groups providing residential and fostering placements for children in England have more debts and liabilities than tangible assets, according to the Local Government Association (LGA). Publishing a report entitled Profit making and Risk in Independent Children's Social Care Placement Providers, the LGA has warned that the situation is placing the stability of placements for children in care at risk. It has called for greater national oversight of companies providing homes for children in care, similar to the role the Care Quality Commission (CQC) holds for adult social care provision.

Other Health and Social Care

[State of Children's Rights report published as new collaborative is launched](#)

An annual progress report setting out the State of Children's Rights in Scotland has been published to coincide with the launch of a new collaborative, STV News reports. The Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland includes the Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde, alongside Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), Children's Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament and the



Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland. At the launch, the organisations involved called for legislation to fulfil the pledge to incorporate the United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child (UNCRC) into Scots law.

[Budget passes Stage 1 following agreement with Greens](#)

The Scottish Government's Budget has passed Stage 1 of the parliamentary process following an agreement with the Scottish Green Party. The agreement will ensure a number of changes to the original proposals, including a National Concessionary Travel scheme offering free bus travel for 18s and under and a further £95m in local government funding.

[Funding announcement for services tackling gender-based violence](#)

A new £13m fund to support organisations protecting women and girls from gender-based violence has been announced by the Scottish Government. The Delivering Equally Safe Fund will support frontline organisations, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. The funding represents an increase of £1m for services tackling gender-based violence.

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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