

## UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: COVID-19 Statement – 6 August 2020

On 8 April 2020, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child published a statement that expresses concern about the situation of children globally, particularly those in situations of vulnerability, due to the effects of the COVID-19. The Scottish Government recognises the need to embed human rights of the child in taking measures to tackle the public health threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The table below sets out our approach to the COVID-19 response, particularly in relation to the 11 areas highlighted by the Committee. Additionally, reporting on the use of the emergency powers contained within the Coronavirus Act 2020 and Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 can be found [here](#).

Area	Recommendations	Scottish Government Response
1	Consider the health, social, educational, economic and recreational impacts of the pandemic on the rights of the child.	<p>Children’s rights and wellbeing matter now, more than ever. A children’s rights approach is being embedded into our response to COVID-19 and our approach to recovery and renewal.</p> <p>Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments are being prepared for key policies and legislation to gauge the impact on children’s rights and wellbeing and mitigate any negative impacts. CRWIAs have been published for the <a href="#">Coronavirus (Scotland) Act</a>, the <a href="#">Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act</a> and the <a href="#">Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020</a>.</p> <p>An <a href="#">initial impact assessment</a> was undertaken as part of the development of a strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision in Scotland; and equality impact assessments are in development across a wide range of other policy areas including Shielding Policy, Border Controls, Transport Restart and Test and Protect.</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring children and young people are at the heart of our decision-making processes, which includes during the development of CRWIAs. We will strive, where possible within the current lockdown limitations, to engage with children and young people to gather their views. Where this is not possible, we commit to engaging with children’s rights organisations and drawing upon the results from consultation with children and young people as identified in Recommendation 11.</p> <p>Our consideration of the rights of children in relation to the pandemic is informed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s Statement on COVID-19. We have shared three reports on the action being taken across Scottish Government portfolios within the 11 key areas outlined by the Committee with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights) and have committed to providing further updates.</p> <p>In May 2020, Scottish Government established a COVID-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group (LG) to review regular intelligence with a priority focus on “vulnerable children and young people”</p>

		<p>(pre-birth to 18 years). It will work to identify issues requiring action, and provide local and national leadership in delivering a response.</p> <p>The LG includes members from SOLACE, COSLA, Police Scotland, Health, Education, Social Work, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA), Children’s Hearings Scotland, the Third Sector and other key organisations.</p> <p>The LG receives regular updates on vulnerable children which includes data from the interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) to inform their work.</p> <p>The Children, Young People and Families Advisory Group (CYPFAG) has been established to inform and support the work of the Leadership Group and will be working with a range of organisations to ensure the lived experiences of children, young people and families inform this work.</p> <p>For context, the interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) is an incident based database that allows officers from Police Scotland to record common concerns that may be a risk to a person's current or future wellbeing. Concerns can be recorded under the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Concerns (including Child Protection)</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Adult Concerns (including Adult Protection)</li> <li>• Hate Concerns</li> <li>• Youth Offending</li> </ul> <p><b>Child Protection-</b> procedures where Police, Social Work or Health professionals determine that a child may have been abused or may be at risk of <b>significant</b> harm, and when an Inter-agency Referral Discussion takes place.</p> <p><b>Child Concern (Wellbeing)-</b> concerns there may be a risk to a child's current or future wellbeing. These are concerns under the threshold of protection procedures.</p> <p>The definition of ‘vulnerable children’ agreed by the Leadership Group is:</p> <p>“Children and young people may be vulnerable because of factors related to their personal development, features of their family life, or because of wider influences that impact on them within their community.</p> <p>Those children who were considered to be vulnerable prior to the pandemic should have been known to services, and are likely to have had a child’s plan.</p>
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2	Explore alternative and creative solutions for children to enjoy their rights to rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities.	<p>The Scottish Government is committed to giving young people all over Scotland a chance to take part in the arts, as demonstrated through our Time to Shine youth arts strategy. Officials are working with Creative Scotland to explore the barriers to young people experiencing culture at this time.</p> <p>We are working with key partners to support families with play and learning at home during the current restrictions including through the Parent Club website. The website provides advice, information and resources for families, including advice and links to provide ideas and encourage parents to keep children physically active. We have also provided a range of free digital content through an online platform which includes content for children and families to keep physically active.</p>

