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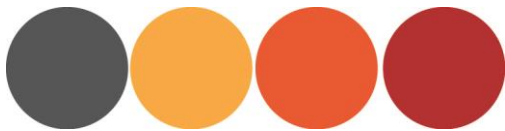
## Care Experience

### [Annual secure care statistics published](#)

Secure care statistics covering the period from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have been published by the Scottish Government. During the period, there were an average of 60 children in secure care accommodation, up 2% from an average of 59 children in 2022-23. There were 149 admissions to secure care accommodation during 2023-24, down from 154 the year before. On average, 48 children were from within Scotland (up 30%) and 12 were from outside Scotland (down 45%). Emergency beds were used for a total of 11 nights, continuing the noticeable reduction starting in 2020, with six residents using an emergency bed over the year.

### [Analysis of responses to Children's Hearings redesign consultation](#)

An analysis of responses to a consultation on Children's Hearings redesign has been published by the Scottish Government. The consultation, launched in 2024 received 105 responses giving views on topics such as the principles of a redesigned system, the role of the Children's Reporter and the Children's Panel. Common themes in responses included the need for a fair, open, trauma-informed process, ensuring children and their voices are at the heart of the system, and ensuring alignment with the UNCRC.



### [Call for unified legal framework on restraint and seclusion across all settings](#)

The Children and Young People's Commissioner has called for a unified statutory framework regulating the use of restraint and seclusion on children across all state care and education settings. The Commissioner joined with the Scottish Human Rights Commission, The Promise and the Equality and Human Rights Commission in writing to the Scottish Government to warn of a "patchwork" approach and highlight concerns that "the level of legal protection for a child in secure accommodation depends entirely on whether restraint takes place in the care or education part of the secure estate". They have called for the Government to:

- establish a short-life legal working group to develop a model for provisions which could be applied across different pieces of legislation
- support the principles of Daniel Johnson MSP's [proposed Bill](#)
- include specific provisions on reporting and notification of restraint, and inspections, within the Education (Scotland) Bill
- confirm that provisions on restraint and seclusion will be in the Promise Bill
- accelerate work on the legislative elements of the response to the Mental Health Law Review.

### [Ofsted research on council support for homeless children aged 16 and 17 \(England\)](#)

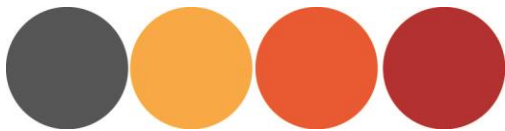
Research on how local authorities support homeless children aged 16 and 17 has been published by Ofsted. Among a range of findings, the report finds that children and young people need more information about their options, including becoming a looked-after child, when they present as homeless. Ofsted said it would consider how to get better insight from local authorities on inspection into whether homeless children are accommodated under section 17 or section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

### [Ombudsman publishes report sharing learning on fostering for councils \(England\)](#)

A report offering learning to improve council services for foster carers and their children has been published by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The report looks at a number of cases the Ombudsman has investigated in relation to fostering in England, highlighting the issues faced and offering guidance to help councils improve their services.

### [Bill to ban new placements in for-profit settings passed \(Wales\)](#)

Legislation aiming to eliminate profit from the children's care sector has been passed by the Welsh Parliament. The Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill will ban new placements in for-profit children's homes, secure accommodation or foster placements, other than in exceptional circumstances, in April 2030. The Bill also includes provisions designed to "bolster the functionality of the regulatory framework", including in relation to annual returns and registration cancellations.



## Child Protection

### [New child protection guides for children, young people and parents and carers](#)

New guides to help children, young people and parents and carers learn about child protection have been published by the Scottish Government. The guides, available on the Keeping Children Safe in Scotland website, provide age-appropriate information for anyone who may become involved in child protection processes in Scotland. The guides were developed in consultation with children, young people and families in Scotland with experience of care and protection, as well as practitioners from police, social work, health, education services and the third sector.

