

15 – 21 December
2023



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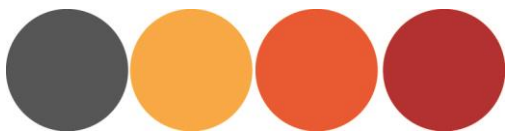
Early Learning and Childcare

[Evidence review on impact of non-parental childcare under age of 3](#)

An evidence review about the effect of early entry into early learning and childcare on children's developmental outcomes has been published by Public Health Scotland. The report, commissioned by the Scottish Government, looked at available evidence on the impact of non-parental childcare below the age of 36 months on children's cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development. The study concludes that the relationship between the age at which children experience ELC and their short- and long-term development outcomes is likely to be complex.

[Sustainable rates review for early learning and childcare](#)

A joint Scottish Government and COSLA evidence-based review on settings sustainable rates for ELC providers in the private, third and childminding sector has been published. Sustainable rates have increased by an average of 57.6 per cent since the expansion to 1140 funded hours and in 2022-23 were at a higher average rate than anywhere else in the UK. Overall capacity across the whole sector has been sustained during delivery of a near doubling in hours.



Health

[Consultation on gender identity healthcare standards](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has announced the launch of a new consultation on the draft standards for Gender Identity Healthcare: Adults and Young People. The draft standards cover 8 areas, including shared and supported decision making, reducing inequalities in gender identity healthcare services, and staff training and support. The consultation is seeking views around any wording that is unclear, potential gaps within the standards, and any additional references for considerations. The consultation will close on Friday 1 March 2024 with the final standards expected to be published in summer 2024.

Justice

[Evaluation of support for witnesses](#)

The Scottish Government has published a report which evaluates the effectiveness of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 at supporting witnesses to participate in the criminal justice system and to set out next steps for implementation. It notes the government adopted a phased approach to implementation to avoid overwhelming the justice system with increased demand for pre-recorded evidence, with the findings concluding that many more child witnesses are receiving the benefits of being able to pre-record their evidence ahead of trial and adult vulnerable witnesses in High Court cases also appear to be benefitting from a much wider use of pre-recorded evidence. Alongside the report, a three-month evaluation report of the act has also been published, which sets out the findings into the operation of the presumption in favour of pre-recorded evidence for children under the age of 18 giving evidence in the High Court.

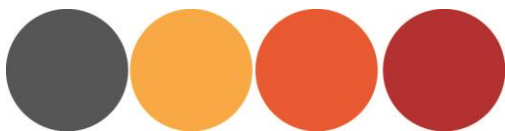
Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Parliamentary Committee writes to Minister on The Promise](#)

Following recent evidence sessions on the Promise, the Education, Children and Young People Committee has written to the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise Natalie Don MSP. The letter asks the Minister to reflect on the issues raised during evidence such as:

- Workforce: capacity, skills and expertise
- Early intervention
- Exclusions
- Change and sequencing
- Premature deaths
- Sibling contact
- Paving the Way Report
- Priorities

The Committee has asked for a response to these issue by 22 January 2024



Other

[Scottish Government's budget for 2024-25](#)

The Deputy First Minister, Shona Robison, gave a [statement](#) to Parliament this week on the Scottish Government's budget for 2024-25. Key announcements include:

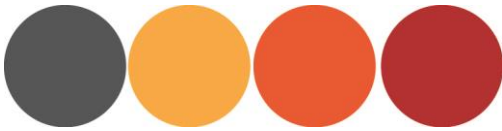
- The introduction of a new 45% tax band for people earning between £75,000 and £125,140. The top rate of tax will also rise from 47% to 48%.
- Provision of funding for local government to help finance a council tax freeze.
- Funding to assist the cancellation of school meal debt.
- £50 million to support care-experienced children and young people through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, as part of the commitment to keep The Promise.
- Continued investment in "a more flexible" childcare system and expansion of the childminder recruitment and retention pilots.

[Annual return deadline extended](#)

The Care Inspectorate has extended the annual return submission period for an additional four weeks, following feedback from providers and their representative groups about the pressures facing the sector. Annual returns will open on Monday 8 January 2024, with a revised deadline of Sunday 17 March.

[Guidance on Play Sufficiency Assessment](#)

The Scottish Government has issued planning guidance setting out the explanations and expectations of the provisions in the Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations 2023. The regulations were published as part of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which inserted a new section into the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, which introduces the duty to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children as part of local development planning.



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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