		<p>Outdoor play parks opened on 29 June, recognising the importance of this outdoor resource for children and young people, particularly in the school holidays, and the importance of play to children's health and wellbeing.</p> <p>We prioritised the health and wellbeing of children and young people with the return of outdoor contact sport, which resumed on 13 July, subject to sport specific guidance being in place. Activities including play are also allowed to take place following rules on meeting other households.</p> <p>We also recognise that young carers may need extra support to take a fun break from their caring role. Young Scot has been working closely with the Scottish Government to adapt its <a href="#">young carer package</a> to help support young carers as they self-isolate or physically distance. This has included launching new digital opportunities which young carers can access safely at home. Young Scot are currently developing a campaign to raise awareness of this package to ensure as many young carers as possible access it.</p> <p>Although Young Scot cannot currently issue new or replacement cards, they have adapted sign up so that young carers who do not have a card can still access the package.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has been working closely with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure information on young carer support is shared with networks for further dissemination. Under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, local authorities have a duty to provide an information and advice service for all carers in their area. We also often highlight support for young carers in our public communications such as social media, press releases and at the daily briefings. As many local carer and young carer services are currently unable to operate as usual, we provided a £500,000 fund to support them to transition to remote working. This means that young carers can still access support over the phone or online. We have funded Young Scot to develop and run a social media campaign to encourage young carers to self-identify and seek support. This is running for 3 months and was launched during 2020 Carers Week.</p> <p>We have also been working with Education Scotland and Carers Trust Scotland to ensure that all education staff are aware of young carers the issues they face, as well as the support they can access, so that they can signpost and support them effectively. The <a href="#">Education Scotland National Improvement hub</a> has recently launched a new page entirely dedicated to young carers to make it easier for education staff to see the latest information.</p> <p>Work is also being conducted with the Digital Inclusion team to see how young carers who need help in accessing technology for information and school work could benefit from the recent £9 million investment made by the Scottish Government to help disadvantaged children become digitally able.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has provided funding to a number of youth work organisations to support their work in engaging with young people through digital means. We have also invested in YouthLink Scotland</p>
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	<p>to support the skills and capacity of the youth work sector through digital youth work training targeting youth workers across Scotland. Youth workers are supporting young people with activities to do online and activity packs to use at home. Many are also offering telephone support to young people, especially those who are struggling with their mental health.</p> <p>The youth work sector is represented on the High Level Ministerial Leadership Group established by Mr Richard Lochhead, MSP, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science. This group actively discusses how the Scottish Government responds to key challenges faced as a result of COVID-19 and how we collectively plan to aid the immediate, and long term recovery of the tertiary sector. A Community Learning &amp; Development (CLD) reference group informs these discussions and youth work is represented on this group by Scotland's National Youth Work agency, YouthLink Scotland. Officials regularly engage with YouthLink Scotland and other key stakeholders on issues as they arise and collectively respond to these. As we ease ourselves out of lockdown, the Scottish Government has announced a further £3m funding package for youth work. This funding will provide ongoing support to young people who have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Access to Childcare Fund has been launched, and will support enhanced childcare provision and access to enriching activities for vulnerable children and families. It will also test and deliver models of accessible and affordable childcare provision which can support low income families.</p> <p>The £11.2 m Transitional Support Fund will help childcare providers in the private and third sectors, including out-of-school care providers, meet extra costs incurred to comply with public health guidance in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Scottish Government has also established a Childminding Workforce Support Fund with the Scottish Government to provide grant funding for childminders experiencing financial strain due to COVID-19. These Funds will support the childcare sector to continue to meet the needs of children and families safely.</p> <p>To support the needs of digitally excluded children and young people, we are investing an initial £9m which will provide devices and connectivity for 25,000 learners across Scotland. We are committed to delivering digital equity for our most disadvantaged children and young people and this is the first phase of our £30m commitment to support digital inclusion for children and young people. We are working closely with local authority partners to deliver this.</p> <p>The Scottish Government ran a social marketing campaign from the start of COVID-19 restrictions being in place that was aimed at supporting families to cope with being at home together for long periods. Play was at the forefront of the messaging as a means of helping children adjust to the new situation, process their emotions, assist with learning and lead to positive interactions with their parents/carers as we sought to help strengthen relationships. The campaign has featured heavily across TV, radio, and social media.</p>
