



[Covid-19 - General](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Disability](#)

[Early Learning and
Childcare](#)

[Looked After and
Accommodated Children](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Other Health and Social
Care](#)

Covid-19 - General

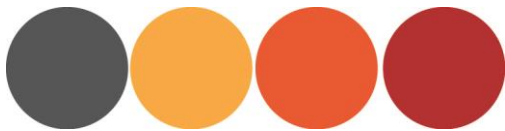
[UK Covid-19 Inquiry launches first investigation](#)

Baroness Heather Hallett has officially launched the UK Covid-19 Inquiry and opened the first investigation into how well prepared the UK was for the pandemic. The Inquiry Chair also set out a timeline for the next 12 months, with preliminary hearings starting this year and the first witness to be called in Spring 2023. Module 1 is examining the resilience and preparedness of the UK for the coronavirus pandemic. Module 2 will be split into parts and will examine core political and administrative governance and decision-making by the UK government, with Modules 2A, 2B and 2C addressing the same overarching and strategic issues from the perspective of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Child Protection

[SCRA receives more free books for children attending Hearings](#)

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has just received its second delivery of free books for children attending Children's Hearings. Children aged five and under are gifted with a book every time they attend a Hearing. SCRA has teamed up with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the Scottish Book Trust, with funding for the books provided by the Scottish Government.



[SCRA collaborates with Voice and Inclusion Project](#)

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) is collaborating with the Voice and Inclusion Project (VIP) as part of the Keeping the Promise work. The VIP is a project that invites young people who have experienced the children's hearing system to share their knowledge and identify challenges of the system. The project aims to help improve engagement of children and young people in the Hearing system by allowing them to highlight the changes they would like to see.

[Keeping the Promise helps to promote Who Cares? Helpline](#)

Keeping the Promise is working with Who Cares? Scotland to help them establish and promote their Helpline for care experienced young people. The helpline offers support and signposting around finances, benefits, housing, health, employment, education, and rights as well as advocacy and a listening ear. The new helpline is open to all care experienced people of any age across Scotland, from 12noon to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Disability

[Guide Dogs reopen Tech for All scheme](#)

The Guide Dogs charity has reopened the Tech for All scheme which gives children aged 3- 18-years-old with a visual impairment the ability to apply for a free iPad. The device has accessibility features built-in, and online guides to help get started.

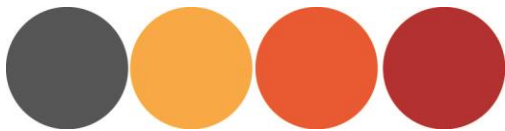
[Call for evidence on Down Syndrome Act guidance \(England\)](#)

The UK Government is seeking views on guidance relating to the Down Syndrome Act 2022. The Act aims to improve access to services and life outcomes for people with Down's syndrome. The consultation, closing on 8 November, seeks views on what should be included in guidance associated with the legislation. The consultation is open to people with Down's Syndrome, their families, professionals and charities.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Summer childcare costs increase by 5% across UK, according to Coram report](#)

Summer childcare costs across the UK have increased by around 5% since 2021, according to a report published by Coram. The report highlights the difference in summer childcare costs between UK nations, with all seeing an increase. England had the smallest rise at 4%, Scotland saw a 7% increase, while Wales had the highest increase at 8%. Meanwhile, 19% of local authorities in Scotland said the pandemic had caused an increase in price, while 12% of Scottish local authorities have enough holiday childcare for working parents, despite an overall increase in sufficiency of holiday childcare 'in all areas'. Among the recommendations in the report, Coram calls for local authorities to be supported to ensure they have a



comprehensive overview of the cost and availability of holiday childcare in their area to identify and fill gaps in provision.

[SOSCN compile advice for keeping children safe during extreme heat](#)

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) has compiled a list online of resources for keeping children safe during extreme heat. The resources range from the think-2-drink campaign as well as sun safety guidance from Cancer research, with SOSCN stressing the need for childcare settings to consider their staff as well as children in any decision making.

[Draft regulations laid on data sharing to support families eligible for funded ELC](#)

Claire Haughey, Minister for Children and Young People, has confirmed that the UK Government has laid draft regulations to allow for Scottish local authorities to receive data on families eligible for funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in their area. Writing to the Education, Children and Young People Committee, the Minister said the regulations marked “an important milestone in supporting as many families as possible to benefit from the expansion of 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare”.

[Children’s development still affected by Covid-19, reports Ofsted \(England\)](#)

Children’s communication and language development continue to be affected by Covid-19, according to a briefing by Ofsted. The report, based on evidence gathered from the 2022 summer term and discussions with early years inspectors, suggests that an increased number of children have been referred to additional support despite the length of the waiting list, children are still lacking confidence in social settings and there are some concerns around children’s physical development.

