



COVID-19 - General

[First Minister announces initial plans to lift restrictions](#)

The Scottish Government has updated COVID-19 Strategic Framework to set out early priorities for gradually easing measures when conditions allow. Conditions for easing, rather than fixed dates, have been provided to reflect the ongoing uncertainties of the crisis. The First Minister confirmed that Scotland will remain in Level 4 but some gradual easings will be allowed when data indicates it is safe to proceed. These include, following a review on 15 March, the second phase of school reopening and the easing of some socialising rules, to allow outdoor meetings of four people from two households. Further reviews are expected to take place every three weeks, with plans to remove the stay at home requirement around 5 April. Scotland will return to geographically variable levels at the end of April.

[Findings from survey on impact of pandemic on children aged 2-7](#)

Findings from the first round of a study into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young children have been published by Public Health Scotland. A survey in June-July 2020 sought to find out how children in Scotland aged 2–7 years had been affected by the pandemic, covering key behaviours, children’s play and learning, use of outdoor spaces and social interactions, and the experience of parents and carers. The findings suggest that the pandemic had a negative impact on most young families in Scotland, particularly those who were already experiencing challenging circumstances due to income, family composition or family health.

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[Priority group 6 receive vaccine appointments](#)

The COVID-19 vaccine programme entered the next phase this week as the Scottish Government confirmed people in priority group 6 are beginning to receive vaccinations. The first to be invited will be people with conditions included on both the JCVI priority list and the flu vaccine list. They will be invited at the same time as unpaid carers who receive carers' benefits or who have been identified by GPs.

[Vaccine linked to reduced COVID-19 hospital admissions](#)

Public Health Scotland has highlighted research showing vaccination is linked to a substantial reduction in the risk of COVID-19 admissions to Scotland's hospitals. The project, involving Public Health Scotland, the Universities of Edinburgh, Strathclyde, Aberdeen, Glasgow and St Andrew's, is tracking the vaccine rollout in real-time. Among those aged 80 years and over, one of the highest risk groups, vaccination was associated with an 81% reduction in hospitalisation risk in the fourth week.

Child Protection

[Child abuse inquiry boarding school hearings to commence on 16 March](#)

Public hearings examining the abuse of children in boarding schools are to commence on 16 March, the Chair of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has announced. Phase 1 of the evidence, expected to conclude in early April, will hear from representatives of inspection and regulatory bodies, as well as individual boarding schools. Subject to ongoing public health guidance and physical distancing, hearings will take place at the Inquiry's hearing venue at in Edinburgh.

[Webinar to mark National Child Exploitation Awareness Day \(18 March\)](#)

An online seminar on child criminal exploitation, serious and organised crime and child protection is to be held to mark [National Child Exploitation Awareness Day](#) on 18 March. The event, presented by the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ), will feature justice academics Professor Sean Redmond (University of Limerick) and Dr Paul Rigby (University of Stirling), who will discuss child protection responses to Child Criminal Exploitation, Serious and Organised Crime and child trafficking in Ireland, Scotland and internationally.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Letter to ELC providers on routine staff testing programme](#)

The Scottish Government has written to all day care of children providers to provide information on COVID-19 testing for early learning and childcare (ELC) staff. The first phase of the routine testing programme began on 22 February and will apply to ELC and school-aged childcare settings which are attached to schools. Those settings within the scope of the first phase will have received communications through their school or local authority. A [letter](#) has also been issued to childminders.



[Campaign launched to help parents abide by restrictions during phased ELC return](#)

A campaign aimed at helping parents to abide by all current restrictions throughout the phased return to schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) has been launched by Parent Club. The key messages are: Adults wear face coverings at drop off/pick up; Stick to one adult at pick up/drop off; Adults keep 2 metres apart; Avoid car sharing; Self-isolate if anyone in your household has symptoms.

[Shetland childcare provider wins business award](#)

A childcare provider based in Shetland has won a business award in recognition of how it responded to the challenges of coronavirus, Children in Scotland has highlighted. Hame Fae Hame, based in Scalloway, won the Times/Lloyds Banking Group Small Business of 2020 Award for the creative and robust way it responded to the pandemic. The centre is supported by the Access to Childcare Fund, which is funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Children in Scotland.