### [Measures to tackle child exploitation in Crime and Policing Bill \(England\)](#)

Measures to tackle the grooming and exploitation of children are included in proposed new legislation introduced by the UK Government. The Crime and Policing Bill will create a new offence of child criminal exploitation (CCE) and the power for a court to make a CCE prevention order. The Bill will also create a statutory aggravating factor that will require sentencing courts to treat grooming behaviour as an aggravating factor when considering the seriousness of specified child sex offences.

## Early Learning and Childcare

### [Latest report from Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare published](#)

A report on the fifth phase of the Scottish Study of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) has been published by the Scottish Government. The latest report of the Study, a key part of the Scottish Government's strategy for evaluation of the ELC expansion, focuses on four and five year olds who are accessing up to 1,140 hours of funded ELC. Key findings include:

- 20% of households paid for additional hours at the participating ELC setting on top of those that were funded, while 18% attended the setting for fewer than 22 hours a week.
- Around a third of children (37%) also received (formal or informal) childcare from a provider other than the participating ELC setting.
- Most parents engaged with the ELC setting to some extent, with 96% having discussed their child's progress with staff.
- Parents saw a lot of advantages in having their four- or five-year-old in ELC, including it being good for them to interact with other children (99%), good for their independence/confidence (96%), because they enjoy it (94%), and because it enables parents to work, study or train (80%).

### [Guidance for setting sustainable rates for funded ELC in 25/26](#)

Guidance for setting sustainable rates for the delivery of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in 2025-26 has been published by the Scottish Government. The



guidance aims to provide a “consistent and transparent approach” for passing on the funding for local authorities to enable childcare workers delivering funded ELC to be paid at least the new real Living Wage rate of £12.60 per hour from April 2025.

#### [NDNA appoints new Chief Executive](#)

The National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) has announced the appointment of Tim McLachlan as its new Chief Executive as Purnima Tanuku CBE moves to an Executive Chair role at the organisation. Mr McLachlan joins from the Institute of Food Science and Technology and will take up his new post on 31 March.

#### [Call for stronger regulatory measures for nannies](#)

The National Nanny Association has called for the implementation of robust regulatory measures for nannies after a judge named a private maternity nurse who was found responsible for 20 separate injuries on newborn twins, Nursery World reports. The Association reiterated its call for mandatory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all individuals working closely with children under its [Road to Nanny Regulation](#) campaign, which it launched in 2023.

### **Justice**

#### [Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour reports](#)

The findings of the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) has been published by the Scottish Government. The group, co-chaired by Fiona Dyer and Lorraine Gillies, set out a series of five recommendations and 45 actions for strategic and sustainable cross-cutting approaches focusing on: prevention and early intervention resolutions; partnerships; and support for victims, communities and people involved with antisocial behaviour ASB.

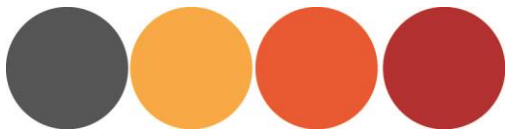
#### [Independent review of sentencing and penal policy](#)

The Scottish Government has announced the Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission, to be chaired by Martyn Evans, former Chair of the Scottish Police Authority. The independent Commission will review sentencing and penal policy and identify the most effective ways to address offending behaviour, to reduce crime and lower the number of victims. The Commission’s initial focus will be on community sentencing, bail and remand, and release from custody, with a final report and recommendations to be published by the end of this year.

### **Mental Health**

#### [HIS and Mental Welfare Commission to carry out joint visits following Skye House](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) and the Mental Welfare Commission are to carry out additional visits to children’s psychiatric units, Mental Wellbeing Minister Maree Todd has announced. Confirmation came in a statement to Parliament following a BBC Disclosure programme regarding the care and treatment of young



people at Skye House specialist NHS unit in Glasgow. Ms Todd said she had asked HIS and the Mental Welfare Commission to carry out a series of joint visits to all adolescent and child in-patient units to provide assurance and make recommendations for improvement.

#### [Mental Welfare Commission to host Zoom calls to inform carer themed report](#)

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland is holding a series of Zoom calls for family members and carers, of all ages, across Scotland. The three 60-minute virtual events will provide an opportunity to discuss key issues for people who provide care and support for individuals who have a mental illness, learning disability, autism, dementia or related conditions. The comments and feedback from the events will be incorporated into a carer themed visit report to be published in Summer 2025.

