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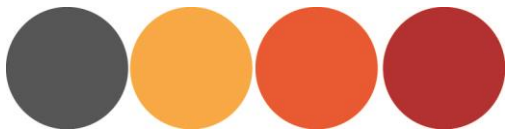
Covid-19 - General

[Preliminary inquiry hearings for education, business and welfare](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has confirmed it will hold preliminary hearings for Portfolio 4 (education and certification) and Portfolio 2 (business and welfare) on Thursday 19 September, rather than over two days as was originally envisaged. The scheduling of impact hearings remains unchanged and the Inquiry will begin its hearings on 4 November, investigating the impacts of the pandemic on Portfolio 4. When these hearings have finished, it will then investigate the impact of the pandemic on Portfolio 2.

[Research on policy and community responses to the pandemic](#)

A new research report commissioned by the Scottish Government reviews existing evidence from evaluations of COVID-19 measures. The aim of the research was to develop key principles for embedding evaluation more systematically into policymaking during times of rapid change or disruption. The research focuses on four themes: timing; equalities; evaluating emergency support measures and; evaluation design.



Child Protection

[Child abuse inquiry to focus on hospital-based long term care](#)

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has appealed for help with its investigations focusing on the provision of residential care for children and young people in any hospitals in Scotland which provided long term care at any time up to the end of 2014. The work is part of the Inquiry's Phase 9 work, which focuses on residential care in establishments for children and young people with long-term healthcare needs, additional support needs, and disabilities. Public hearings for the Phase 9 case study are expected to begin in spring 2025.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Three years since expansion of funded early learning and childcare](#)

The Scottish Government is celebrating the third anniversary of the expansion of funded early learning and childcare for eligible two-year-olds and all three and four-year-olds. Uptake of the 1140 hours offer for three to four-year-olds remained high in 2023, with 97% accessing funded ELC. Minister for Children and Young People, Natalie Don-Innes, reiterated the Government's commitment to work with providers and local government to safeguard the ELC sector and noted the ongoing testing of new systems of childcare through the six Early Adopter Communities.

[Institute of Early Education launched](#)

The National Day Nurseries Association has launched a UK-wide professional membership body for all individuals working, or aspiring to work, in the early learning and childcare sector. The [Institute of Early Education](#) aims to support the personal and professional development of professionals and improve the status and wellbeing of those working within the sector.

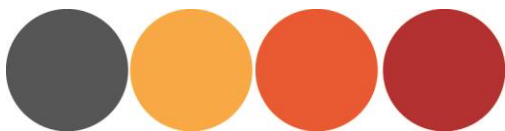
Health

[Unannounced inspections of maternity units from 2025](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland has confirmed it will carry out unannounced inspections of maternity units from January 2025, following a recommendation in its February report on neonatal death rates. The inspections will last 1-3 days and will look at care, staffing levels, culture and leadership, as well as speaking to staff, senior managers, mothers and families.

[Plans to strengthen tobacco legislation to include outdoor smoking](#)

The BBC reports on plans by the UK Government to introduce tighter restrictions on smoking outdoors, including in pub gardens, outdoor restaurants, outside hospitals and sports grounds. The measures will reportedly be included in reintroduced legislation which aims to increase progressively the age at which people can buy



cigarettes. The restrictions on outdoor smoking will target outside areas where there are large concentrated groups of people, particularly children.

Justice

[One year since opening of first Bairns Hoose](#)

Children 1st opened its Bairns Hoose one year ago and has highlighted that 169 children and 109 members of their family have received support. Earlier this month, a child gave evidence from the Bairns Hoose to court via a live link for the first time. Together with the University of Edinburgh, Victim Support Scotland and local partners, Children 1st continues to test, develop and share learning about how to transform justice, care, protection and recovery support for child victims and witnesses.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Webinar on the Promise in rural areas](#)

The Rural Social Work (Scotland) Forum, which includes partners from Iriss, the Scottish Association of Social Work, academia and local government, will hold a webinar on the Promise in rural areas on 26 September. The event will look at how the Promise is shaping social work in practice, and how Plan 24-30 can help meet the Promise vision, particularly in the context of work alongside children and families in rural settings.

Mental Health

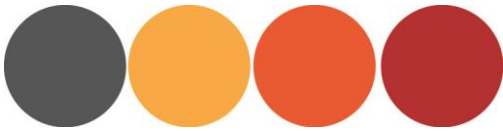
[Summary of consultation on draft national specification on eating disorders](#)

The Scottish Government has published a summary of consultation responses on the draft National Specification for the Care and Treatment of Eating Disorders. Following recommendations by the National Review of Eating Disorder Services, a working group developed the National Specification for the Care and Treatment of Eating Disorders in Scotland and a public consultation asked for views on the Specification overall, the impact of the nine Outcomes on the experiences and outcomes of people accessing eating disorder treatment, and on the proposals for implementing and monitoring the Specification. Overall, the key message is that there is widespread support for the draft National Specification, but for this to be implemented successfully it will require significant financial investment, increased service capacity, extensive training, and more guidance around how the proposals would operate in practice.

Other

[National Induction Framework for social care](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council and NHS Education for Scotland have been asked to develop a National Induction Framework for the social care sector. It is



hoped the Framework will help reduce the problem of duplicated induction activities. SSSC and NES will work with those in the social care sector to identify the core training and learning outcomes that people entering the workforce need. The initial materials will be tested with providers in spring 2025 to allow further design and development, with the aim of having the National Induction Framework in place by March 2026.

[Scotland's care workforce highest since records began](#)

The latest data from SSSC shows the social services sector workforce increased by 0.6% in 2023, mainly driven by increases in the housing support, care at home and nurse agency sub-sectors. The size of Scotland's care workforce is now at its largest since records began in 2008. Overall the three largest sub-sectors are housing support/care at home, care homes for adults and day care of children. Together these account for almost 79% of the workforce.

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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