

[Additional Support Needs](#)[Care Experience](#)[Child Protection](#)[Early Learning and Childcare](#)[Education](#)[Equalities](#)[Health](#)

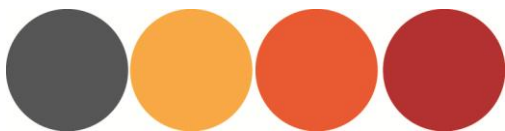
Additional Support Needs

[Rise in number of pupils with additional support needs](#)

The Scottish Government has released the latest Pupil and Teacher Characteristics 2025, which suggest the number of pupils in Scottish schools classed as having an additional support need has reached almost 300,000. The figures show 43 per cent of students are categorised as ASN, up 2.5 percentage points from last year. The Scottish Government has cautioned that the increase may be the result of a change in recording methods and greater awareness of pupils' needs.

[SEND children missing out on support if not in school full-time \(England\)](#)

A report by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission has found support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who do not attend school full-time is too inconsistent. The investigation concluded children are missing out on local education, care and health support, while missed opportunities for early identification of children's needs is causing too many children with SEND to leave the school system.



Care Experience

[Evaluation of SCRA's Keeping The Promise Commitment Standards](#)

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration has published two new reports following evaluation of their Keeping the Promise Commitment Standards. Pilot projects ran in various parts of Scotland in 2024, focused on improving the participation of Relevant Persons in Children's Hearings, providing a more personal, trauma-informed service, and reducing the number of delayed hearings. The evaluation reports suggest the projects were positively received with 83 per cent of Relevant Persons found being contacted helpful. SCRA has confirmed a pilot will begin in 2026 to pay travel expenses to children and Relevant Persons in advance of their hearing.

[Call for improvements to support people access their own care records](#)

Celcis has highlighted the Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) call for urgent improvements across UK local authorities after it found care experienced people trying to access their own care records are being let down. The ICO's research detected systemic challenges facing people trying to access their records, with 71 per cent of people struggling with poor communication from the local authority and 69 per cent facing delays. When care records were received, 59 per cent did not receive enough information and 87 per cent were left with questions or concerns.

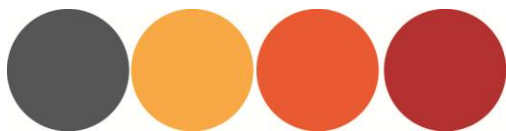
[Financial transparency and profit limitation in children's residential care – consultation analysis](#)

The Scottish Government has published an analysis of the consultation responses to Financial transparency and profit limitation in children's residential care. Responses were generally supportive of the Government's proposals, but concerns included the administrative burden the proposal would place on care providers, the impact on services (availability and quality), including the potential to lead to the closure of some children's residential care services, and the impacts this would have on vulnerable children and young people. There was a view that any new requirements should be proportionate, avoid duplication, and demonstrably add value to information that was already in the public domain. Respondents who disagreed with the measures offered two main views: they thought the proposals did not go far enough, or they were concerned about the impact on services and, ultimately, on the children and young people using those services.

Child Protection

[Latest phase of Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry announced](#)

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has confirmed it will begin to hear opening submissions in relation to Phase 10 of its investigations. The latest case study will consider the provision of residential care for children and young people in establishments run by local authorities and establishments run by voluntary



providers used by local authorities and others to place children in care. Twenty establishments have been confirmed as being part of this investigative phase and the period examined by Inquiry's investigations into abuse at these establishments extends from within living memory until the end of 2014.

[Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs \(England and Wales\)](#)

The UK Government has confirmed the Chair and [draft terms of reference](#) for the Independent Inquiry into Grooming Gangs. Baroness Anne Longfield CBE will Chair the inquiry, with panellists Zoë Billingham CBE and Eleanor Kelly CBE. The Inquiry will cover England and Wales. Should the Inquiry identify any material relating to the other devolved administrations, it will pass them to the relevant authorities wherever possible. The Chair will consult on the draft terms of reference then the final terms of reference will be agreed with the Home Secretary and published by March 2026, when the inquiry will be formally established.

[Charity offers support to community members with a child neglect concern](#)

The NSPCC has urged anyone with a concern about child neglect to contact the charity for further support. They revealed that last year, over 4500 contacts were received from community members and neighbours worried about child neglect. Almost half of these concerns were serious enough to require a referral to local safeguarding agencies, with referrals increasing by 17 per cent compared to the previous year.