Education

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

Statistics on the initial destinations and attainment of 2019-20 school leavers have been published by the Scottish Government. The results show that: 95.8% of school leavers gained one pass or more at SCQF Level 4 (e.g. National 4) or better; 85.7% of school leavers gained one pass or more at SCQF Level 5 (e.g. National 5) or better; 63.9% of school leavers gained one pass or more at SCQF Level 6 (e.g. Higher) or better; 23.2% of school leavers gained one pass or more at SCQF Level 7 (e.g. Advanced Higher) or better. The results also show that 93.3% of 2019-20 school leavers were in a positive destination three months after leaving school, a decrease from 95.0% in 2018-19.

Justice

[Findings from inspection of justice social work services in Aberdeen published](#)

A report into how well community payback orders are implemented and managed in Aberdeen has been published by the Care Inspectorate. Inspectors looked at how justice social work services in the area were delivering services for individuals who are, or have been, subject to community payback orders. Inspectors found the support provided by justice staff in Aberdeen is having a transformative impact on individuals subject to community payback orders.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[New quality framework for housing support services and offender accommodation](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published the new quality framework for housing support services and offender accommodation. It reflects Scotland's Health and Social Care



Standards, which are rights-based, person-led and outcome-focused. The framework covers a variety of service types providing a range of different supports, including offender accommodation and support provided to children and young people. The framework was originally due to be published in April last year but was delayed due to the pandemic.

[Ban on placing children in unregulated accommodation from September \(England\)](#)

A ban on placing vulnerable children under 16 in unregulated accommodation in England has been announced by the UK Government. The ban, announced in response to a consultation on reform to unregulated provision for children in care, will come into force in September. According to the UK Government, while independent and semi-independent provision can be the right option for some older children, children aged under 16 are too young for this type of accommodation.

[Westminster Committee launches children's home inquiry \(England\)](#)

An inquiry into children's homes has been launched by the Education Committee at Westminster. The Committee is likely to look at issues such as improving educational outcomes, disproportionately high rates of criminalisation and the quality of care, support and safeguarding for those living in children's homes.

Mental Health

[Campaign promoting infant mental health awareness to be launched](#)

A campaign promoting awareness of infant mental health and how parents and carers can support infants' brain development is to be launched, the Scottish Government has confirmed. The campaign will link resources and information on the Parent Club website's Wellbeing for Wee Ones hub and sit alongside the work of the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board, which is overseeing the expansion of mental health service provision for women, infants and families.

[Report on future of paediatrics predicts increase in mental health disorders](#)

An increase in mental health disorders and substance misuse among children is predicted in a new report on the future of paediatrics. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has published a vision for the future of paediatrics in the UK, projecting ahead to 2040. The report predicts continued reductions in deaths, illness and disability resulting from most major diseases, but "significant future increases" in issues relating to mental health, substance use and prematurity.

Other Health and Social Care

[Manifesto for Play launched](#)

A manifesto highlighting the importance of play for children's physical, social and emotional wellbeing has been launched by Play Scotland. Play Scotland's Manifesto for Play calls on all political parties to commit to supporting Ten Asks in 2021.



[Survey on levels of trauma-informed understanding](#)

A survey to establish current levels of understanding of psychological trauma across the health and social care workforce has been launched by NHS Education for Scotland (NES). The survey is part of the National Trauma Training Programme, led by NES in partnership with the Scottish Government.

[Ofsted postpones return to full inspections \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has decided not to restart assurance inspections of early years and social care services this term. The regulator had intended to resume routine full inspections from 8 March, after suspending them in January due to national restrictions. Ofsted will continue with regulatory work in relation to provision that causes concern, registrations and expansions to existing provision.

[Joint inspections of non-maintained childcare settings to remain suspended \(Wales\)](#)

Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn have issued a joint statement confirming that the current suspension of joint inspections of non-maintained childcare settings will continue until at least 31 August 2021. The situation will be reviewed in the summer.

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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