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		<p>Family Fund have reviewed their application processes and criteria this year to ensure that TABS is as flexible and responsive as it can be in the current situation. For example, as current Government guidelines in Scotland may prevent some travel for holidays, families may apply for a range of other items that help support a break at home such as bikes, sports equipment, outdoor play or home entertainment.</p>
3	<p>Ensure that online learning does not exacerbate existing inequalities or replace student-teacher interaction.</p>	<p>Thanks to the significant progress we have made in suppressing the virus, we announced on 30 July that schools will reopen from 11 August.</p> <p>A return to full-time schooling in August will enhance the life chances of children and young people and start to reverse any damaging impacts of recent months.</p> <p>We have developed and published guidance with key partners to help ensure a safe and welcoming return to school for children, young people and staff. The guidance sets out a suite of important mitigations that local authorities and schools will be asked to implement.</p> <p>Enabling families to have access to digital technology also plays an important role in ensuring that children and young people can participate online, access the support they need, carry out school work at home and connect with family and friends.</p> <p>As set out above, we are investing an initial £9m which will provide devices and connectivity for 25,000 learners across Scotland. We are committed to delivering digital equity for our most disadvantaged children and young people and this is the first phase of our £30m commitment to support digital inclusion for children and young people. We are working closely with local authority partners to deliver this.</p> <p>Children 1st and Aberlour are taking part in the <i>Connecting Scotland</i> pilot. The pilot will provide laptops suitable for education purposes and 6 months data via a sim to families highlighted by Children 1st and Aberlour as being particularly in need.</p> <p>The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, Jeane Freeman MSP, announced the £5 million Connecting Scotland programme which will support 9,000 low income individuals across Scotland that are clinically at risk. The Scottish Government are working in partnership with SCVO, ScotlandIS and the wider public sector to identify the most at risk digitally excluded people; supply them with devices, and / or connectivity; train and mentor them to get on-line; and provide on-going support to cope with issues and training needs.</p> <p>We will be collecting data on the number of children and families that have received a device, connectivity and support through the Connecting Scotland programme to enable any gaps to be identified, and are in</p>

	<p>the process of discussing plans for any future publication of data in relation to the Connecting Scotland programme.</p> <p>The application process for intermediary organisations who think they can help reach and support people to tackle digital exclusion is now closed. Over 4,700 devices have been awarded by 21 local authorities to date, and we are working to deliver the remaining allocation by the end of August 2020. Further information on this process is available at the Connecting Scotland website <a href="https://connecting.scot/for-organisations">https://connecting.scot/for-organisations</a>. Individuals are unable to directly apply for devices and connectivity and are advised to contact their local authority to arrange support if they are clinically at risk to COVID-19, digitally excluded and on a low income.</p> <p>One Parent Families Scotland, Barnardo's and Action for Children have also received funding from the Immediate Priorities Fund to help provide direct support to families during the COVID-19 pandemic, including addressing digital access. This investment is part of the Scottish Government's wider £350 million Communities Funding.</p> <p>We are working with Education Scotland in exploring a range of options to support the learning of our children and young people at this time. Education Scotland is helping local authority officers and teachers ensure learning continues during this challenging period.</p> <p>Closing the Poverty-related attainment gap remains the defining mission of the Scottish Government. We recognise the challenges that this unprecedented situation presents, in particular for vulnerable children and families from the most deprived backgrounds. That is why we are continuing with our commitment to invest £182 million from the Attainment Scotland Fund in 2020/21. It's also why we have committed to extend funding for the Scottish Attainment Challenge at current levels beyond the lifetime of this Parliament and into 2021/22.</p> <p>On Friday 1 May, the Deputy First Minister announced that over £250 million in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) will be made available to schools over 2020/21 and 2021/22 meaning that, for the first time, PEF allocations have been confirmed for two years, to provide more certainty for head teachers and aid learning during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.</p> <p>The Scottish Government is providing local authorities/schools with flexibility to redirect Attainment Scotland Funding aimed at closing the attainment gap to help mitigate the impacts of school closures on our most disadvantaged families. This plays an important part in mitigating the impact of home learning arrangements that may prove more challenging for our most disadvantaged families to adapt to. Examples include providing tablets to support digital learning at home and transport to enable learners to attend hubs and supporting home-school link workers to maintain regular contact with children.</p>