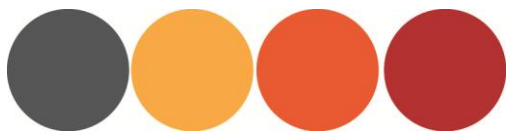
Early Learning and Childcare

[Webinars announced on proposed changes to school age childcare](#)

The Scottish Out of School Care Network has highlighted a series of consultation events being held by the Scottish Government on its plans to expand the school age childcare sector. The events will outline the Government's proposal to explore potential changes to the way in which the sector is regulated. People who work in and run school age childcare services are invited to the webinars to learn more about the changes and share their views. The Scottish Government has added further dates in January due to popular demand.

[Latest figures on funded ELC](#)

Statistics on funded early learning and childcare have been published by the Scottish Government. The report covers data collected through the annual Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) census on centres providing the funded entitlement, children registered for it, and staff delivering the provision. The figures estimate that almost all eligible three and four year olds are taking up their funded place. The proportion of all eligible two year olds registered for funded ELC increased to 14% in 2025 from 13% in 2024, although the estimated uptake for eligible two year olds decreased to 55% from 57% over the same period.



[Latest overview of childminding and funded ELC](#)

The Scottish Childminding Association has published its annual overview of local authority progress in involving childminders in the delivery of funded ELC. The report shows 8 per cent of the childminding workforce is delivering funded hours to eligible two year olds, while 23.4 per cent are delivering funded hours to three and four year olds. However, the number of childminders approved to deliver funded ELC was higher than the actual number delivering funded hours, which the SCMA said was the result of local authorities failing to promote childminders' services equitably alongside their own nursery provision as an option to parents.

[Call for universal breakfast provision in schools and ELC settings](#)

Magic Breakfast, the charity that provides breakfasts to more than 300,000 children and young people before the school day begins, has launched the latest phase of its Breakfast Can't Wait campaign. The campaign calls on the next Scottish Government to deliver universal breakfast provision in all primary, secondary and Additional Support Needs schools in Scotland and expand breakfast provision in ELC settings, starting with local authority nurseries.

Education

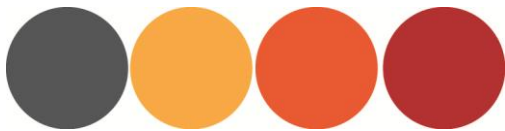
[Young people write manifesto for reducing school poverty](#)

The Child Poverty Action Group has launched a school students manifesto ahead of next year's Scottish Parliament election, which calls for action on child poverty, support in schools and the cost of school meals, clothing, trips and devices. The manifesto sets out the views of thousands of young people on how the impact of poverty in their schools should be reduced. The manifesto also calls on MSPs to involve children and young people to ensure schools are made better and fairer.

Equalities

[Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy](#)

The Scottish Government has published their Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy, setting out their approach to embedding equality and human rights into everything it does across government and encouraging the same approach across the wider public sector. The Strategy is supported by an [Action Plan](#) and a [Toolkit](#), and an accountability framework is to be published in summer 2026 to set out structures for oversight, accountability and delivery. The vision is to "support the continued growth of strong communities across Scotland, built on a foundation where everyone can fully realise their human rights. These communities will be diverse, inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. We are committed to addressing the systemic inequalities that persist in Scotland."



[Annual assessment of human rights in Scotland](#)

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (HRC) has published its annual assessment of how human rights are being realised across Scotland. The 'State of the Nation: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Scotland' report focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, the rights that ensure everyone can live with dignity: rights to adequate housing, health, social security, food, and fair working conditions. Reportedly finding ten areas of concern across Scotland, the SHRC report highlights that healthcare is not always available where and when people need it, the support for people with learning disabilities and autism to live in their own homes is inadequate, and people cannot access effective justice or remedies when their ESC rights are not realised.

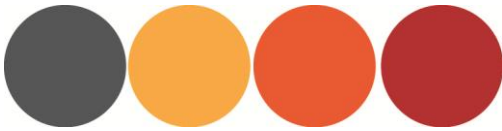
[Proposals for Public Sector Equality Duty improvement activity](#)

The Scottish Government has published 'Regulation 12 Report: Published Proposals to Enable Better Performance of the PSED in Scotland – 2025-29', setting out their proposals to help listed authorities in Scotland improve their performance in relation to the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Proposals for action include Pay Gap Action Plans, stakeholder engagement on PSED improvement, improving the wider public sector's understanding of, and engagement with, the fostering good relations element of the general equality duty, and increasing the emphasis on senior accountability in relation to PSED.

Health

[Landmark report on childhood dementia](#)

Alzheimer Scotland has published a new report on childhood dementia, highlighting the urgent need for a coordinated national response to the condition. The report suggests families affected by childhood dementia, which is caused by a group of over 145 genetic, metabolic and neurodegenerative conditions, face a range of challenges including delayed diagnoses, inadequate health and social care support, and lack of financial assistance. The report recommends three actions: including childhood dementia in the national dementia strategy second delivery plan; develop a national framework; and invest in research.

**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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