



[Covid-19 - General](#)

[Carers](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Early Learning and
Childcare](#)

[Education](#)

[Justice](#)

[Looked After and
Accommodated Children](#)

[Workforce](#)

[Other Health and Social
Care](#)

Covid-19 - General

[Update on self-isolation for health and social care staff](#)

The Scottish Government has issued an updated policy framework, setting out self-isolation guidance for health and social care staff. This is a result of changes to the Covid-19 self-isolation guidance for the general population, which applies from 6 January. The policy framework sets out the conditions that will enable health and social care staff who are Covid-19 index cases (confirmed as positive cases), or contacts of a positive Covid-19 case to exit isolation early, in line with updated guidance for the general population. The updated framework replaces the previous version dated 24 December 2021.

[Statement prioritises social care support](#)

The Scottish Government and COSLA have issued a joint statement on service disruptions caused by the prioritisation of social care during the pandemic. They explain why keeping life preserving services, including social care, open is essential and outline the work of Scottish ministers, COSLA and local partners to maximise social care support, calling for all public, private and voluntary sector services to make supporting social care a national priority.



Carers

[Funding package for unpaid carers](#)

A £4m funding package to expand support services to unpaid carers in recognition of the extra pressure they have faced as a result of the pandemic has been outlined by the Scottish Government. £3m has been allocated to local carer centres, £200,000 to the Young Carers Package, £377,000 to Family Fund support and £590,000 to wellbeing support services.

[Results of carers census published](#)

The second publication of results from the Carers Census has been issued by the Scottish Government. Covering unpaid carers supported by local services in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the statistics suggest there were 32,690 and 31,760 carers supported by local services in 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively. The most commonly reported impact of providing unpaid care was on emotional wellbeing, with around four in five carers experiencing impact.

Child Protection

[Joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Dundee](#)

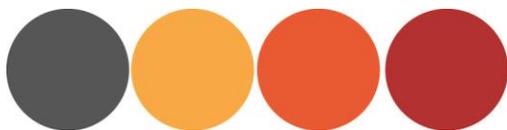
A report has been published following a joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm in Dundee City. The inspection took place between 12 July 2021 and 15 November 2021 and identified key strengths and areas for improvement in the way children and young people at risk of harm are supported and cared for in Dundee. Inspectors looked at how staff were working together across a range of services in the Dundee community planning partnership area, including social work, health and education staff, police officers, and children's reporters.

[Analysis of responses to consultation on child contact centre regulation](#)

The Scottish Government has published an analysis of responses to its consultation on child contact centre regulation. The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 gives ministers the powers to make provision for child contact centre regulation and to appoint a body for this purpose, with the Care Inspectorate the Scottish Government's preferred option for the role. Overall, there was majority support for the proposals outlined in the consultation, with respondents calling for regulations and minimum standards to be child-friendly and in line with the UNCRC.

[National campaign to recruit Children's Panel Members launched](#)

A national campaign to recruit Children's Panel Members has been launched by Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS). CHS is looking for over 700 volunteer trainee Panel Members from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflect the children, families and communities of Scotland.



[Campaign launched as 2021 judged worst on record for child sexual abuse online](#)

A new campaign to help parents spot the signs of sexual abuse has been launched as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) said 2021 was the worst year on record for child sexual abuse online. The IWF took action against 252,000 URLs which contained images or videos of children suffering sexual abuse, and investigated 361,000 reports in total, more than they dealt with in the entire first 15 years of their existence. A new campaign and website, [Stop Abuse Together](#), has been launched by the UK Government to help parents and carers spot the signs of sexual abuse.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Adult to child ratios and new notification during Omicron](#)

Like all services, early learning and childcare settings are operating under unprecedented circumstances due to the pandemic. The Omicron variant will be extremely challenging, particularly in terms of staffing. To support continued delivery of safe, high-quality childcare for children and families as we move through this stage of the pandemic, we have temporarily adjusted our policy position on adult to child ratios and introduced a new notification. High-quality experiences for children should be paramount. Adjusting adult to child ratios must only be used when all other options for additional staffing have been exhausted and a risk assessment has been undertaken. [Our guidance](#) gives information on the approach to risk assessment and the required notification.