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	<p>We are also providing a further £135 million over the next two years to help support the return to school. This new funding will see us invest to tackle the impact of coronavirus in our schools, and will include investment in teaching resources and other work to support children and young people's health and wellbeing and attainment.</p> <p>In April 2020, the Scottish Government published 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): supporting pupils, parents and teachers - learning during term 4', a <a href="#">comprehensive guide</a> to help support continuity in children and young people's learning during term 4.</p> <p>The National Parent Forum of Scotland also published term 4 <a href="#">guidance</a> for parents and carers. This provided an overview of the measures in place and the steps being taken, at a national and local level, to support children and young people, including those with additional support needs during term 4.</p> <p>On 5 June guidance '<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for continuity in learning</a>' was published. The guidance is to help local authorities, early learning centres and schools continue to support children and young people's learning during the coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p>The guidance should be read alongside <a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): strategic framework for reopening schools, early learning and childcare provision</a> and <a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): re-opening schools guide</a>. The guidance offers high-level advice to local authorities as they consider the support required to address the impact of interrupted learning and disconnection from school or early learning and childcare for many children and young people, including those with additional support needs.</p> <p>Information for parents and carers on the reopening of schools and early learning and childcare is on the Parent Club website, and will be supported by a multimedia marketing campaign launching 31 July on TV, radio, digital and social channels. The site also provides advice for parents and carers about home learning. This includes specific pages with advice about supporting children and young people with additional support needs.</p> <p>The Parental Audience marketing team are working with a number of partners, including YoungScot, Education Scotland, BEMIS and Children 1<sup>st</sup> to produce materials to support parents with their children's return to school/ELC and disseminate to minority and digitally excluded families across Scotland. Information on the continued provision of care and support for children and young people with complex additional support needs can be found in the '<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19): school and early learning closures - guidance about key workers and vulnerable children</a>'.</p> <p>The decision that there should be no exam diet in 2020 took into account public health concerns, uncertainty around schools reopening and the possibility of ongoing impacts or disruption to learning.</p>
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		<p>The Scottish Government and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) recognise that this has been a worrying time for learners who were due to sit exams this year. In response, SQA has taken steps to ensure they have communications that speak directly to parents/carers and young people. SQA continue to provide support and resources on their dedicated teacher and lecturer, learner and parent and carer web pages: <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93825.9757.html">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93825.9757.html</a>. They are also working with national bodies, such as the National Parent Forum of Scotland, Connect, Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament to share information on what is happening and when.</p> <p>SQA published a <a href="#">Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment</a> and an <a href="#">Equality Impact Assessment</a> on the 2020 Alternative Certification Model on 4 August.</p>
4	<p>Ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals provided through school feeding schemes.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government provided an additional £27.6m to local authorities to continue provision of food support to households and free school meals during the summer holidays. This included £12.6m specifically for free school meals provision. The funding will be provided to local authorities through a grant, included within the grant conditions is a requirement to enable newly eligible families to apply for free school meals during the summer holidays. The grant conditions also set out that local authorities can continue to put in place an approach or approaches to meet the needs of the families within their community, this included the provision of direct cash payments.</p> <p>The flexible approach to delivery of free school meals during the period of school closures supported around 175,000 children and young people. Local authorities welcomed the flexibility as it enabled them to put in place approaches swiftly and effectively, it also enabled them to adapt approaches during the period of school closures.</p> <p>Existing legislation also enables local authorities flexibility to award free school meals to children ‘in need’, where family financial circumstances have changed. This means that families who are experiencing difficulty can approach a local authority and request assistance through provision of a free school meal, when they would not usually be eligible through the qualifying criteria.</p> <p>The Food Fund guidance did advocate a ‘cash first’ principle, however the flexible approach has enabled local authorities to put in place multiple approaches – with the needs of their communities in mind.</p> <p>When schools reopen, the provision of a healthy and nutritious free school meal is a key contributor to children and young people’s learning and health.</p> <p>Data provided by local authorities during the period of school closures is published <a href="#">here</a></p>

