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## **Covid-19 - General**

### [Face masks no longer required in social care settings](#)

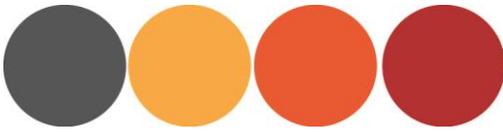
Guidance on the extended use of face masks and face coverings in hospitals, primary care and wider community healthcare has been updated by the Scottish Government. The recommendation that face masks are worn at all times is being removed for service users, visitors and staff in social care settings.

### [Covid-19 guidance updated for those on Highest Risk List](#)

Covid-19 guidance for those who were on the Highest Risk List has been updated to include further details on vaccination and amended information on testing and safety measures. The Scottish Government has also updated the protective measures and precautions section of its guidance for [care at home, housing support and supported housing](#).

### [Chair of Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry to step down](#)

Lady Poole, Chair of the Scottish Covid-19 Public Inquiry, has given notice that she intends to step down from the role. She will assist with the transition to her successor during a notice period of up to three months.



## Child Protection

### [Childnet publishes guidance for supporting children facing sexual harassment online](#)

Childnet has published a guide for supporting children facing sexual harassment online, reports Children and Young People Now. A research project into online sexual harassment among teenagers across the UK, Denmark, and Hungary, funded by the European Union, and carried out by Childnet, has found that online sexual harassment is widespread across the three countries, and that young people could be both victims and perpetrators. The charity's research found that 10% of UK teenagers had received sexual threats online, and a further 29% had witnessed it happening to people they know online. The guidance includes parental leaflets, for different age ranges, as well as guidance for foster carers.

## Early Learning and Childcare

### [Access to Childcare Fund 2020-2022 final evaluation report](#)

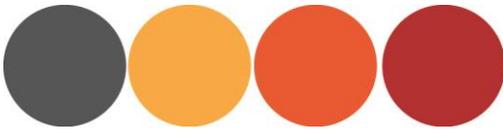
Children in Scotland has published its final evaluation report on the Access to Childcare Fund. The report finds projects supported by the fund opened up new work opportunities and reduced costs for participating families, making a difference to families' lives by bolstering child and parent health and family financial security. Over £2million was invested in 15 projects between October 2021 and March 2022, with the fund managed by Children in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. The report highlighted several recommendations, funding, and availability of places was mentioned as well as specialised services for children with additional support needs. Childcare was also highlighted as an important area that should be recognised within wider children's landscape with childcare providers included in planning services.

### [Scottish Government publish ELC 2022-26 plan](#)

The Scottish Government has published the best start strategic early learning and school age childcare plan 2022-26. The plan sets out how the government will harness the benefits of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) places and sets out the expansion for the places over the next four years. The plan has developed three outcomes to help children, families and communities reach their potential: children's development to improve and the poverty-related outcomes gap to narrow; family wellbeing to improve; and parents' and carers' opportunities to sustain work, training or study to increase.

### [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) Policy Statement](#)

The Scottish Government has published a policy statement for Getting it Right for Every Child, which provides an overview of the policy and legislative context and gives an outline of the core components of the policy. An easy read version of the policy statement has also been published, alongside statutory guidance clarifying how the eight wellbeing indicators are used in assessing the wellbeing of children and young people and an information sharing charter for parents and carers. Easy



read versions of the statutory guidance and the charter have also been published. A range of documents detailing practice guidance in relation to the approach have also been release

## **Education**

### [Charity survey shows lack of confidence delivery sex and relationship education](#)

The NSPCC has published data from a joint NSPCC/NASUWT survey which shows almost half of secondary school teachers don't feel confident teaching sex and relationship education classes and teachers want better support. Over a quarter didn't feel confident answering sensitive or difficult questions while 86% felt resources and training in the topic was lacking. 40% did not feel confident delivering lessons on pornography, less than a third felt uncomfortable delivering lessons on consent and only 19% felt very confident talking to their students about harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment.

### [Gaelic teacher recruitment below school demand](#)

The teaching of Gaelic in schools is in crisis due to a shortage of new teachers according to a study, reports the BBC. The study, carried out by Dr Michael Foxley and Prof Bruce Robertson, a former director of education at Highland Council and visiting professor at the University of Strathclyde, has been submitted to a Scottish Government consultation on Gaelic and Scots education. Dr Foxley and Prof Robertson said their study suggested there was already a recruitment crisis, and the situation was likely to get significantly worse, with rural and island schools being the hardest hit. They said a minimum of 135 new primary and 90 new secondary teachers would be required over the next five years to meet the needs of 19 local authorities already with Gaelic provision or planning to introduce it.

## **Health**

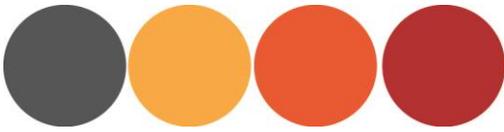
### [Early Years Alliance launches nutrition survey with LEYF \(England\)](#)

The Early Years Alliance and nursery group London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) have launched a joint survey about food provision and nutrition in the early years. The survey aims to gain an insight into food provision across the early years sector and the challenges associated with providing healthy, balanced, and nutritious meals for children. Responses to the anonymous survey will be used to support efforts to influence government policy and improve early years food provision and funding.