[Letter issued to childcare providers on updated self-isolation policy](#)

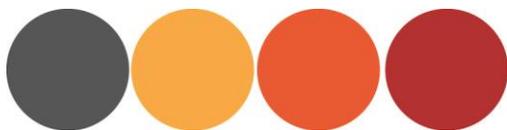
The Scottish Government has issued a letter to all registered childcare providers with information on changes to self-isolation policy that came into effect on 6 January. The notice contains information about: updated guidance for the early learning and childcare, school aged childcare and childminding sectors, the Care Inspectorate's temporary adjustment to adult to child ratios and new notification process relating to Omicron; updated information (warn and inform) letters; and general guidance on keeping safe.

[Consultation launched on legislation to help identify eligible families for funded ELC](#)

The UK Government has launched a consultation on proposed legislation designed to make it easier for local authorities in Scotland to identify families who are likely to be eligible for the offer of funded early learning and childcare for 2-year-olds. The consultation, which would enable particular data sharing between HMRC, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Scottish Government and local authorities, comes after research previously suggested that more eligible families would be likely to take up the offer if they were aware of it. The deadline for responses is 7 March.

[Ofsted withdraws document requiring staff health changes to be reported \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has withdrawn a document suggesting early years providers must report any change to an employees' health, Nursery World reports. The decision comes after



concerns were raised by bodies such as the National Day Nurseries Association that the requirement could result in sharing confidential information, which could potentially be discriminatory.

Education

[Guided play as effective for learning as tradition instruction, study suggests](#)

Learning through guided play can be as effective for younger children's acquisition of early skills as traditional, direct instruction, according to a new study. Academics at the University of Cambridge assessed data from numerous studies and sources which collectively documented guided play's impact on the learning of around 3,800 children aged three to eight. The study found that play-based learning can be just as effective as more traditional, teacher-led methods in developing key skills, including literacy, numeracy, social skills and executive functions. The findings also suggest that children may master some skills more effectively through guided play than other methods.

Justice

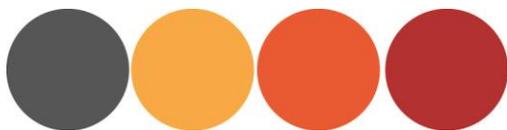
[Committee report sets out changes it wants to see in Scottish justice sector](#)

The Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee has outlined some of the short and long-term changes it wants to see made in the Scottish justice sector. The Committee held a series of hearings looking at justice issues including: the impact of Covid on the sector, youth offending, community justice solutions and alternatives to custody, and the misuse of drugs and the criminal justice system. The report sets out 60 actions for the Scottish Government and partner agencies, including ensuring under-18s are in secure care rather than HMPYOI Polmont, rapidly implementing the recommendations of the Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce, and ensuring a co-ordinated approach from the justice, social justice and health sectors to fill the service gap between what is currently being provided and what is needed.

[Guidance for social work and police relating to rise in age of criminal responsibility](#)

Guidance for social work and the police has been published as the rise in the age of criminal responsibility comes into effect. The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 raised the age of criminal responsibility from eight to 12, with an intention to protect children from the harmful effects of early criminalisation, while ensuring that children and their families receive the right support. The guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- [Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019 – Statutory Guidance on Investigative Interviews](#)
- [Age of Criminal Responsibility Act \(Scotland\) Act 2019 – Statutory Guidance on the use of a Place of Safety](#)
- [Age of Criminal Responsibility Act \(Scotland\) Act 2019 – Child Interview Rights Practitioner Code of Practice](#)



Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Views sought on cross-border placement policy position paper](#)

The Scottish Government has published a policy position paper relating to the cross-border placements of children and young people into Scottish residential care when a High Court in England or Wales has granted a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) order. The Scottish Government is seeking views on DOLS orders having effect in Scotland as if they were Compulsory Supervision Orders, and intends to lay related draft regulations in Spring 2022. The deadline for responses is 28 January.

[Updated Covid-19 guidance for residential and secure childcare](#)

Updated Covid-19 guidance for residential and secure childcare has been published by the Scottish Government. The guidance is for organisations and their staff working in residential children's houses, residential schools, secure care and residential respite/short break services for children and young people. It supports the management of these services, taking account of local guidance and public health guidance. A summary of changes is available [here](#).

