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Covid-19 - General

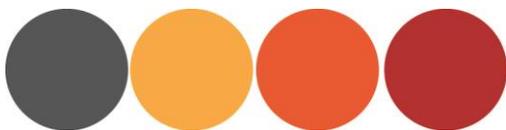
[Covid-19 Inquiry announces thematic approach to investigations](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has announced it will take a thematic approach to its investigations and hearings, giving priority to evidence from those most impacted by the pandemic. The themes are health and social care, education and young people, and finance, business and welfare. The Inquiry has also announced that it will hold its first public hearing this summer.

Disability

[Children's reporter announces neurodiversity champions](#)

This week is Neurodiversity Celebration Week. The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration has announced that 20 members of its staff are taking on the role of Neurodiversity Champions. The body's Disability Group has partnered with Salvesen Mindroom Centre to establish a Neurodiversity Champions Network. The Champions will help raise awareness of neurodiversity within the organisation through providing training and awareness raising to staff. They will also ensure that sensory tools, visual information guides and other aids to support people with neuro-differences are available and actively promoted within all Hearing centres.



[Expert advisory group makes recommendations on disability and carer's assistance](#)

The Scottish Government has published a report containing recommendations from the Disability and Carer Benefits Expert Advisory Group on the additional positive impact the disability and carer's assistance could make. The report provides six calls for action for Scottish Ministers and provides recommendations related to these actions including gathering research to better understand the needs of carers and disabled people, and developing and implementing a Disability Poverty Action Plan and a Carer's Poverty Action Plan.

Early Learning and Childcare

[SCMA increase annual fees for childminders](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association has notified its members of a £4 annual fee increase, noting the association is using £17,000 of its own funds to reduce what would have been a £10 increase.

[Expansion of funded childcare announced for England](#)

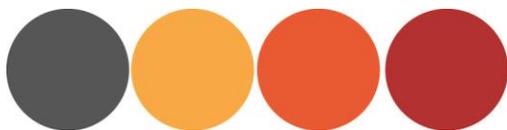
The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced plans for households in England, where all adults are working at least 16 hours per week, to be entitled to 30 hours free childcare for every child aged between 9 months and 3 years. This will be available for 38 weeks of the year to reflect term time. The reforms, announced in the Spring Budget, will be introduced in stages to ensure supply:

- From April 2024, parents of 2 year olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare
- From September 2024, parents of children aged 9 months and over will have access to 15 hours of free childcare
- From September 2025, all eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3 years will be able to access 30 free hours

Equivalent funding for the policy is expected to be announced for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Also announced in the Budget were [plans](#) to change minimum staff to child ratios for 2-year-olds. These will change from 1:4 to 1:5 from September 2023.

[Care Inspectorate report writing timelines updated](#)

Early Years Scotland has highlighted the Care Inspectorate's plans to change its report writing timeline for the new inspection year. They note that for inspections that take place after 1 April, inspectors will issue a draft report within 15 working days. Providers will have 10 working days from receipt of the draft report to return their error response form. Inspectors will have ten working days to assess if changes or adjustments are needed and update the report if necessary. The provider will receive a letter stating the evidence the Care Inspectorate considered, the outcome and if any changes have been made. The report will then be finalised and published on the [Care Inspectorate website](#).



Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Kinship carers urged to check Scottish Child Payment eligibility](#)

The Scottish Government has urged kinship carers to check if they are entitled to the Scottish Child Payment, after eligibility was expanded to include more of them last year. The call comes at the start of Scottish Kinship Care Week, which celebrates the role of extended family or friends who care for children when they cannot remain with their birth parents

[Ongoing study of siblings affected by separation](#)

The impact of sibling separation for looked after children and young people is the focus of new research being conducted by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Families Outside. The project team is coming towards the end of the data collection phase of the research and is looking to speak to children and young people who are care-experienced and whose sibling is or has been in prison or secure accommodation, as well as those with direct experience of being in prison or secure accommodation themselves.

Other Health and Social Care

[Children and Young Peoples Voices Matter progress report published](#)

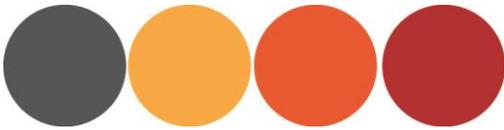
The Scottish Government has published a report on the progress made on the nine commitments agreed at the sixth annual meeting of cabinet members on children and young people on 1 March 2022. The report features details of the efforts of the Scottish Government to progress on the commitments such as continuing to engage and keep children and young people fully up to date regarding the UNCRC Bill, raising the priority of children's rights and ensuring the engagement of children and young people in efforts to tackle climate change.

[New inquiry launched into UK Government strategy for children's social care \(England\)](#)

The Public Services Committee has launched an inquiry into the UK Government's strategy for children's social care. The committee will assess the effectiveness of the strategy and consider whether it will meet the needs identified in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Report.

[Annual update report for long-term monitoring of health inequalities published](#)

The Scottish Government has published an annual update report for 2021 on the long-term monitoring of health inequalities across indicators such as healthy life expectancy, premature mortality, all-cause mortality, baby birthweight and a range of morbidity and mortality indicators relating to alcohol, cancer, coronary heart disease and drug use. The COVID pandemic is likely to have had an impact on the most recent data for most indicators included in this report. The Scottish Government has highlighted that, with the exception of the healthy birthweight indicator, significant



health inequalities persist for each indicator. The relative index of inequality (RII) indicates the extent to which health outcomes are worse in the most deprived areas compared to the average throughout Scotland, with the RII having now increased to its highest level since the start of the time series for both males and females. The absolute gap in health life expectancy also increased since the start of the time series for males and females.

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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