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Additional Support Needs

[Concern over cuts to additional support needs support](#)

The Scottish Children's Services Coalition has raised concerns about proposed funding cuts for specialist support provided to children and young people with additional support needs (ASN). The Coalition has highlighted a fall in the number of ASN teachers since 2014, compared with a rise in the number of pupils requiring support. They are calling for greater resourcing from both the Scottish Government and local authorities to ensure that those with ASN are getting the care and support that they need.



Care Experience

[Focus on Change, The Promise strategic workplan launched](#)

The Promise Scotland has launched its new strategic work plan, Focus on Change. The plan covers the work of the organisation over the next 18 months, as it continues to support the changes recommended by Independent Care Review and monitor Scotland's progress to Keep The Promise. The plan sets out how The Promise Scotland will deliver across four key areas: the Plan 24-30; The Promise Story of Progress; policy and parliamentary engagement; and support to the Oversight Board and Independent Strategic Advisor.

[Public Health Scotland publishes its corporate parenting plan](#)

Public Health Scotland has published its second Corporate Parenting and Vision Plan set to cover 2025 to 2028, and are aiming to integrate their Corporate Parenting Strategy into a wider body of work relating to Scotland's promise to care-experienced children and young people that they will grow up loved, safe, and respected.

Child Protection

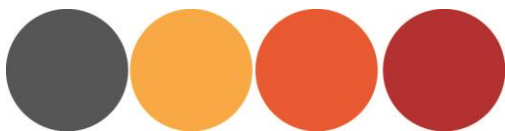
[Annual child protection statistics](#)

The Scottish Government has published child protection statistics for 2023-24, which include data on children subject to child protection processes. As of July 2024, there were 2,129 children on the child protection register, representing a 26 per cent increase since 2014. The most common concerns identified at child protection planning meetings for children registered during the year were domestic abuse, neglect, parental substance use, parental mental ill health and emotional abuse.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Choosing a quality childminder](#)

Listen to the Care Inspectorate's latest podcast with our Chief Executive Jackie Irvine in conversation with Audrey Donnan, chief inspector for early learning and childcare, about choosing a quality childminder. The Care Inspectorate is here to provide you with the information and support you need to make an informed choice. We regulate and inspect childminding services across Scotland to ensure they meet high standards of care, in line with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).



Education

[Film showcases work of Young Advisors in schools](#)

The Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland has announced a new film which showcases the work of Young Advisors in schools. The Young Advisors have been working alongside the Commissioner to further explore children and young people's experiences, and the changes they want to see in education. The film shows how they used participative methods to help children express their views through work including mapping out dream schools.

Justice

[Ministerial statement on secure care capacity](#)

During a Ministerial statement to the Scottish Parliament, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise, Natalie Don-Innes, outlined actions to address secure accommodation capacity since her statement in January. Ms Don-Innes noted strain on capacity in recent months, attributing these to four main factors: a pause on admissions to St Mary's Kenmure; complexity of some individual children's needs; increased duration of some placements; and cross-border placements. The reforms contained within the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act also required a period of adjustment, the Minister said.

Reflecting on the improvement notice served by the Care Inspectorate to St Mary's Kenmure following October's inspections, the Minister reminded members that the pause in admissions was lifted in December but capacity was capped at 12. The Minister noted a further visit on 13 March by the Care Inspectorate and confirmed the improvement notice had been lifted, with focus now on making further requirements and moving towards sustainable, restored capacity as soon as safely possible. This work includes doubling staff capacity and working to fill specialist roles. The Minister said she'd provide a further update to Parliament before summer recess.

Play

[Play Vision Statement and Action Plan for Scotland](#)

The Scottish Government has published its Play Vision Statement and Action Plan for 2025-2030. It includes the Play Theory of Change, which is intended to provide a framework for further improvement in play opportunities in Scotland and offer a route map for public and third sector bodies to create their own localised strategies, policies and projects. The Action Plan includes ten main actions to support the delivery of drivers within the Play Theory of Change. Actions include:

- Review and strengthen current programmes that support Early Child Development on the importance of play



- Map opportunities for play, as well as challenges to accessing play, for children in care and on the edges of care, refugees and asylum-seeking children and those not in settled housing
- Review the support for families on safely adopting good habits for digital play
- Support the development and provision of free, accessible, inclusive and safe public play spaces
- Develop Guidance for Public Bodies to support access to play by specific groups of children

Other

[Launch of social work student placement resource](#)

Iriss will hold an event on 29 April to launch its new resource on social work student placements in third sector organisations. An online session will also be held on 30 April for those who cannot attend the in-person event in Glasgow the previous day.

[Summary of CSWO annual reports](#)

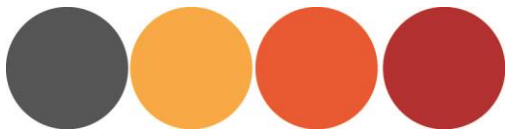
Iriss has published its annual summary of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) annual reports for 2023-2024. The report provides a summary of the main areas and themes covered in the CSWO Annual Reports, giving a general overview of the social work landscape in Scotland. The most common theme mentioned across the CSWO reports is the uncertainty of available funding and the impact on social work and social care.

[Inquiry into first 1000 days of a child's life](#)

The UK Parliament's Health and Social Care Committee has launched an inquiry into the first 1000 days of life, from conception to age 2. The Committee recognises this as a critical period for child development and wants to look at progress made since 2019 on early years support and the expansion of Family Hubs. A call for written evidence is open until 21 April 2025.

[Consultation shows support for charity regulation review](#)

The Scottish Government has published a consultation analysis report on the recent proposal for a review of charity regulation. The analysis shows 83 per cent of respondents agreed there should be a review, with just over half of respondents stating their preference for a review to focus on assessing the sector's future needs and ensuring regulation is fit for purpose. Agreement was recorded for reviewing charity trustee duties, public benefit and charitable purposes as part of any review. Other topics highlighted included safeguarding and disclosures for staff and volunteers, accountability structures for staff, discrimination against staff, and employee benefits. Some others also mentioned the need for strengthened regulation.



[Estimating the impact of policies on child poverty](#)

The Scottish Government has published an update on 'Child poverty modelling', which the impacts of Scottish Government policies on child poverty, updating the modelling that was originally undertaken for the second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, and it also analyses the impacts of current and hypothetical UK Government welfare policies. Focusing on two of the four statutory measures of child poverty, namely relative and absolute poverty after housing costs, the report also contains analysis on deep (or 'severe') poverty, defined as having household income below 50% of the UK median; and low income, defined as having household income below 70% of the UK median. Amongst other findings, the update reportedly shows that Scottish Government policies are estimated to keep 70,000 children out of relative poverty in 2025-26, and the estimated impacts of the policy package on deep child poverty are equivalent to, or greater than, the impacts on relative child poverty.

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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