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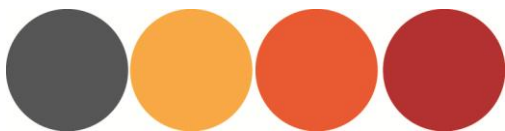
Care Experience

[Latest Promise Scotland newsletter](#)

The latest edition of the Promise Scotland newsletter has been published, with various updates on work underway to keep The Promise across Scotland. Topics covered include the upcoming Route Maps, The Promise Story of Progress and changes the Care Inspectorate has made to its work to align with The Promise.

[Inspection of the leadership of Edinburgh children's social work services](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published a report following an inspection of the leadership of children's social work services in the City of Edinburgh Council. The Care Inspectorate was asked to undertake this inspection by the Scottish Government's Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise. The full report can be read [here](#).



Care Experience

[Fiona Duncan responds to Audit report on The Promise delivery progress](#)

The Promise Independent Strategic Advisor Fiona Duncan has provided a response to Audit Scotland's report on progress in delivering improvements to the care system. Submitting her response to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee, Ms Duncan responds to each of the Auditor General's recommendations but also suggests that any assessment of achievement "requires a different approach, a move beyond the traditional views of accountability and ways of scrutiny, which in turn require different approaches to understanding responsibility and collective leadership".

[Ofsted Annual Report warns of profiteering in children's care sector \(England\)](#)

Ofsted has warned against profiteering in the children's care home sector as it publishes its Annual Report. The report highlights rapid growth in the number of children's homes registered with Ofsted (up 15% in the last year) but suggests this masks "very significant problems with location, affordability and suitability", adding that the concentration of children's homes in areas where housing is cheaper suggests strong profit motive in the market, which "bends the system out of shape".

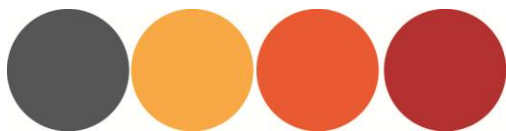
[Headline judgement to be removed in council children's service inspections from April \(England\)](#)

Ofsted will remove the headline judgement of overall effectiveness from April 2026, as part of a range of measures in relation to inspections of local authorities' children's services. The changes, which follow The Big Listen consultation, will precede other reform in how local children's services are evaluated, with a consultation in 2026 to be followed by a renewed framework in 2027.

Child Protection

[National review of responses to group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation](#)

The Scottish Government's Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth has announced that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, His Majesty's Constabulary, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate will lead an independent national review of responses to group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation. Professor Alexis Jay will chair the National Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Strategic Group from January 2026, and will provide expert advice to Ministers on the findings of the national review as it reports on its progress. The national review will be undertaken alongside the independent Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, and work already underway by Police Scotland to review previous cases, to gather evidence on the extent of group-related child sexual abuse and exploitation. This evidence will inform any decision on a future public inquiry into group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation.



Early Learning and Childcare

[Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Action Plan published](#)

A new action plan aimed at ensuring better joined-up speech, language and communication support from the earliest stages of life has been published by the Scottish Government. Framed around a commitment to a preventative approach, the Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Action Plan sets out three Pillars of Action: Leadership and Accountability; Families and Communities; Skilled and Supported Workforce. In relation to Early Learning and Childcare, the Action Plan notes that the Scottish Government will collaborate with the Care Inspectorate and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education "to explore how aspects of language and communication supportive environments, across interactions, experiences and spaces, can be evidenced in reporting aligned with the Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Sectors".

[SOSCN launches annual workforce survey](#)

The Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) has launched its annual workforce survey. The survey is looking at pay and conditions, and wellbeing, and closes at the end of February 2026.

Equalities

[SHRC publishes report on fatal accident inquiry system](#)

Scotland's fatal accident inquiry system is "confusing, slow, defensive and dehumanising", according to a report published by the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC). The SHRC commissioned the charity INQUEST to facilitate a Family Listening Day, at which 33 bereaved relatives provided personal testimony and set out a number of recommendations to consider. The report has been submitted by the SHRC to the Fatal Accident Inquiry Review, chaired by Sheriff Principal Ian Abercrombie.

Health

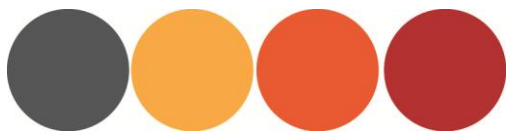
[Flu levels continue to rise, according to Public Health Scotland](#)

Laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza rose from 555 to 805 in the week ending 23 November, according to new figures from Public Health Scotland. Over the week, hospital admissions also rose from 279 to 391, with all age groups now affected at levels not previously seen at this time of year.

Justice

[Latest MAPPA National Overview Report published](#)

The latest National Overview Report on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) has been published by the Scottish Government. The 2024-



25 report outlines national developments across the eighteenth year of the framework's operation, as well as real world examples of collaborative working in a selection of the MAPPA regions.

Mental Health

[Admission of young people to adult wards](#)

A report by the Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) on the admission of young people under the age of 18 to non-specialist wards in Scotland reportedly shows 71 admissions of children and young people under 18 years old, to non-specialist hospital wards (primarily adult wards) in Scotland during 2024-25, for treatment of mental illness. According to the MWC, data collection has improved as they received further information in 76% of cases, up from 57% the previous year.

Other Health and Social Care

[Annual Return 2025](#)

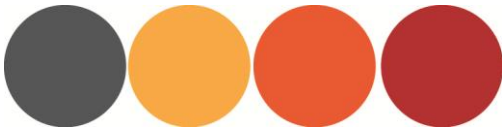
This year's annual return will be available to service providers for completion between Tuesday 6 January and Tuesday 17 February 2026. Each year, we ask services to complete an annual return. This gives us important information that helps us plan, inform and carry out our inspections and improvement work. We share some of the information with other organisations, such as the Scottish Social Services Council and the Scottish Government, and we use it to produce several statistical publications that you can view on our website.

[Regulation of child contact centres](#)

The Scottish Government's Minister for Victims and Community Safety has written to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee with an update on the affirmative legislation relating to the regulation of child contact services. There will be an 18 month lead-in period before regulation fully comes into force on 1 April 2027 to give the Care Inspectorate the necessary time to carry out preparatory work that is needed ahead of regulation. The Minister confirms that part of the work the Care Inspectorate will undertake during this period will be the development of a Quality Improvement Framework for child contact services, and the development process will involve the Care Inspectorate consulting with stakeholders.

[First Ministerial Report on Staffing Act published by Scottish Government](#)

The first Ministerial Report for the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 has been published by the Scottish Government. The legislation aims to enable better care through appropriate staffing and, according to the report, early evidence indicates that the Act "is fostering greater transparency in staffing decisions and cultivating a culture of openness and honesty". Part 3 of the report focuses on the reporting process relating to care services, with the level of detail provided by authorities in the first year varying "widely". The report also sets out detail of the Care Inspectorate's Safe Staffing Programme.

**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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