



COVID-19 – General

[Latest weekly Public Health Scotland COVID-19 figures](#)

Public Health Scotland has released its weekly COVID-19 statistical report. By Sunday 13 December, 87,381 individuals had been recorded in the contact tracing software, leading to 246,988 unique contacts being traced. There had been 106,904 confirmed cases, with 5,639 in the latest week. There were 397 admissions to hospital with confirmed COVID-19 and 35 patients were treated in intensive care. 563 people aged 5-17 tested positive.

[First Minister joins with rest of UK in setting out guidance for Christmas](#)

A joint statement from the Scottish, Welsh and UK governments has set out guidance on staying safe at Christmas. The First Minister has stressed that the strong recommendation is to celebrate Christmas within your own household and in your own home, and as far as possible to keep any interaction with other households to a minimum. The guidance seeks to reduce risks as far as possible for anyone choosing to use the flexibilities afforded over the Christmas period.

[Changes to local authority protection scale levels](#)

The Scottish Government has confirmed that three local authorities, East Lothian, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, will move up a level on the protection scale from Level 2 to 3. All other areas remain unchanged in their levels but a further review of protection levels will be taken on Tuesday 22 December 2020.

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[Reduction in time people need to self-isolate](#)

The Scottish Government has confirmed a reduction in the amount of time an individual needs to self-isolate from 14 days to ten days. From Monday 14 December, anyone who has had contact with someone who has had a positive test for coronavirus, who is required to quarantine following arrival in Scotland from overseas, or whose close contacts including members of the same household have tested positive for COVID-19 will only be required to self-isolate for ten days.

[Ofsted reports look at impact of pandemic on children \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has published its third, and final, set of reports looking at the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people. The reports focus on specific areas, such as social care and early years, and highlight the detrimental impact the pandemic has had on children's education and welfare, particularly among the most vulnerable.

Additional Support Needs

[Action plan and next steps for autism in schools working group](#)

An action plan and next steps for a short-life working group on autism in schools have been published by the Scottish Government. An implementation group will be formed to help co-ordinate activities and ensure the work in the action plan is taken forward, before a progress report is produced and reported to Deputy First Minister John Swinney.

[Iriss overview of evidence on weight management among children with autism](#)

Iriss has published an overview of evidence relating to obesity and weight management in children and young people with autism. The summary points out that research on weight management among children with autism is scarce but most of the literature agrees there is a need for comprehensive, individualised, tailored lifestyle and physical activity interventions given the characteristics of autism, and the challenges and barriers faced by those who live with it.

Child Protection

[Views of stakeholders to be sought on child protection petition](#)

A number of key children's organisations are to be asked for their view on a petition calling for the Care Inspectorate's role to be expanded to investigate individual child protection complaints. [The petition](#), lodged by James A Mackie, is being considered by the Public Petitions Committee at the Scottish Parliament and has been addressed in a submission by the Scottish Government which suggests an extension to the Care Inspectorate's remit as proposed would be "problematic". The Committee has agreed that they need the views of key stakeholders on "whether



they believe that the solution that the petitioner has identified is the right one, and indeed whether they accept that there is not sufficient oversight”.

[UK Government sets out plans and codes of practice to protect children online](#)

The UK Government has set out plans for a legal duty of care on online companies and published interim codes of practice on online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The publications come in response to the Online Harms White Paper on legislation “to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online but at the same time defend freedom of expression”.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Statutory duty for 1,140 hours to commence from August 2021](#)

The statutory duty for the expansion of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1,140 hours will commence in August 2021, Children’s Minister Maree Todd has confirmed. Full implementation was originally intended to take place in August 2020 but was postponed to allow local authorities to focus on the COVID-19 response.

[Children who defer to receive extra year funded ELC](#)

A joint plan for funded early learning and childcare (ELC) places for all children who defer their primary one start has been announced by the Scottish Government and COSLA. In Angus, Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Scottish Borders and Shetland Island councils, families who defer entry to P1 for their child next year will automatically receive an extra year of funded ELC. The pilots will explore how many parents decide to take up the offer ahead of it becoming a universal right from August 2023.

[Infographics on what to do if there is a suspected outbreak in an ELC service](#)

The Scottish Government has produced an infographic which sets out what should be done if there is a suspected outbreak of COVID-19 in an early learning and childcare service. The document includes key health messages, what to do if a staff member becomes ill and what to do if a child becomes ill. Bespoke infographics for [school age childcare](#) and [childminding](#) are also available.

[Care Inspectorate guidance to support safe ELC provision over Christmas](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published new guidance to support early learning and childcare services to operate in a safe environment during the festive period. The guidance is designed to support the provision of a wide range of Christmas activities using the core public health measures that underpin the operation of provision.

