



[Covid-19 - General](#)

[Child Protection](#)

[Early Learning and  
Childcare](#)

[Equalities & Human  
Rights](#)

[Health](#)

[Justice](#)

[Looked After and  
Accommodated Children](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Other](#)

## **Covid-19 - General**

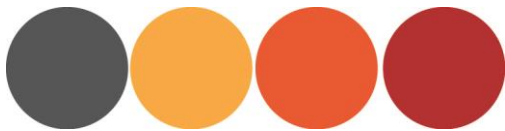
### [Scottish Covid inquiry to resume in March](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has confirmed that it will resume its health and social care impact hearings on 12 March 2024, continuing through to 28 March before a short pause over the Easter break. They are then scheduled to resume the week beginning 15 April and to continue until 31 May 2024.

## **Child Protection**

### [Joint inspection report on children and young people services in Moray](#)

A joint inspection report on services for children and young people at risk of harm in Moray has been published by the Care Inspectorate and its scrutiny partners, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and Education Scotland. A number of key areas of performance need to improve, according to inspectors, including ensuring staff spend adequate time with children and young people in their care and ensuring specialist support is available for those at risk of harm. However the report noted that the partnership's approach to identifying and responding to risk was helping to keep children and young people safe.



### [Refugee children forced to share rooms with unrelated adults, study finds](#)

Research carried out by the Refugee Council, Helen Bamber Foundation and Human for Rights Network suggests refugee children as young as 14 are being forced to share rooms with unrelated adults with no safeguards in place to protect them, Children & Young People Now reports. The study suggests at least 1,300 refugee children are being placed in unsupervised accommodation and detention after being wrongly age assessed when arriving in the UK, according to figures for January 2022 to June 2023.

### [Charity announces partnership to tackle AI-related abuse](#)

The NSPCC has launched a new partnership with Common Sense Media in response to a rise in the number of young people contacting Childline about AI related sexual abuse, bullying and misinformation. The partnership will advocate for children, making sure their experiences and safety are central to decision-making by tech companies, regulators and policymakers.

## **Early Learning and Childcare**

### [Summary report on ELC provision for 1 and 2 year olds](#)

A report prepared by Alma Economics, commissioned by the Scottish Government, provides a summary of mapping work to understand current ELC provision for 1 and 2 year olds. The final report offers data on: number of places per child in formal group based settings; number of service providers; staffing; and feedback from stakeholder engagement. Case studies highlighting good practice in various areas are also included, covering themes such as: meeting the needs of 1 and 2 year olds with ASN; providing a holistic approach; and family support programmes.

### [Scottish Government responds to parental employment recommendations](#)

Following the conclusion of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee inquiry on addressing child poverty through parental employment, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice Shirley-Anne Somerville has responded to the Committee's final report. In a letter, she sets out how the Scottish Government is already addressing some of the issues raised as well as planned action in response to the Committee's recommendations. She confirms that further detail on a new workforce plans for the ELC sector will announced later this year.

### [SCMA shares update on engagement with health visitors](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association has shared an update on its engagement with the Health Visiting Leads Network, following reports from members that health visitors in some areas were advising parents that their children should be in a nursery rather than a childminding setting. The SCMA recently presented at a meeting of the Health Visiting Leads Network and has offered to help improve understanding about childminding within health visitors across Scotland.



### [Action needed to support ELC and avoid widening attainment gap \(England\)](#)

A report by the Sutton Trust suggests the pressures facing the early years sector in England, combined with the latest expansion, could result in widening inequality and poorer educational outcomes for young children. The report criticised the qualifying criteria for access to expanded state-funded hours, stating it was likely to further widen the early years attainment gap.

## **Equalities & Human Rights**

### [Response to UN Human Rights Council review of human rights](#)

The Scottish Government has responded to the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the UK's overall human rights record, published in November 2022. Section 5 of the response focuses on children's rights and notes developments such as the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, the delivery of the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan, the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 and The Promise.

