

13 – 19 February 2023



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**Covid-19 - General**

[Impact of Covid-19 on speech and language](#)

Public Health Scotland has published research findings on the impact of public health measures during the pandemic on speech, language and communication development of children and young people. The paper finds language development can be best supported through a supportive communication environment in places where young children live and learn. On the situation in Scotland, it notes that Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) services continued to be disrupted even after the pandemic, due to infection prevention and control measures.

**Early Learning and Childcare**

[Care Inspectorate letter to ELC settings](#)

Jackie Irvine, Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate, has written to early learning and childcare providers highlighting ongoing concerns about children leaving ELC settings without an adult and incidents at mealtimes. The letter highlights the Care Inspectorate's practice notes, the SIMOA campaign tools and a reminder that all incidents must be submitted to the Care Inspectorate through a notification.



### [SCMA survey findings published](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association has published the results of its large-scale survey of childminding businesses. It shows 83 per cent of all childminders believe that cost of living increases are the greatest risk to their business sustainability. The report captures data on the extent to which childminders' businesses have recovered after Covid-19; the impact of cost-of-living increases on childminding businesses; the extent to which childminders can pay themselves the Real Living Wage; the level of additional unpaid hours worked by childminders; childminders' views on their business sustainability and where additional targeted support may be required.

### [NDNA cost of living survey](#)

The NDNA has launched a survey for the nursery and early years sector in England, Scotland and Wales on the impact of rising costs on childcare businesses and charities. The survey will run until 2 February.

## **Health**

### [Chair appointed for neonatal deaths inquiry](#)

The Herald reports that Healthcare Improvement Scotland has appointed Dr Helen Mactier, a retired consultant neonatologist, to chair the expert group which will investigate the unusually high neonatal mortality rate in Scotland during 2021-22. A total of 39 infants died between September 2021 and March 2022. The Scottish Government commissioned the review after internal inquiries by Public Health Scotland found no definitive explanation for the increase in deaths. The HIS review is at an early stage and publication of the final report is expected in autumn 2023.

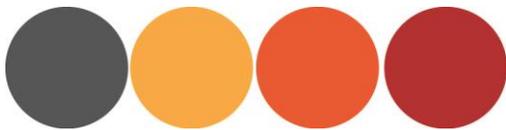
## **Looked After and Accommodated Children**

### [Ten per cent of children on fostering waiting list placed with families](#)

Barnardo's has reported that just 40 of the 400 children referred to its fostering service in Glasgow and Edinburgh have been placed with families in the last year. In 2020-21 the number on the waiting list for foster care was 461, but in 2021-22 this rose to 691. The number of foster carers registered with Barnardo's has fallen by around 12 per cent over the last decade.

### [Iriss evidence outline: siblings in care](#)

Iriss has published a new evidence outline, providing an overview of literature on how to best support the relationships of siblings in care. The outline focuses on how practitioners can best promote relationships when siblings do not live together, or how to identify, establish and repair lost relationships. It also explores how entering the care system affects sibling relationships.



## Mental Health

### [Research shows rise in antidepressant prescriptions for young people](#)

University of Aberdeen research suggests antidepressant prescriptions in NHS Grampian increased by almost 60 per cent in six years. The study, published in the journal BMC Psychiatry, found that overall boys were more likely than girls to receive a prescription to help with mental health problems. Boys received 73 per cent of all mental health prescriptions and more prescriptions than girls in primary school, mostly to treat ADHD. Girls had more prescriptions issued during secondary school, with mostly antidepressants being given.

## Other Health and Social Care

### [UK Ministers move to block Scottish Government's gender reforms](#)

The UK Government has confirmed it will use a Section 35 order to prevent the Scottish Government's gender recognition reforms legislation from gaining royal assent. Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack, raised concerns that the Bill could impact on equality laws that apply across the UK and said the UK Government could block legislation if it could have a detrimental impact on reserved areas. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said the Scottish Government is likely to seek a judicial review of the decision at the Court of Session.

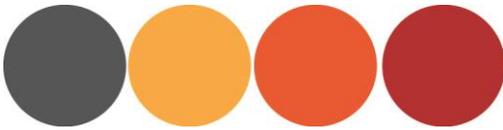
### [Cowan Grove Recovery House opens](#)

The Scottish Government has announced the opening of a Mother and Child Recovery House in Dundee. Cowan Grove is a national residential rehabilitation service designed to support women and their children through recovery from problematic substance use. Run by children's charity Aberlour, the house enables children to stay with their mothers during their recovery.

### [Inequalities report highlights health divide in poorest areas](#)

The Health Foundation has published an independent review of health inequalities in Scotland. The findings show that across a range of measures there is a wide gap between the health of people living in the most and least deprived areas, with people living in the most deprived areas increasingly left behind. Key findings show:

- Infant mortality is rising for the most deprived but is static or falling among the rest of society. In the last decade, inequalities have also widened for infant immunisation uptake, low birth weight and childhood obesity.
- Avoidable mortality rates among females living in the most deprived fifth of areas have increased by 8 per cent since 2010 despite reducing for the rest.
- Young to middle aged men are the most likely to suffer from deaths related to drugs, alcohol or suicide, with the exponential rise in drug deaths concentrated among men in their mid-30s to early-60s.



## 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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