5	<p>Maintain the provision of basic services for children including healthcare, water, sanitation and birth registration.</p>	<p>By using the strength of universal services such as maternity, health visiting and family nurse partnership, we have established routes and relationships with all children, families and pregnant women across Scotland, who are able to offer support and advice at this challenging time in multiple ways.</p> <p>Health Visitors and Family Nurses continue to exercise the function of the named person for all children and families in their care. Prioritising contacts for new mothers and infants was part of the initial response. Clinical community guidance was issued to support these services: <a href="#">Nursing and Community Health Guidance</a>. In all cases, professional judgement must be the driver for determining level of support required, to keep individual children and their families, including those hard to reach families, safe and well during this time.</p> <p>Workstreams have been established to consider the secondary health impacts for children and young people, and where actions taken to address the pandemic emergency could widen inequalities. The Scottish Government is working alongside Public Health Scotland and Child Health Commissioners to drive this forward.</p> <p>On birth registration, the focus of services in this area at the moment unfortunately has been on the registration of deaths and still-births. However, the Scottish Government and National Records of Scotland (NRS) recognise the importance of birth registration. NRS have been working with local authority registrars on the resumption of birth registration and we will make announcements as soon as we can.</p> <p>In April, the Scottish Government published a framework to support local authorities and their partners in local decision making to support Gypsy/Travellers during the outbreak. We recently reviewed the framework and published a revised version on 25 June that takes into account changing circumstances as the lockdown continues to lift. Approaches will vary locally but the current framework recommends options which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing additional toilets and washing facilities, if necessary, to allow families to self-isolate within a caravan and limit sharing of facilities and therefore risk spreading the virus</li> <li>• Minimising evictions, local authorities should only consider eviction or dispersing a camp where the location of the encampment is unsuitable for health and safety reasons or if there is another good reason, for example antisocial behaviour or persistent breach of COVID-19 travel advice. In this case, an alternative, suitable location should be identified where possible</li> <li>• Linking to services and the wider COVID-19 response</li> <li>• Ensuring the community knows about Test and Protect and supporting anyone who shows symptoms and needs to access the testing service to do so</li> </ul>
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		<p>The Scottish Government committed £120,000 to provide specific support for Gypsy/Travellers during the COVID-19 outbreak. £44,000 of that funding was used to directly provide essential sanitation facilities to Gypsy/Traveller families to enable them to follow government advice and curb the spread of the pandemic. This included 36 toilets and 4 showers to provide sanitation to Gypsy/Travellers living in temporary camps. An additional £35,000 was then approved from the Immediate Priorities Fund for sanitation facilities and this was used to extend the provision of the 36 toilets and 4 showers.</p> <p>During the 'lockdown' young people in the care of the Scottish Prison Service have had access to daily showers and NHS colleagues have continued to provide health support including mental health support for those who require it. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice provided a detailed response on 24 June to issues raised by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland regarding the care of young people in custody during the pandemic via a <a href="#">letter to the Justice Committee</a>.</p>
6	<p>Define core child protection services as essential and ensure that they remain functioning and available, including home visits when necessary, and provide professional mental health services for children living in lockdown.</p>	<p>The Scottish Ministers are clear that the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 should continue to have full effect in November 2020, as originally planned. The Scottish Government has issued a <a href="#">circular</a> on this Act.</p> <p>Additional supplementary <a href="#">child protection guidance</a>, which included further content in relation to children affected by domestic abuse, was disseminated to stakeholders on 31 March 2020. This guidance advises on how processes can be streamlined and modified to take account of current challenges without compromising actions to protect children and young people, consistent with children's rights. The guidance is clear that the pandemic must not affect the protections afforded to children.</p> <p>The guidance also notes the continuing importance of the ongoing support of a named person or first point of contact and underlines that local areas must ensure that parents and carers are clear about how they can get advice or raise concerns in relation to their children.</p> <p>On 18 March we announced a £350 million package of funding to support our communities. Of this £1.5 million of funding is supporting key national third sector groups to promote wellbeing and provide support for vulnerable children, young people and families. We have provided £60,000 to Childline to adapt and respond to rising demand, and ensure continued service to meet the growing counselling need from children and young people. We have also provided £15,236 to Stop it Now! Scotland to adapt their service delivery to respond to the increased risks currently facing children across Scotland and develop tailored resources to replace outreach work.</p> <p>As projects are currently being delivered, an analysis of the number of children and families reached through the £350m communities funding is not available at this time. However, organisations have been asked to provide a progress report at the end of their funding to enable the effectiveness and impact of</p>