## **Justice**

### [CYCJ welcomes new associates](#)

Children and Young People Centre for Justice (CYCJ) has welcomed four new associates, experts in participation, children's rights, social innovation, and resilience from across the UK. The associates' scheme was created to broaden and transform Scotland's youth justice knowledge base. Although not direct members of the team,



Associates contribute to the Centre's practice, research, and knowledge exchange activities, in accordance with their skillset and areas of expertise.

### [Children's Commissioner publishes guide to involve children in decision-making](#)

The Children and Young Peoples Commissioner Scotland (CYCPS) has published a new guide to help children get involved in decision-making. CYCPS have used the child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE) which puts children's rights at the heart of public authority decision-making to help inform the guide. CYCPS have worked with the Children's Parliament, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights in Scotland to create [a user-friendly guide](#). Listen, engage, have fun, gives practical advice and guidance in involving children in CRIA and CRIE for leaders, policymakers, and practitioners. Children from three primary schools and one secondary school in East Lothian who shared their views and experiences were vital to making this guide.

## **Mental Health**

### [The Scottish Mental Health Law Review has published its final report](#)

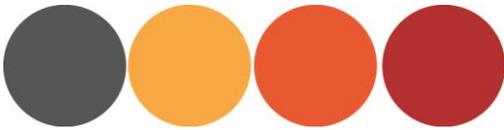
The Independent Review was tasked with improving the rights and protections of people who may be subject to mental health, incapacity or adult support and protection legislation because of a mental disorder, and the final report includes a number of recommendations to be taken forward. The Report notes that the recommendations for change made throughout need to be taken forward with full and equal participation of people with lived experience of mental or intellectual disability, including unpaid carers with lived experience of caring for someone with mental or intellectual disability.

### [Scotland's new suicide prevention strategy and action plan launched](#)

The Scottish Government and COSLA have published 'Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Strategy for the period 2022-2032'. The strategy sets out a vision for suicide prevention in Scotland over the next ten years and is supported by an [action plan](#) for the next 3 years, setting out the actions needed to support the vision. It presents seven guiding principles as a way of ensuring the effective delivery of the strategy and action plan, including considering equalities and diversity to ensure the suicide prevention needs of the whole population are met whilst taking into account key risk factors, such as poverty, and social isolation. An easy read version of the [strategy](#) and [action plan](#) are also available.

### [Study shows therapy for children under five years reduces mental health issues](#)

A new study produced by the Anna Freud Centre compiles a scientific review of international research which shows the positive impacts of therapy interventions with children under five-years-old and their caregivers. The research is the first of its kind to focus specifically on psychodynamic and psychoanalytic interventions and was commissioned by the Association of Child Psychotherapists (SCP). The systematic



review of 77 research studies, including 5,660 participants, shows that therapy in the very early months and years of life can help to prevent and reduce mental health difficulties both for parents and carers and their children by focussing on the crucial relationship between them. The research did highlight that most interventions were focused on mothers and infants, Fathers were sometimes included with mothers but there were no interventions focused solely on fathers and infants. The research also shows that there were no harmful outcomes reported, however did note that more research of its kind should be conducted.

#### [Universities told to contact students' families if they have mental health concerns](#)

Universities are being told to contact key family members, carers or friends if they have serious concern for a student's mental health or wellbeing, even without consent from the student, reports BBC. Universities UK (UUK) has said the strategy is to prevent student suicides, with students registering 'trusted contact' when they start university. UUK is hoping that the new blanket guidance of contacting families out with permission of the student will prevent student suicides should there be concern for their mental health and wellbeing.

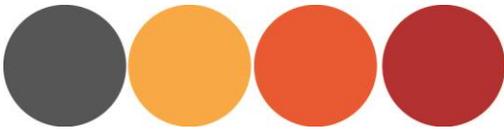
#### **Other Health and Social Care**

##### [Challenge poverty week 3 – 7 October](#)

Aberlour has produced a blog post in conjunction with challenge poverty week. SallyAnn Kelly, Aberlour Chief Executive highlights the challenges faced by families due to the cost-of-living crisis and also touches on the fact it is no longer an option to heat or eat as families are struggling to do either. Ms Kelly highlights research Aberlour have undertaken regarding the school meal debt families hold and she goes on to highlight that the problem will only grow during the cost-of-living crisis.

##### [RCN has notified NHS employers of intention to ballot members on strike action](#)

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Scotland has notified NHS employers of the intention to ballot RCN members working on Agenda for Change Contracts. Julie Lamberth, RCN Scotland Board Chair, said "strike action is the last resort for nursing staff; however, we have been left with no choice but to ballot our members". RCN notes that an indicative ballot during the summer showed that more than 90% of RCN members eligible to vote rejected the current pay offer.

**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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