### **Workforce**

#### [Guidance on forthcoming PVG scheme changes](#)

Disclosure Scotland has published guidance on the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 which will see the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme become a legal requirement from 1 April. New regulated roles will be introduced, including sports and talent agents or scouts who work with children and non-clinical hospital or hospice staff/volunteers who have unsupervised contact with children and/or protected adults. There will be a 3 month grace period after the PVG scheme becomes a legal requirement meaning that from 1 July onwards, it will become a criminal offence for individuals to carry out a regulated role if they are not a member of the PVG scheme, and organisations to offer a regulated role to an individual who is not a member of the PVG scheme.

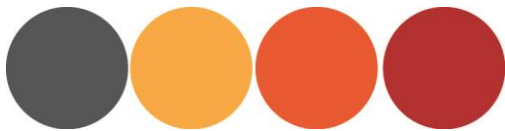
#### [Changes to qualification conditions for SSSC registration from June](#)

A three-year timescale for new registrants in the social care workforce to gain their qualification for registration is to be introduced in June. The change is part of broader changes introduced last year by the Scottish Social Care Council (SSSC) but was delayed in response to concerns from employers and stakeholders. Registrants with an existing qualification condition will still have the same length of time to gain their qualification, while those who need to gain two qualifications will still have five years.

### **Other Health and Social Care**

#### [Impact evaluation report on year two of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding](#)

An impact evaluation report on year two of Whole Family Wellbeing Funding has been published by the Scottish Government. The funding aims to create local system changes, mainly through Children's Services Planning Partnerships, supporting the goal to reduce the need for crisis intervention in families, and to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention. The evaluation found varied achievement of different outcomes, with outcomes relating to availability and access to child and family centred service design partially achieved, while there was less achievement



on the whole systems approach and leadership, workforce, and the culture core. There was no evidence of outcomes worsening.

#### [Consultation on proposals to mitigate two-child Universal Credit limit](#)

A consultation on proposals to mitigate the two-child limit on Universal Credit (UC) has been launched by the Scottish Government. The consultation sets out the intention to develop systems to alleviate the impact of the two-child cap in Scotland from April 2026 by making a flat-rate payment equal to the UC child element for each third and subsequent child in Scotland. The consultation closes on 18 April.

#### [Evelyn McPhail appointed interim Chair of HIS](#)

The appointment of Evelyn McPhail as interim Chair of Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has been confirmed by the Scottish Government. Ms McPhail takes on the role, running for one year from 1 April, in her capacity as vice chair of HIS. She worked in the NHS and health and social care sector for 38 years until her retirement in 2019.

#### [Scottish Budget for 2025-26 approved by MSPs](#)

The Scottish Government's Budget for 2025-26 has been approved by the Scottish Parliament. The Budget, backed by the Greens, the Liberal Democrats and Alba, includes £21.7bn for health and social care, and funding to ensure all social care and early learning and childcare staff are paid at least the real living wage from April 2025.

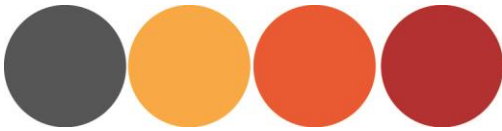
#### [Lords amendments introduce exemptions to higher National Insurance rates](#)

The UK Government's National Insurance Contributions (Secondary Class 1 Contributions) Bill was examined by the House of Lords this week at report stage. Members of the Lords voted for a number of amendments, defeating the Government, which will ensure health and care providers are exempt from higher rates. Members also agreed charities with annual revenue less than £1 million should be exempt while employment allowance in the early years sector will be increased to £20,000. The House of Lords will consider the Bill at third reading stage next week.

#### [Play Commission publishes interim findings \(England\)](#)

A Commission established to spark a national conversation about how to encourage and support children and families in England to play more has published its interim findings. The Raising the Nation Play Commission is investigating the benefits of, and barriers to, play through a range of evidence taking activities and by consulting children, young people and families. The Commission makes a number of recommendations, including that the UK Government take inspiration from the respective play strategies and play sufficiency duties in Wales and Scotland.





## 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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