	<p>the funding provided to be assessed. Data from these progress reports will be uploaded to the <a href="#">Community Funding Mapping Dashboard</a> which provides analysis on the Wellbeing Fund and Food Fund, the Supporting Communities Fund and the Third Sector Resilience Fund.</p> <p>The UK Government has launched a child protection media campaign in partnership with the NSPCC which is running across the UK. We are currently developing options for further Scottish specific awareness raising to complement national messaging from Child Protection Committees Scotland, Police Scotland and local communications activity.</p> <p>We are in regular dialogue with local authorities and other bodies to help ensure that we understand the challenges facing the sector and are working collaboratively with services for children to ensure they are able to respond to these effectively.</p> <p>We have also developed guidance to assist children’s residential care services (including secure care) during the pandemic, and continue to work closely with Police Scotland and other key stakeholders to resolve any issues as they arise for those caring for looked after children and young people.</p> <p>A joint statement has been published by Social Work Scotland, Police Scotland and Scottish Government on the continued use of Early and Effective Interventions for young people involved in offending behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>We wrote to CYPSC on 15 June with detailed responses from the responsible agencies around the Commissioner’s concerns raised about the emergency measures applicable to the children’s hearings system. In addition, the first edition of detailed two-monthly reporting on the provisions in the first Coronavirus Act was published on 9 June. Further supplementary data and commentary was published on the Children’s Hearings Improvement Partnership website. That process will be repeated in August.</p> <p>Planning and preparation for the earliest possible safe recovery of some face to face children’s hearings is well-advanced and a submission was made to Health Protection Scotland. Some face to face children’s hearings activity recommenced in mid-July. Meantime, CELCIS and CYCJ led an evaluation of children’s and families’ experiences of ‘virtual hearings’ – more than 1000 were conducted since lockdown in late March. Regular contact is maintained with CYPSC officers around any emerging concerns around the operation of the system under the emergency measures.</p> <p>While Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) continue to be provided, and emergency and urgent cases are being prioritised, services will need to accommodate coronavirus restrictions. This will impact their ability to see people face to face and ultimately their performance in terms of timescales for the delivery of care and treatment. Officials are working closely with all Boards to support mental health staff to maintain the integrity and quality of services across Scotland during the coronavirus</p>
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		<p>pandemic and, looking forward, to recovery. We issued a set of principles on 1 May to guide the delivery of mental health services around referral processes and managing existing waiting lists. Specifically, for all new referrals to mental health services it is expected that there should be contact with the patient and/or family and carer, by phone or secure video conference, to discuss their situation. This contact should identify patients who need a prioritised assessment and facilitate signposting and self-help, optimising the full range of digital services available. We also wrote to NHS Boards on 14 May highlighting mental health as a clinical priority and setting out plans for recovery and requirements for mental health within coronavirus mobilisation plans.</p> <p>On 3 May, we announced £105,000 funding to the organisation Young Scot to support them to add content to their existing webpage focussing on general wellbeing and mental health. This is a universal offer, available to all children and young people, and connects to general population level information and links to practical support. There is also appropriate links and signposting for young people who may be experiencing mental ill health or distress, to ensure young people can access the right support for their circumstances. This was launched on 18 March and can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Advice for parents on supporting their children’s mental wellbeing during this time is also available on the Parent Club website.</p> <p>Funding of up to £306,166 has been provided in 2020-21 from Mental Health and Youth Justice budget portfolios to Kibble to continue to deliver the Interventions for Vulnerable Youth (IVY) project as previously delivered through the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice since 2013. This is a specialist psychological and social work service which conducts risk assessment, formulation and management for young people (aged 12 – 18) with complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and who pose a risk to others. The service also extends this support to families.</p> <p>IVY has provided support for over 220 children and young people referred by Scottish local authorities since 2013.</p> <p>Regarding housing conditions, subject to shielding and other restrictions, as far as is practical, priority adaptations for disabled children and young people are still being undertaken. We are also working with local government and the housing sector to restart the lettings process prioritising families experiencing homelessness and those in temporary housing to move into settled accommodation with the housing allocations becoming open to other groups such as families in overcrowded homes and those with particular needs as recovery progresses.</p>
7	Protect vulnerable children from the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic.	Ministers are clear that we must continue to focus on ensuring that all children and families who need additional support during the crisis can access that support, including through local hubs, other community and place-based initiatives, and local 3rd sector activity.