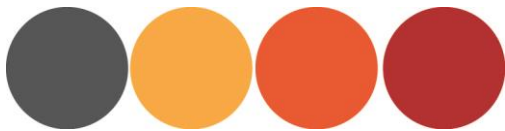
Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Barnardo’s and IKEA relaunch LifeLabs for young people leaving the care system](#)

Barnardo’s in partnership with IKEA have expanded an online hub for young people in and leaving care. The LifeLabs hub offers care leavers video content and augmented reality lenses through Snapchat to help support care-experienced young people’s mental health. LifeLabs allows care-experienced young people to connect, share experiences and learn together.

[Children in care being placed illegally in unregulated homes, BBC reports \(England\)](#)

Children in care are still being illegally placed in unregulated homes in England, including narrowboats and caravans, the BBC reports. Through their investigation the BBC found that a 12-year-old boy was placed at a campsite for a week, more than 100 miles away from his siblings and school, while a 10-year-old child had been placed in an unregulated home, which have been banned for children and young people under the age of 16. In response to a freedom of information request posed



to 141 local authorities in England, more than 50 admitted placing at least 120 children in unregulated homes.

[Care Standards Act regulations to include regulation of supported accommodation for 16 - 17s \(England and Wales\)](#)

Proposed regulations for the Care Standards Act 2000 will include regulation of supported accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds, reports Children and Young People Now. An explanatory memorandum highlights that the secondary legislation was “introduced to reform the regulatory care services in England and Wales including children’s homes, fostering agencies and voluntary adoption agencies”. The regulations will lay out the requirements to be met by supported accommodation, registration and inspection requirements for providers and [national standards for supported accommodation](#) which are currently in draft form.

Mental Health

[Research finds poor mental health hinders young from entering employment](#)

New research from Learning and Work Institute and the Princes Trust, supported by HSBC UK, shows that poor mental health is a factor in prohibiting young people from entering employment. The report highlights that in 2011 only 11% of young people that were out of work reported a mental health problem, compared to almost 30% in 2022. It further highlights that 25% of young people not in work, education or training suffered from mental health issues, compared with 9% of those that are in work or education.

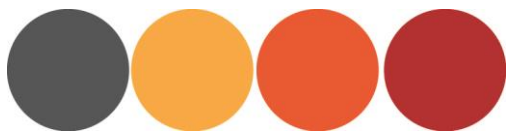
[Children and Young People’s Mental Health newsletter published](#)

The Scottish Government has published the Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Joint Delivery Board newsletter. The July issue includes information about the Mental Health Strategy Public Consultation, as well as new developments in relation to suicide prevention.

Other Health and Social Care

[Final report published by Scotland's Drug Death Taskforce](#)

Scotland’s Drug Death Taskforce has published its final report noting that there is a need to take urgent action to reduce drug related deaths. It notes that extra resource is required to bring about transformational change and calls for a cultural change to end the stigma and discrimination faced by those who use drugs and their families. The report also calls on the Scottish Government to publish a plan as soon as possible, but at the latest in the next six months, on how they will implement the recommendations set out in the report. The report makes 20 recommendations including that people with lived and living experience must be at the heart of the response to drug-related deaths, and that families must be involved in the process whenever possible.



[Charity launches 'Creating Happy Memories' play campaign](#)

A campaign to support parents and caregivers to engage in play with young children to support their development has been launched by the Family Action charity. The Creating Happy Memories campaign provides activities as well as guidance and practical tips from Fisher Price Play Lab child development experts on how to create engaging play spaces for children.

[10 Minute Shake Up launched to help keep children active over summer \(England\)](#)

Parents of primary school aged children across England are being encouraged to keep their children active over the summer holidays by using the 10 Minute Shake Up. The UK Government campaign, delivered by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, aims to inspire children and parents to get active together using Disney themed activities and characters to encourage children to get their one hour of daily exercise.

[Poliovirus detected in London sewage \(England\)](#)

Following the detection of poliovirus in London sewage, Public Health Scotland (PHS) is working with NHS boards on a precautionary basis to ensure vaccination and protection against polio and advising the public to ensure polio vaccines are up to date. This particularly applies to parents of young children who may have missed an immunisation opportunity.

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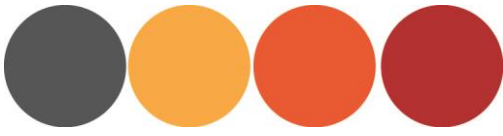
This weekly bulletin is produced as an update on the key issues concerning children and young people.

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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