[ELC provision information published alongside school census results](#)

Information on early learning and children (ELC) provision has been published by the Scottish Government alongside results from the annual pupil and teacher census. The report shows 95% of eligible three and four year olds were registered for funded



ELC (98% in 2019), while 9% of two year olds were registered for funded ELC (11% in 2019). There were 90,126 registrations for funded ELC in September 2020, a decrease of 6.5% since September 2019 when there were 96,375 registrations.

[Updated guidance on support funds for childcare providers](#)

Updated guidance on support to the childcare sector in light of the COVID-19 outbreak has been published by the Scottish Government. The guidance provides updated information on support funds for childminders, nurseries, the self-employed and private and third sector providers.

[Scottish Government writes to ELC providers](#)

The Scottish Government has written to all registered early learning and childcare (ELC) providers to thank them for their efforts this year and to update on recent developments, including a new date for the full expansion of funded ELC.

[Online event to feature Care Inspectorate and SOSCN](#)

A Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) online event will feature the Care Inspectorate on 13 January. The Care Inspectorate and Evelyn Cairns, Out of School Care Development Officer for Dundee City Council, will talk about how they are supporting services during the pandemic, while delegates will also have an opportunity to ask questions after the presentations.

[SCMA to allocate additional payments from Childminding Workforce Support Fund](#)

More childminders will benefit from the Childminding Workforce Support Fund, the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has confirmed. An additional 90 grants have been approved by the Scottish Government after the SCMA was able to make significant savings in the initial allocation of the £350 payments.

[Childminders invited to events to inform new out of school care framework](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association has highlighted consultation events for childminders to inform the Scottish Government's consultation on a new out of school care framework. The events will be held on 12 and 14 January.

[Study highlights impact of gender stereotypes in early childhood](#)

A study on the impact of gender stereotypes in early childhood has been published by the Commission on Gender Stereotypes in Early Childhood. Unlimited Potential sets out how gender expectations significantly limit children, finding that stereotypes contribute towards mental health issues among children and young people, girls' problems with body image and eating disorders, higher male suicide rates and violence against women and girls.



Education

[Study links presence of graduate in early learning with improved outcomes \(England\)](#)

A new study suggests there is an association between the presence of degree-qualified staff in early education and children's outcomes as measured at age five. The two-year study, based on census data of 6 million children in private and independent settings over the past 10 years, found that having a staff member with particular qualifications corresponds to an improved early years foundation stage score. The study found that there is not a massive difference whether graduates are in the classroom or at leadership level, and that the number of hours children spend where a graduate is present made a crucial difference to outcomes.

[Study links early language learning to school performance \(England\)](#)

Pre-schoolers who spend more time discussing letters and sounds with their parents are better at reading and mathematics when they start school, according to a report by the Nuffield Foundation. The report has been published as part of the Liverpool Early Number Skills Project (LENS) at Liverpool John Moores University, which examines the impact of the home learning environment from pre-school to Year 2.

Justice

[CYCJ report calls for 'radical re-shaping' of justice system for children](#)

A report calling for a "radical re-shaping" of Scotland's justice system has been published by the Children & Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ). 'Use and impact of bail and remand with children in Scotland' shares findings from a small nationwide study undertaken by CYCJ on the use of bail and remand with children in Scotland, drawing upon the experience of children, families and professionals. The report argues that the changes that have been observed in the adult justice system are no longer sufficient to ensure procedural justice for children in conflict with the law, and propose that a more "radical shake up" of the system is needed.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[New fund to support care experienced young people](#)

A new fund aimed at supporting young people with care experience to make choices about their future has been launched by the Life Changes Trust. The Individual Grants initiative is designed to encourage young people with care experience to take steps to achieve their full potential and to support them to live the life they want.

[Guidance for family contact during the pandemic](#)

The Scottish Government has published guidance for arranging contact between looked after and accommodated children and young people and their families in local authority premises, community settings or private dwellings. This guidance should be read by managers, social workers and social care providers in conjunction with the



approach for home visiting in [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safe and ethical social work practice](#). In addition, the collaborative document published by Social Work Scotland, [SWS Contact Framework](#), sets out the principles and framework within which decision makers can consider each child's individual needs and circumstances in the context of public health measures.

[Fostering Network calls for national allowance for kinship carers and foster carers](#)

The Fostering Network has called for the introduction of a new national allowance for kinship carers and foster carers. The charity said the move would honour a prior commitment and bring Scotland into line with the rest of the UK.

Other Health and Social Care

[SSSC publishes annual report](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has published its Annual Report for 2019-20. The report is the SSSC's final annual report of its 2017-2020 strategy and sets out achievements its four strategic outcomes.

[Play Council and Play Scotland AGM on 23 January](#)

The Play Council and Play Scotland AGM will be held online on 23 January. The agenda includes presentations by Professor Helen Dodd and Dr Susan Elsley, with topics including the importance of play and the review of Scotland's Play Strategy.

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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