<p>These include children with disabilities; children living in poverty; children in street situations; migrant, asylum-seeking, refugee and internally displaced children; minority and indigenous children; children with underlying health conditions including HIV/AIDS; children deprived of their liberty or confined in police lock-up facilities, prisons, secure care centres, migrant detention centres or camps; and children living in institutions.</p> <p>States should respect the right of every child to non-discrimination in its measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic as well as take targeted measures to protect children in vulnerable situations.</p>	<p>On 18 March, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced £350 million of funding to support communities impacted by COVID-19, including children and families living in poverty. This funding has strengthened the support available by more than doubling the Scottish Welfare Fund and enabling third sector and community responses, including £1.15m shared by children’s charities Aberlour, Barnardo’s and Action for Children to offer direct financial support to children and their families who are most in need and investment. Since the onset of the pandemic over £110 million has been committed to tackle food insecurity and ensure support is in place for people whose access to food has been affected. Of this funding £27.6 million was targeted specifically at ensuring eligible children and young people continue to receive free school meal provision. In term time around 175,000 free school meals (or alternatives e.g. cash/vouchers) were being distributed each week day by local authorities and funding was allocated to continue this support over the summer period.</p> <p>The Children and Families Directorate is working with partners to establish robust processes for monitoring the impact of the pandemic on the needs of children and young people who are at risk or who may become ‘at risk’ as a result of the crisis. A weekly data collection has been established to bring together intelligence from the 32 local partnerships and national agencies and delivery partners including the third sector, Police Scotland the Health Service. The dataset includes key data on what is happening across children’s services partnerships to support children and young people on the child protection register, those looked after and on the edge of care. Three wider evidence and intelligence reports have also been published on the SG website to date. The latest report, published on 22 July, contains a review of a wide range of evidence and intelligence gathered from both local partnerships and third sector organisations. The report can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839609206">https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839609206</a></p> <p>The Scottish Government is aware that the current situation may be placing additional strain on young carers. We have established a new fund of £500,000 to help local carer organisations and young carer services transition to supporting carers remotely. This includes tailored advice and training to help them understand how best to keep in touch with carers and young carers in their communities</p> <p>The Carer’s Allowance is a weekly income replacement benefit, and recipients are on some of the lowest incomes, as well as having some of the most intensive caring roles – carers need to provide at least 35 hours care and earn less than £128 weekly.</p> <p>The Young Carer Grant, on the other hand, is an annual grant designed to support young carers to look after their own health and wellbeing, reduce any negative impact of caring, and improve access to opportunities which are the norm for other young people. There are no income or earnings requirements for Young Carer Grant, and the hours requirement for Young Carer Grant is less than half that of Carer’s Allowance (average 16 hours weekly). Therefore the decision was taken to not increase the Young</p>
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	<p>Carer Grant, like the Carers Allowance, as it should not be a supplement for living costs, but for the young carers to use to do things to support themselves and their wellbeing.</p> <p>However, an additional £300,000 was announced for young carers to enable them to take a break and have some fun. Two thirds of this has to Young Scot to add extra e-vouchers and subscriptions (many of which were launched over Carers Week this year) to their young carer package. The other third went to small grants for young carers to purchase something for themselves that allows them to take a break from caring. These grants are delivered through the Time to Live fund by local carer centres.</p> <p>We fund Shared Care Scotland to provide public information on short breaks. Their guide, <a href="#">Short breaks for strange times</a>, contains ideas and resources for activities at home.</p> <p>It is important to note that carers in the age bracket for Young Carer Grant who provide 35 hours care or more and earn less than £128 weekly may be eligible for Carer's Allowance.</p> <p>Social Security Scotland routinely publish Official Statistics on Young Carer Grant covering applications, with various breakdowns such as applications by month and by the age of the applicant. They have currently published up to the end of April. The latest publication can be found through the following web link: <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/young-carer-grant-high-level-statistics-to-30-april-2020/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/young-carer-grant-high-level-statistics-to-30-april-2020/</a></p> <p>The Scottish Government has worked closely with Carers Trust Scotland to find an alternative way to use the funding for the annual Young Carers Festival, to still provide young carers with the break and fun they would normally get from this event.</p> <p>After consultation with young carer services it was decided that the funding would be used in 2 ways. The first to set up a mini-grant scheme, which would be run by Carers Trust Scotland. These grants can be up to £2,500, and eligible young carer services can apply to use this funding to put on events for young carers with the goal of providing a break and fun. The criteria for this funding has been purposefully flexible so that services might be able put on events which fit with what stage of the route map we may be in, and to align with what young carers feel comfortable with. This grant scheme was launched on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July, and all eligible services in Scotland were pro-actively emailed by Carers Trust to encourage them to apply.</p> <p>The Second part of the funding is going towards an online festival called "<a href="#">Best of the Fest</a>". Carers trust will also be hosting this event, due to take place from 5<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> August. Any young carers can sign up to this event, where there will be online activities, drop in sessions with different services and opportunities for young carers to feedback to us their thoughts on the support they have received. Many of the workshops and activities will be recorded and stored on an online hub, so that young carers can watch them even after the event has finished.</p>
