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Additional Support Needs

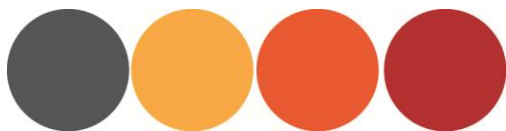
[Committee launches ADHD and ASD support inquiry](#)

An inquiry into Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathways and support has been launched in the Scottish Parliament. The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee is seeking to understand: why waiting times for diagnosis and management of ADHD and ASD are reportedly long; how these conditions are diagnosed and managed; the impact of delays on individuals; and possible solutions to improve capacity of services, referral pathways and support. The Committee has launched a [call for views](#) which closes on Monday 18 August.

Care Experience

[Scottish Government responds to Reimagining Secure Care report](#)

The Scottish Government has published its response to the Reimagining Secure Care: A Vision for the Future report. The report was published by the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice in September 2024 and outlined a new option for the future of secure care in Scotland. The response sets out a two-phased roadmap for delivery: Phase 1 (2025/26 – 2027/28), including Capacity restoration and reinforcement, and Delivering secure care contingency planning, restoring capacity and building resilience. Phase 2 (2028/29 – 2029/30) focuses on: Road-testing/readiness for re-imagining, and Applying learning from piloting, testing and evaluating. Accompanying the



publication was the [announcement](#) of funding of over £4m to establish three four-bed secure houses, as well as a further four-bed contingency resource.

Child Protection

[SCAI publishes findings relating to residential care at Merchiston Castle School](#)

The Chair of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has published her findings relating to the provision of residential care for children at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh. Lady Smith found there were aspects of the boarding provision for children at Merchiston that involved “dreadful abuse”, concluding that from the 1950s until into the second decade of the 21st century abusive behaviour perpetrated by two particular teachers became normalised for generations of boys. In common with Loretto School, Morrison’s Academy, Gordonstoun, and Queen Victoria School, children who boarded at Merchiston were exposed to risks of suffering sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, according to Lady Smith. Merchiston has apologised for the abuse experienced by children entrusted into its care.

[Record in domestic abuse contacts to NSPCC Helpline](#)

Child welfare contacts to the NSPCC Helpline involving domestic abuse reached a record high in 2024/25, according to the charity. The Helpline handled 7,825 child welfare contacts from adults where the main concern was domestic abuse, a 14% rise from the previous year and the highest total since records began in 2021/22. Concerns about coercive and controlling behaviour contributed to the rise, with a 29% increase compared to 2023/24.

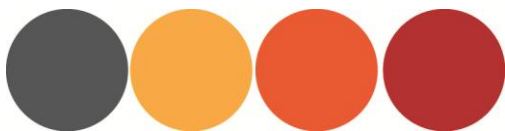
[National inquiry into child grooming gang cases announced \(England\)](#)

The UK Government has announced a new national inquiry into the sexual exploitation of children by grooming gangs. The move comes after the publication and recommendations of Baroness Casey’s [National Audit](#) on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The audit examined existing data and evidence on the nature and scale of group-based child sexual abuse. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced the inquiry as one of a number of actions to be taken forward in response to the findings.

Early Learning and Childcare

[Joint statement on quality improvement framework for ELC sectors](#)

A joint statement providing an update and timeline in relation to the quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare (ELC) sectors has been published by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. The new framework was published in January 2025 to give settings an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the content before it is used for inspection. Since then a total of 74 pilot visits/inspections took place across 28 local authorities, helping us to test how



the framework works. The update provides further detail on what can be expected after the framework comes into use in inspections in September.

[Keeping children safe – sharing the learning webinar](#)

The Care Inspectorate has shared the recording of a webinar to provide information about everyone's role in keeping children safe in ELC settings. The webinar provided key data from recent years in relation to incidents of children leaving settings unsupervised or being in unsafe situations and highlighted relevant resources and legislation which underpins safe staff practice.

[Early Years Scotland publishes consultation findings following workforce survey](#)

Early Years Scotland (EYS) has published the key findings from a consultation exercise with its members following a Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) survey. The SSSC recently carried out its first Have Your Say Workforce Wellbeing Survey, which aimed to hear about the experiences of those working in social work, social care and children and young people services. EYS encouraged its members to respond to the survey and also held an online consultation with members to discuss the key themes. Among the findings, 22% said they were likely to leave their role within the next 12 months, while 45% said the same about the next five years. Staff turnover was reported to be high by 48% of respondents – mainly due to increased staff levels, increased workloads and lower staff morale.

