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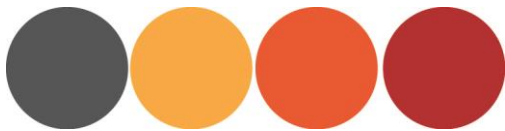
## Covid-19 - General

### [UK inquiry recruits partner to gather children's views](#)

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has appointed independent research specialists Verian to deliver a bespoke research project to collect the experiences of children and young people affected by the pandemic. The insights from the research will be fed into the inquiry as legal evidence to inform questioning and the Chair's recommendations for the future.

### [UK Covid Inquiry begins hearings in Scotland](#)

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry's Module 2A hearings begin in Scotland on Tuesday 16 January 2024, looking into core political and administrative governance and decision-making. It will include the initial response, devolved government decision making, political and civil service performance as well as the effectiveness of relationships with the UK government and local and voluntary sectors. Public Health Scotland has published its opening statement for Module 2A.



## **Child Protection**

### [Concerns over risk to young children online](#)

Barnardo's has highlighted new figures from the Internet Watch Foundation which suggest children under 10 are increasingly being targeted by paedophiles online. The internet watchdog received 392,660 reports of possible abuse images on websites in 2023, of which 275,655 were found to contain such material. Of those, 39 per cent were found to contain images of children under 10, up from 25 per cent in 2022. The Internet Watch Foundation has criticised plans by Meta to introduce end-to-end encryption on Facebook Messenger.

## **Early Learning and Childcare**

### [Update from SCMA on use of self evaluation frameworks](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has provided an update to members on its work to reduce the level of paperwork and duplicative quality assurance for childminders. The SCMA had previously engaged with the Scottish Government and others regarding the increase in work required by childminders under ELC expansion, including through self-evaluation against the Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework, Education Scotland's How Good is our ELC? and some local authority frameworks. A letter from the Scottish Government has confirmed that while How Good is our ELC? is a useful document to support practice, there is no requirement for childminders to use it as part of the self-evaluation process. The Government said it expects childminders to continue using the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework, until the implementation of the shared inspection framework.

### [Challenges in wraparound care delivery \(England\)](#)

Statistics from Coram Family and Childcare highlight the challenges faced by local authorities in England in delivering wraparound care. Insights into wraparound childcare, commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA), explores the views of key stakeholders, including parents, sector experts and local authorities, on current provision of wraparound childcare. Increased demand for services, paired with lack of funding, has led to a number of challenges for the sector.

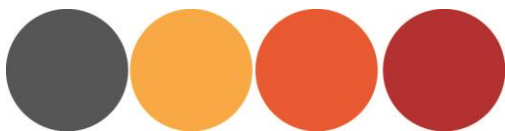
## **Equalities & Rights**

### [Royal Assent for UNCRC Act](#)

This week, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 received Royal Assent. The Act will incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. The majority of provisions will come into force on 16 July 2024.

## **Justice**

### [Briefing paper from Rights Respecting Group](#)



The Children and Young People's Centre for Justice has published the Rights Respecting Group Report. The group was convened in 2021, including children's rights experts from across England, Ireland, Jersey, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to consider the implications and challenges of UNCRC incorporation across these separate jurisdictions. The new report provides a summary of discussions within the group between May 2021 and September 2023, touching on topics such as police custody, children and young people in court and in custody, restraint and isolation in education and health, and restorative justice.

## **Looked After and Accommodated Children**

### [Minister calls on UK Government to introduce leave for kinship carers](#)

Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise, Natalie Don, has written to the UK Government's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, calling for the provision of family leave for kinship carers, an issue that is reserved. In the letter, she raises concerns that family leave for kinship carers remains dependent on the good will of the employer and that the lack of statutory leave has forced some kinship carers to leave employment. The Minister also highlights that the issue was raised by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

### [Majority of councils seeking to offer more reunification support \(England\)](#)

New research by the NSPCC and Action for Children highlights the impact of funding constraints and lack of recruitment and retention of social work staff on reuniting children experiencing care with their families. Local authorities in England were surveyed, with 78 per cent of respondents saying they would like to provide more support for families to help them reunite, than is currently offered.

## **Mental Health**

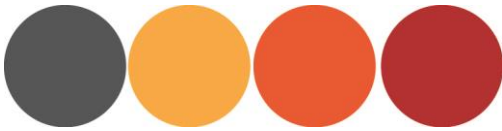
### [Youth Navigator mental health support programme extended](#)

The Scottish Government has announced the expansion of the Youth Navigators programme, which supports young people aged 12-16 arriving at A&E departments in mental health distress. The programme is delivered by Medics Against Violence, providing trained youth workers to identify the help young people need and provide practical support so they can access longer-term help. Scottish Government funding of £64,000 will allow the expansion of the service to University Hospital Wishaw and a pilot of the Youth Navigator programme in schools.

## **Other**

### [Extension of stage 1 for National Care Service Bill](#)

The Scottish Parliament has agreed to extend the consideration of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 to 1st March 2024.



## 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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