## **Health**

### [Good Food Nation Plan published](#)

The National Good Food Nation Plan has been published by the Scottish Government. It includes actions such as promoting breastfeeding, provision of daily portions of fruit and vegetables and milk to all children in preschool childcare, and provision of a free, healthy meal in funded Early Learning and Childcare. The Plan is now open for consultation and the Scottish Government will publish a statement summarising the consultation process and any responses received.

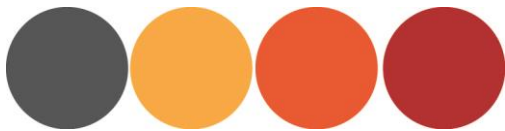
### [Rise in measles cases across Europe](#)

The World Health Organization has warned that urgent measures are needed to prevent further spread of measles, of which 42,200 cases were reported in 2023 – compared to 941 in 2022. The WHO believes the rise is a result of fewer children being vaccinated against the disease during the pandemic. In England, more than 3.4 million children under the age of 16 are thought to be unprotected and parents are being urged to make an appointment so their child can receive the MMR vaccine.

## **Justice**

### [Rise in cyber-enabled offences among young teens](#)

A new research report by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration highlights the number of Children's Reporter referrals involving cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent offences among 12-15 year olds. The report shows that although cybercrimes constitute less than 3 per cent of offence referrals received by the



Children's Reporter, there has been a notable increase in the number of cybercrimes being referred to the Reporter. Since 2018, more children were being charged with the taking, distributing and possessing of indecent images and the sending of non-sexual offensive messages.

## **Looked After and Accommodated Children**

### [National review of care planning arrangements for children and young people \(Wales\)](#)

Care Inspectorate Wales has published their national review of care planning for children and young people. The review was focused on the steps taken by local authorities before initiating court proceedings to ask for a care order to take a child into care, or for a supervision order to be made. The support given to families subject to legal planning and pre-proceedings was found to be extensive, meaning children and young people were supported to remain with their families where it was safe for them to do so. The inspectorate found that improvements were needed regarding parents' access to advocacy and delays in assessments were also found.

## **Mental Health**

### [Progress on perinatal and infant mental health set out in report](#)

The Scottish Government has published the final report of the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board and the Infant Mental Health Implementation and Advisory Group, which concluded in 2023. The report provides a progress update against various actions, including Mother and Baby Units, resources for women and families, education and training, and substance misuse.

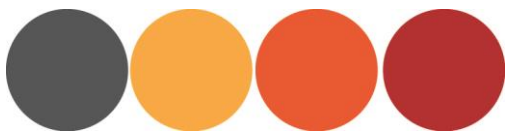
## **Other**

### [Stage 2 consideration of Children \(Care & Justice\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

The Education, Children and Young People Committee began consideration of the Children (Care & Justice) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2 this week. Natalie Don, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping The Promise, was in attendance. Among the topics covered were emergency placement in secure accommodation, rights of victims and the children's hearings system. Further amendments on secure accommodation, secure transport and cross-border placements will be considered at a future meeting.

### [Care Inspectorate Statistical Summary Report](#)

The Care Inspectorate Statistical Summary Report for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 has now been released. This presents data on the number of registered care services, new registrations and cancellations, complaints about care services and quality theme grades all by care service type and or service sector. The data is updated on a quarterly basis.



### [Update on changes to SSSC registration renewals](#)

The SSSC has informed employers that changes to the Register and registration process will mean registrants due to renew between 1 March and 31 May 2024 will have their registration extended for another year and do not need to complete a renewal application. When the updated SSSC Register comes into effect later this year, registrants will complete an annual declaration instead of a renewal application every five years.

### [Impact of lack of outdoor play on children raised by charities \(England\)](#)

A number of charities have raised the need to improve the outdoor environment for children, to ensure they have access to play, the Guardian reports. Ahead of a Commons Committee inquiry, charities such as Playing Out have stressed the need to make streets safer and neighbourhoods more child-friendly, to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children in England.

#### **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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