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COVID-19 – General

[Vaccination programme to start next week](#)

The Scottish Government has confirmed that people in Scotland will start to receive a COVID-19 vaccine from next week, after the UK became the first country in the world to [approve the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine](#) as being safe for use. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency said the vaccine - which offers up to 95% protection against COVID-19 illness - is safe to roll out. Vaccinators will receive the vaccine first, followed by priority groups.

[No change to virus alert levels](#)

The First Minister announced there will be no changes made to Scotland's COVID-19 alert levels, the BBC reports. Eleven council areas will remain in level four restrictions until 11 December, while other areas will be reviewed on Tuesday 8 December.



[Weekly COVID-19 statistics](#)

Public Health Scotland has released its weekly COVID-19 statistical report. By Sunday 29 November, 76,020 individuals had been recorded in the contact tracing software, leading to 214,474 unique contacts being traced. There had been 94,998 confirmed cases, with 5,779 in the latest week. In the week ending 29 November, there were 463 admissions to hospital with confirmed COVID-19 and 43 patients were treated in 4 intensive care. 489 people aged 5-17 tested positive.

[COVID-19 survey for social workers](#)

The British Association of Social Workers has launched a survey for social workers to share their experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic to date. The survey follows up on previous findings from a survey launched in March.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Early years survey findings shared by Duchess of Cambridge](#)

Earlier this year, the Duchess of Cambridge launched an early years survey. The Royal Foundation's 5 Big Questions survey received over 500,000 responses and the Duchess has shared five key insights from the research. 98 per cent of people believe nurture "is essential to lifelong outcomes". However, just one in four people recognise the specific importance of the first five years of a child's life. The survey found that 90 per cent of people see parental mental health and wellbeing as being critical to a child's development but just 10 per cent of parents mentioned taking the time to look after their own wellbeing when asked how they had prepared for the arrival of their baby. The findings were shared on the Children & Young People Now news site.

Education

[No change to school holidays](#)

The Scottish Government has confirmed there will be no changes to school holiday dates over Christmas. The timing of school holidays was raised with Ministers in the Education Recovery Group, given many schools break up very close to Christmas and the potential for increased social interaction in households following the limited relaxation of rules between 23-27 December.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Call for foster carers to receive £500 bonus](#)

The Fostering Network has criticised the decision not to include foster carers in the provision of a £500 bonus for health and social care workers. The Scottish Government confirmed the plans earlier this week. The pro-rata bonus will benefit over 300,000 NHS and social care workers including residential child care staff, children's social workers and staff who have had to shield, or who have since retired.



The Fostering Network said foster carers had cared for children since the beginning of the outbreak and had mixed with multiple households to ensure children in their care were able to maintain relationships with their families.

Mental Health

[Concern over CAMHS waiting times](#)

The Scottish Children's Services Coalition has raised concerns about new statistics suggesting more than 1,000 children and young people in Scotland have been waiting over a year for mental health treatment. The figures from Public Health Scotland indicate that only one health board met the waiting time target of 18 weeks from referral to treatment in the second quarter of 2020.

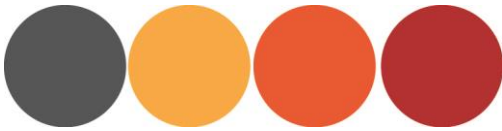
Other

[Research highlights impact of restricted Christmas on families](#)

Research by Action for Children suggests one in six parents would "cancel Christmas if they could", raising concerns about how financial struggles and mental health issues could impact on families. Over half of UK children think their parents will be worried about making Christmas a happy time for their family. The research also highlights the mental health toll the crisis has taken on children, with 49 per cent of children reporting anxiety and a third feeling lonely.

[Ofsted annual report published \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has published its annual report, presenting the findings of areas inspected in early years childcare, schools, social care and further education and skills. More nurseries and pre-schools than ever before were judged as good or outstanding (98 per cent). Overall 96 per cent of early years settings which include childminders were judged as good or outstanding. Launching the report, Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman warned that the invisibility of vulnerable children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic should be "a matter of national concern". Ofsted has also [announced plans](#) for its return to inspections and regulatory work in early years and social care services.



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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