[Paper suggests child poverty contributes to increase in children entering care \(England\)](#)

Rising child poverty is contributing to an increase in children entering care, according to a paper on Preprints with The Lancet. The study, yet to be peer-reviewed, looked at 147 local authorities in England between 2015 and 2020, linking data from the Department for Work and Pensions and HMRC. It found a 1% increase in child poverty was associated with five additional children entering care per 100,000, estimating that over the study period 8.1% of care entries (10,356 children) were linked to rising child poverty.

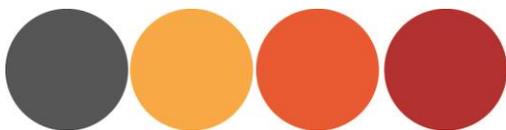
[Report proposes new care system to protect vulnerable teenagers \(England\)](#)

A report proposing a new care system to protect vulnerable teenagers at risk of exploitation and crime in England has been published by the Commission on Young Lives. The Commission, chaired by former Children's Commissioner for England, makes a series of recommendations, including the establishment of a programme that guarantees teenagers are not placed in inappropriate care placements, a ban on the use of unregulated accommodation for all under 18s in care, and a new 'Teenager in Care' package of appropriate and high-quality modes of care.

Workforce

[Staff joining social care to have fees paid by Scottish Government](#)

Entry costs for new staff joining the social care workforce are to be paid by the Scottish Government until the end of March to encourage more people into the profession. The scheme, which will fund Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration, includes staff



taking up direct care posts in adult social care, along with comparable roles in children's social care services and the justice sector.

[SSSC consulting on a register for the future](#)

The SSSC is seeking views on its plans to create a register for the future in a new consultation which runs until 14 March. Changes are being proposed to the register, processes and the qualifications accepted for registration. The proposed changes aim to make SSSC registration simpler and easier to understand for workers and employers. They will also help to make sure people know about the benefit and value of being registered and the standards, skills and qualifications needed.

Other Health and Social Care

[Care Inspectorate Chief Executive to retire](#)

Peter Macleod is retiring from his role as Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate on 10 February following a period of ill health. Peter has been Chief Executive since January 2019, having worked for almost 35 years in public service. Edith Macintosh, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Strategy and Improvement, will become interim Chief Executive until future arrangements are put in place.

[Committee begins evidence on health and wellbeing of children and young people](#)

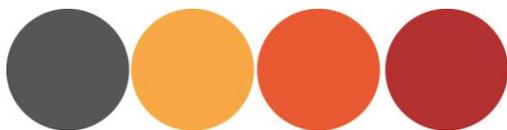
A committee at the Scottish Parliament has begun taking evidence as part of its inquiry on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The Committee is looking to address key issues affecting the health and wellbeing of children and young people, including child poverty and adverse childhood experiences, issues affecting care experienced young people, and mental health. The Committee held a roundtable with a range of stakeholders, including Perth and Kinross Council Chief Social Work Officer Jacquie Pepper, before a further panel session taking place on 18 January including representation from the Care Inspectorate, The Promise, Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS.

[Deputy First Minister sets out response to Supreme Court ruling on UNCRC Bill](#)

John Swinney has written to the Education, Children & Young People Committee, setting out the Scottish Government's response to the UK Supreme Court's judgment on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. The Deputy First Minister Mr Swinney reiterated the Scottish Government's commitment to the incorporation of the UNCRC to the maximum extent possible as soon as is practicable. He explained the Government would prefer to return the bill to parliament through the reconsideration stage and is considering whether that route offers the best approach.

[World Social Work Day 2022 – 15 March](#)

The British Association of Social (BASW) is to host a full month of activities and events to mark World Social Work Day on 15 March 2022. BASW national teams will



each be leading a week of events and activities throughout the month, with SASW leading activities in the final week, looking back and reflecting on the month as a whole.

[Consultation launched on open space and play sufficiency assessment regulations](#)

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation on draft regulations relating to open space and play sufficiency assessments. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced new duties on planning authorities to prepare and publish an Open Space Strategy and to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in their area for children. The consultation, closing on 31 March, discusses the proposed provisions and seeks views on draft regulations relating to the duties.

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.

It should also be noted that the Care Inspectorate has no liability in respect of the content of external websites which may be signposted on this site.