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Early Learning and Childcare

[New guidance on management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services](#)

We have published new guidance on the management of medication in daycare and childminding services, which is designed to help service providers and Care Inspectorate staff ensure the safe and effective administration of medication to children in their care.

[Childminding audit by SCMA](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has published an Early Learning and Childcare Audit for 2024, including data on local authorities' progress in involving childminders in the delivery of funded ELC; current issues including tendering, childminder payment, the deferral year and the impact of local budgetary pressures on ELC; and SCMA's latest in-depth childminding workforce analysis and projections (based on Care Inspectorate data).



Education

[Ending school meal debt](#)

The Children and Young People's Commissioner has joined a group of children's charities, anti-poverty organisations and third sector organisations to call for an end to school meal debt and 'hidden school hunger', in a joint letter to the First Minister. Acknowledging the temporary School Meal Debt Fund, the letter calls for this measure to be made permanent and expand free school meal eligibility to all families receiving the Scottish Child Payment, with the ultimate goal of universal free school meals.

[Stage One report on Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

The Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People Committee has published their Stage One report on the proposed Education (Scotland) Bill. Overall, whilst the Committee agrees the general principles, it believes the Bill will require substantial amendment to ensure that the improvements envisaged by the Scottish Government in relation to engagement, governance, organisational culture and accountability, become a reality for learners, teachers and staff.

Equalities

[Complaints filed about treatment of young football players](#)

The Children's Commissioner and campaigning organisation RealGrassroots have filed complaints with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) about Scottish football's treatment of young players. The complaints allege that Scottish Football Association (SFA) and Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) rules that restrict youth players' freedom to move between club academies violate UK competition law and amount to economic exploitation of children, which breaches their human rights.

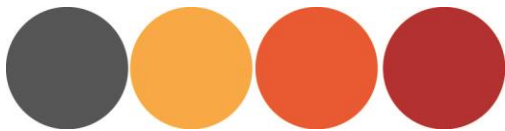
[NES call for views on future equality outcomes](#)

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) is consulting on its equality outcomes for 2025-29 and is inviting feedback through a short online survey. Feedback will help NES identify the most important issues to prioritise as part of its equality, diversity and inclusion strategy.

Infection Prevention and Control

[Young people encouraged to take up routine vaccines offer](#)

Public Health Scotland is encouraging young people to take up the offer of routine vaccines at secondary school, as recent data shows that uptake rates are yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. All S1 pupils are offered vaccination against Human papillomavirus (HPV), pupils in S3 are offered the MenACWY vaccine to help protect them from meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning), as well as the DTP vaccine



to protect against diphtheria, tetanus, and polio. PHS's national campaign, Chat. Sign. Protect., is helping to raise awareness and uptake of secondary school vaccines. It provides useful information such as videos answering some of the most common questions about secondary school vaccinations, information in other formats and languages, and advice for young people who are not in mainstream school.

Looked After and Accommodated Children

[Report on restrictive practices in residential childcare settings](#)

We have published our first annual report on restrictive practices used in Scotland's residential childcare settings, setting out data on recorded incidents of physical restraint and seclusion notified to the Care Inspectorate by residential care services for children and young people. The data is a baseline for future reports, and as at 31 December 2023, there were 408 services providing residential care and support for children and young people across Scotland, of these, 346 were care home services for children and young people, 32 were school care accommodation services (special residential schools) and four were secure accommodation services. There were 6,331 incidents of physical restraint and 729 incidents of seclusion in 2023.

Mental Health

[Information on access to school counsellors](#)

The Scottish Government has published 'Access to counsellors in secondary schools and children and young people's community mental health services: summary report - January to June 2023', analysing information provided by local authorities on the school counselling service and community mental health support in their area from January to June 2023. The information covers numbers of children and young people accessing counselling services and people accessing community mental health and wellbeing supports and services, number of school counsellors, outcomes, recorded referrals, and reasons presented for accessing the support and services.

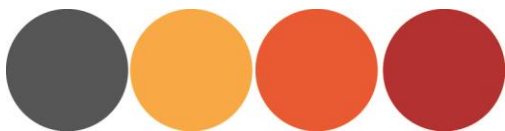
Other Health and Social Care

[Ofsted annual report on education and social care \(England\)](#)

Publishing their annual report, Ofsted are commenting that most children are well-served by the education sector and, in social care, life-changing work is being done for children and young people, however challenges remain such as education and care providers struggling to recruit and retain skilled staff.

[Chair of Ofsted Board to step down](#)

Ofsted has announced that their Chair Dame Christine Ryan will step down from the Board in 2025. The UK Government's Department for Education (DfE) will begin a



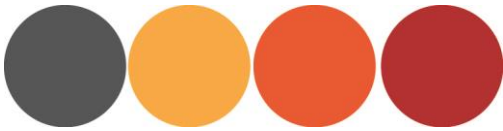
formal process to find a successor shortly, and Dame Ryan will continue as Chair during this process to ensure a smooth and orderly transition.

Other

[Scottish Budget for 2025-26](#)

The Scottish Government has published its proposed Budget for 2025-26. Finance Secretary Shona Robison announced:

- over £21bn for the Health and Social Care portfolio
- increased capacity and access to Primary Care to shift the balance of care to preventative and community-based support and “substantially reduce delayed discharges by working with local health and social care partnerships”
- £8m for the continued development of flexible, affordable childcare for priority families in the Early Adopter Communities
- £3m for a Bright Start Breakfasts pilot, which will test the delivery of free breakfast clubs
- funding to ensure all ELC and social care staff are paid at least the real living wage from April 2025
- a rise in the earnings threshold for Carer Support Payment and Carer’s Allowance to £196
- £2.5m to support actions within the Disability Equality Action Plan
- changes to income tax thresholds designed to protect low and medium-income earners
- funding to mitigate the two-child benefit cap for families on Universal Credit and £800m investment to ensure benefits increase with inflation
- a £30m Invest to Save fund, funding reform, drive efficiencies and improve productivity in the public sector.



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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