[National Nanny Register launched](#)

A National Nanny Register has been launched by the National Nanny Association. The register is designed to provide a platform to help professionalise, empower and safeguard the nanny workforce across the UK.

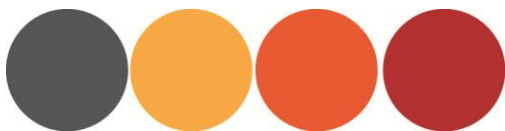
[UCL researchers warn of nursery 'deserts' in poorer areas \(England\)](#)

Nurseries backed by private equity are more likely to open in wealthier areas, while not for profit nurseries are declining faster in deprived areas, according to new research. Researchers from University College London (UCL) related data on the distribution of nursery closures across England to deprivation between 2018 and 2024, taking nursery ownership into account. They warn that deprived areas are being left with fewer childcare options, impacting on low-income families. They also found that there were proportionately fewer nurseries with Ofsted 'outstanding' ratings in deprived areas.

Education

[Education \(Scotland\) Bill passed by MSPs](#)

A Bill to establish a new Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland has been passed by MSPs. The [Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#) establishes the Chief Inspector, which will take on the education inspection functions currently sitting with Education Scotland, and will also create a new body called Qualifications Scotland to replace the Scottish



Qualifications Authority. After two days of debate and amendments, the Bill was passed by 69 votes to 47.

Justice

[New group to drive reforms in avoiding avoidable deaths in custody](#)

A new expert group will help drive reforms to prevent avoidable deaths in custody, the Scottish Government has announced. Justice Secretary Angela Constance is leading the Ministerial Accountability Board overseeing the implementation of actions to address the recommendations of Sheriff Collins' Fatal Accident Inquiry report into the deaths of Katie Allan and William Lindsay at HMP & YOI Polmont. The Board is an interim measure until the National Oversight Mechanism is established over the coming year to provide independent oversight for all deaths in custody.

Mental Health

[Charity highlights link between language and mental health challenges in children](#)

Children struggling with talking and understanding words are more likely to develop mental health problems and less likely to get the support they need, according to a report by Speech and Language UK. The report highlights the link between speech and language challenges and mental health challenges, suggesting 81% of children experiencing mental health problems also have significant, often undiagnosed, speech and language difficulties.

[Findings from survey on young people's hopes and ambitions](#)

Barnardo's and the Co-op have published the results of a survey of over 2,000 children and young people aged 10 - 25 about their hopes and ambitions. According to the findings, fears about the future have become part of daily life for 36% of respondents. Just under a third (30%) said they believe they will achieve their dream job, while 29% don't feel positive about their future at all. On mental health, 45% said they've experienced issues such as anxiety, stress, anger, panic attacks, loneliness or depression in the past six months.

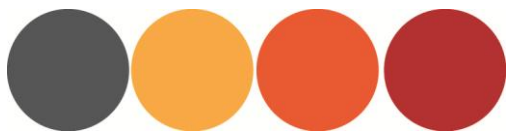
Other Health and Social Care

[Help us build a better website for people who experience care in Scotland](#)

The Care Inspectorate is working on improving its website and we are inviting people who experience care, their families and carers to take part in a short user research survey to help us design a website that is clear, accessible, and easy to use. The survey takes 5-10 minutes to complete.

[Thematic review of the care curriculum in Scotland's colleges published](#)

A thematic review of the care curriculum in Scotland's colleges has been published by Education Scotland. The document provides an overview of how well colleges are



in planning, promoting and delivering a care curriculum, and the impact on learners. The Review highlights areas of strength as well as persistent challenges, including that too many learners enter care programmes without a full understanding of what's required and too many leave before they complete. A number of recommendations are made, aimed at helping to build "a workforce not only ready to care, but equipped to lead change in one of the most vital sectors in our society".

[New Public Service Reform Strategy for Scotland](#)

A Public Service Reform Strategy for Scotland has been published by the Scottish Government. In a statement to Parliament, Public Finance Minister Ivan McKee said the strategy builds on the foundations of the Christie Commission, with a system-wide approach focused on prevention, place, partnership, people and performance. He stressed the importance of understanding the barriers to change and learning from examples where effective preventative measures have taken place. Research setting out learning from 25 years of preventative interventions in Scotland was [published alongside the strategy](#).

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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