



[Care Experience](#)

[Covid-19](#)

[Early Learning and Childcare](#)

[Equalities and Rights](#)

[Health](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Workforce](#)

[Other Health and Social Care](#)

Care Experience

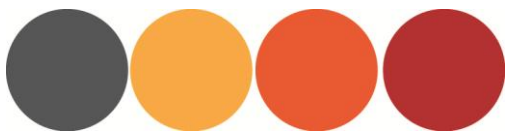
[Pilot expanded for new inspection type for children's care homes](#)

The Care Inspectorate has been testing out a new, more proportionate inspection type for better performing care homes for children and young people. The 'Promise Assurance' inspection reflects 'Plan 24-30' set by The Promise and further builds on our journey to ensure that scrutiny is centred on listening to children and young people. Following positive feedback from the test, the pilot of Promise Assurance inspections is being expanded for the remainder of this inspection year.

[Fostering and adoption statistical bulletin 2024-2025](#)

The number of foster care households and approved adoptions in Scotland has continued to decrease, according to a new report by the Care Inspectorate.

The report, Fostering and Adoption Statistical Bulletin 2024-2025, provides insight into the operation of fostering, adoption and continuing care services in Scotland over the past five years. At 31 December 2024, there were just over 11,000 care services registered with the Care Inspectorate. This includes 38 adoption and 58 fostering services which are provided by the local authority and the voluntary/not-for-profit sectors.



[Scheme to strengthen professionals' relationships with care experienced young people](#)

Care Experienced Week runs from 25 October to 1 November. To mark the occasion, Midlothian Council has launched a new initiative to help care-experienced young people feel safer and more connected to the professionals supporting them. Following feedback from members of the Midlothian Champions Board, Children's Services staff will now be encouraged to complete a short biography to share with the children they work with. The move aims to strengthen relationships and ensure young people feel valued and respected.

Covid-19

[Update on Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry](#)

The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry has issued its October 2025 Chief Executive's Update, detailing progress since the conclusion of its public impact hearings in June. Recent hearings in September and October 2025 focused on expert evidence about how COVID-19 spread and the factors governments should consider when managing public health emergencies. The inquiry is now turning to examine decision-making and policy implementation during the pandemic, with a preliminary hearing scheduled for 3 March 2026 to outline the next phase of investigations. No final reporting date has yet been set, as the Inquiry continues to prioritise a thorough, evidence-based process.

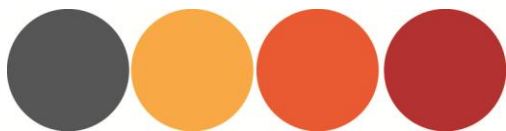
Early Learning and Childcare

[Experiment exploring health benefits of forest preschool in Finland](#)

An article in the Guardian explores the impact of forest kindergartens in Finland on children's health. Across Finland, 43 daycare centres have been awarded a total of €1m to rewild yards and to increase children's exposure to the microscopic biodiversity that lives in nature. Scientists are investigating how exposure to biodiversity can have health benefits for children who use the daycare services, one of which is featured in the article and gives children access to a "giant live carpet" of forest floor. Children are encouraged to forage, find bugs and learn about nature.

[Cyber experts warn early years settings on online security \(England\)](#)

Nursery World has published a long-read article on early years settings and online security, following the data breach at Kido nursery group. Cyber experts are reportedly urging early learning and childcare settings to ensure their cyber-security is robust as nurseries remain a target, whilst others are calling for urgent investment in technology infrastructure in the sector. One expert said online safety should be a statutory requirement, with settings being inspected on how robust their cyber-security is. In England, early years settings and schools are expected to follow NCSC regulations to protect children and staff and must report breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours of an attack.



Equalities and Rights

[Children and Young People's Commissioner annual report](#)

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland annual report for 2024-2025 has been published. The report covers Commissioner Nicola Killean's first full year in the role. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was also incorporated into Scots law during this period, and the report reflects on the first legal case the Commissioner was required to intervene in using the new powers. The Commissioner has made recommendations for UNCRC Act duty bearers, including those on meaningful participation for young people.

Health

[Scottish Health Information Integrity Strategy](#)

The Scottish Health Information Integrity Strategy has been published by the Scottish Government, setting out the framework for safe, coherent, evidence-based and ethical approaches to address false and misleading health information. Aligning with wider UK and international practice, the strategy focuses on three pillars: leadership and coordination; building Scotland's resilience to false information; and rapid response. The actions set out will aim to help the health and social care system adapt to the new "information landscape", and to respond when widespread misinformation poses a risk to public health.

Mental Health

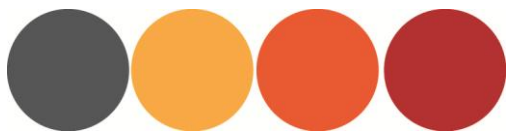
[Increased demand for children's emotional wellbeing support services](#)

Children First has reported an increase in demand for its support services, with over 60 per cent of children experiencing challenges related to their mental and emotional health. A recent survey conducted by the charity revealed that online harm is the number one threat identified by children and young people themselves. Children First has called for the next Scottish Government to tackle online harm as an urgent public health crisis in its manifesto for the Holyrood election in 2026.

Workforce

[Updated guidance on employing young people in social care](#)

Guidance published by the SSSC, Care Inspectorate, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Care and Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland for employing 16 and 17-year-olds has been updated, with an online version now available. The guide highlights that there are no regulatory barriers to employing 16 and 17-year-olds in social care and helps dispel common myths and misconceptions about employing young people.



Other

[Concern over delay in introducing child contact centre regulation](#)

Children First and Scottish Women's Aid have published a joint blog reflecting on five years since the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 received Royal Assent. The blog raises concerns that many of the Act's provisions, specifically those on child contact and child welfare reporters, remain unfulfilled. The blog notes that secondary legislation has been drafted on the regulation of child contact centres but that they remain unregulated which "leaves uneven safeguards in places where victim-survivors and children may be forced into contact with perpetrators". The blog also makes a number of recommendations to improve the legislative process and bridge the gap between policy and practice.

[Insight into the lives of 17-year-olds in Scotland](#)

The Scottish Government has published findings from the Growing Up in Scotland survey which highlights the lives of 17-year-olds living in Scotland. The report uses data collected from Birth Cohort 1 of the Growing Up in Scotland study which was originally comprised of a nationally representative sample of 5217 children born between June 2004 and May 2005. The new report includes findings on educational experiences, employment and income, free time and social media usage, civic participation, relationships, risky behaviours, mental health and general health.

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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