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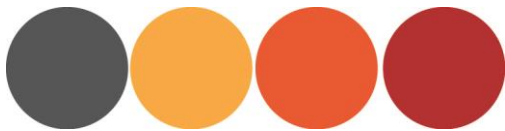
Covid-19 - General

[Care sector investigation opens in Covid Inquiry](#)

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has opened the sixth investigation: the Care Sector across the UK (Module 6) with public hearings planned for Spring 2025. Module 6 will investigate the impact of the pandemic on the publicly and privately funded adult social care sector in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It will consider the consequences of government decision-making – including restrictions imposed – on those living and working within the care sector, as well as decisions concerning capacity in hospitals and residents in adult care and residential homes.

[Health and care impact hearings to pause until February 2024](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has paused its health and social care impact hearings until February 2024. This is to allow for the UK Covid-19 Inquiry to begin its Core UK decision-making and political governance – Scotland (Module 2A) hearings in January.



Early Learning and Childcare

[Evaluation of Care Inspectorate ELC improvement programme](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published an evaluation of our Early Learning and childcare (ELC) improvement programme highlighting the impact and reach of the programme as well as recommendations for future development. The overarching aim of our Early learning and childcare (ELC) improvement programme is to support funded settings across Scotland to improve the quality of ELC and meet the National Standard, and focuses on providing targeted support for those settings currently, or at risk of, not meeting the National Standard through a programme of sessions and peer support opportunities. In addition to this, the programme provides a range of universal resources to support all settings with improving quality.

[Improving early child development](#)

The Scottish Government has published a factsheet on the 'Early Child Development Transformational Change Programme', setting out the meaning of early child development, and renewing the Scottish Government's focus on improving early child development by bringing together a programme of work to provide oversight and better integration of the policies that contribute to early child development with a focus on prevention, re-emphasise the importance of pre-birth and early years across all policy areas, and identify any policy and implementation gaps, informed by current evidence (including what is needed pre-conception) and build collaboration across the whole system to address them.

[Operating guidance for Funding Follows the Child](#)

The Scottish Government has published 'Funding Follows The Child and The National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers: Operating Guidance', which sets out how the Funding Follows the Child approach operates, including how settings meet the National Standard criteria and the role of local authorities in delivering the approach.

Education

[Scottish Government update on literacy and numeracy](#)

The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Jenny Gilruth, has given a Ministerial Statement to the Scottish Parliament on literacy, numeracy and the performance of Scottish education. Amongst other issues, the statement contains information on literacy and numeracy performance, teacher numbers, pupil attendance, and curriculum improvement with the first revision area to be maths. Along with the statement, the government has published [local authority stretch aims](#) for raising attainment for 2023-24 to 2025-26 and a [National Improvement Framework and improvement plan for 2024](#).



Equalities

[Children's rights Bill passes in Scottish Parliament](#)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Bill has been passed by the Scottish Parliament for the second time. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Bill requires Scotland's public authorities to protect children's human rights in their decision-making when delivering functions conferred by Acts of the Scottish Parliament. It also allows for children, young people and their representatives to use the courts to enforce their rights. The amended Bill means that public authorities will be required to comply with the UNCRC requirements only when delivering devolved functions conferred by or under Acts of the Scottish Parliament or under common law powers.

Justice

[Strategy to prevent violence against women and girls](#)

The Scottish Government and COSLA have published 'Equally Safe 2023 - preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls', a strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and girls, specifically violence, abuse, and exploitation directed at them because of their gender. The aim of the strategy is to work collaboratively with key partners in the public, private and third sectors to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

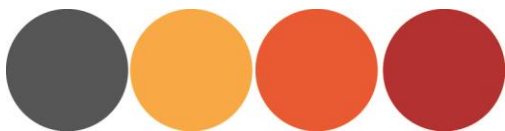
[Research into children with a sibling in prison or secure care](#)

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) has published the report of a joint research project by themselves and Families Outside, funded by The Promise Partnership, which explores topic and emotional impact on care-experienced siblings separated by imprisonment or secure care. The report, 'Staying Connected: Care-experienced children and young people with a sibling in prison or secure care', sets out the barriers to rebuilding and maintaining relationships such as physical distance, costs of contact such as phone calls, and parents acting as 'gatekeepers.' The main recommendation is that key agencies need to work collectively to identify care experienced young people who are separated, inform them of their rights, inquire if they want to keep in touch, input their choice into the care plan and implement the decision.

Other Health and Social Care

[Annual returns FAQs](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published information and guidance to assist providers in completing their annual returns. This year's annual returns will be available to service providers for completion between Monday 8 January – Sunday 18 February 2024.



[Concluding Celcis report on children's services reform](#)

The concluding report by the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (Celicis) into service delivery models and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and their families, which aims to inform the Scottish Government's decision about the future of children's services in light of the introduction of the proposed new National Care Service in Scotland, has been published. The concluding report identifies themes from across the findings of the study and determines that there are key elements which contribute to creating the optimal conditions for implementing effective, sustainable change to improve support and outcomes such as supportive trusting and consistent relationships between children, young people and families, and the practitioners who support them, and a sufficient and skilled workforce who have manageable workloads and receive the support they need from leaders at all levels.

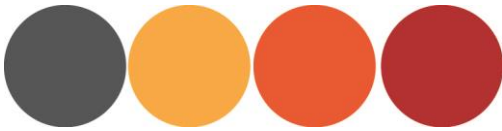
[Changes to Social Services Register](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is highlighting proposed changes to their Register in 2024. There are a number of changes proposed including reducing the number of Register parts to four, introducing ongoing registration with an annual declaration, three months to apply for registration, information available on the public register, updated Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and their Employers, changes to qualifications, a new approach to continuous professional learning, and a return to practice requirement for social workers.

Workforce

[Learner journeys of areas of work in the children and families workforce](#)

The Scottish Government has published 'Mapping Of Professional Qualification Routes and Continuous Professional Learning Opportunities relating to Psychological Trauma, in the Children and Families Workforce', which aims to map the learner journeys of five sectors of the Children and Families workforce including School Nursing, Health Visiting, Children and Families Social Work, Residential Childcare and Secure Care. Within these learner journeys, the study explored the extent to which learning around psychological trauma was already included or where there is potential for the National Trauma Transformation Programme (NTTP) 'Level 1: Trauma Informed' and 'Level 2: Trauma Skilled' practice level resources to be further incorporated.



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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