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		<p>The Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying at home and away from others (social distancing) <a href="#">guidance</a> has been amended, allowing vulnerable people, including those who are autistic or have learning disabilities to travel a bit further to appropriate outdoor space where they can exercise safely, to enable them to keep to their routines and ease their anxiety.</p> <p>On 24 March, we wrote to NHS Boards stating that people with learning disabilities and autism are exempt from the COVID-19 'no visitors' policy. This means children with learning disabilities are able to be supported by their families in hospital.</p> <p>The compulsory wearing of masks on public transport and in shops is exempt for people with health conditions who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of any physical or mental illness or impairment or disability, without severe distress.</p> <p>Commissioned by the Scottish Government, the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities has a hub of resources available to people with learning disabilities and those who support them. These resources include easy read materials on the virus and government advice, self-help guides for supporting your mental health and a clinical guide for supporting someone with a learning disability in hospital. These are available on the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities website and the easy read government advice can be found on Ready Scotland.</p> <p>In relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and trafficked children, the Scottish Government funds the Scottish Guardianship Service (SGS) which provides a guardian to unaccompanied and trafficked children. The Scottish Government has weekly meetings with SGS to ensure that unaccompanied and trafficked children are receiving the support they need during the pandemic including information translated in the correct languages so that the children and young people understand about the pandemic and lockdown rules.</p> <p>The Government has made local authorities aware of options to provide laptops to unaccompanied and trafficked children so that they can keep up with their studies and appointments with lawyers. We have also been engaging with the Home Office on asylum and trafficking processes during COVID-19 and Police Scotland on the trafficking situation during COVID-19, to ensure the young people are receiving the correct support and safeguarding during the pandemic.</p> <p>In relation to the support provided for care experienced children and young people, a number of measures have been implemented.</p>
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	<p>In order to keep those children who are most vulnerable, and who are shielding safe, the Scottish Government has extended access to PPE and testing to all unpaid carers who need it. PPE will be available to carers providing personal care, such as washing and dressing, in cases where they are unable to access it through their normal routes. Carers should read the Scottish Government advice for <a href="#">unpaid carers providing personal care</a> to find out if they should be wearing PPE and which type of PPE they require for their situation. Based on this guidance, if an individual feels they require PPE and can't get it through your normal routes they can access it through their local carers' centre. The Scottish Government <a href="#">website</a> confirms that unpaid carers are included with the group of key workers who are able to access testing. Unpaid carers are specifically mentioned within priority group 4.</p> <p>For young people in custody, the Scottish Prison Service has worked hard throughout the pandemic to mitigate the impact for them. All prison staff have been provided with information on how to identify those who may be struggling whilst in isolation. Self-help support leaflets, designed by SPS Psychologists, have been issued to everyone in custody to provide information and tools which can be used to maintain a sense of wellbeing. Relaxation and mindfulness tapes and videos are also now available through in-cell televisions and radios.</p> <p>At Polmont, Fife College provide learning materials for young people on a weekly basis and other activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily kettlebell and physical workout activities daily for small groups, provided by Sports and Games instructors;</li> <li>• weekly activity packs and materials issued by activities staff to children and young people for them to engage with in their rooms;</li> <li>• access to library books maintained;</li> <li>• phone lines to enable contact between young people and third sector partners, including Barnardo's.</li> </ul> <p>Children and young people on remand are encouraged to participate in these activities.</p> <p>In addition to these elements, some children and young people have been undertaking work activities for up to 6 hours a day in essential services (cooking, gardening, cleaning and hall painting).</p> <p>Staff encourage young people to participate in all the activities they have access to, including recreation, work and outdoor exercise. Staff monitor and record participation in recreation and outdoor exercise and also young people's shower use and telephone use. Senior managers within the establishment review the findings in daily meetings.</p>
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		<p>Where a young person is being protected for reasons of their offence an individual care plan is in place and case conferences are held frequently with a view to supporting their wellbeing and maximising the individual's access to activities.</p> <p>The <a href="#">SPS published their COVID-19 Routemap</a> on their website along with physical distancing guidance. It is hoped that education and a range of other services can resume at HMP&amp;YOI Polmont for young people throughout August.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has engaged with asylum and refugee stakeholder organisations to promote clear messaging and guidance on public health, including their right to access healthcare in Scotland.</p> <p>The Scottish Government supported work to develop COVID-19 specific guidance for local authorities when making support decisions for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) under social work and children's act duties. This guidance was published by COSLA on 20 April. This builds on guidance published in 2019 which highlights local authority duties in relation to child wellbeing and GIRFEC policy.</p>
8	<p>Release children in all forms of detention, whenever possible, and provide children who cannot be released with the means to maintain regular contact with their families.</p>	<p>A number of short-term prisoners nearing the end of their time in custody were released early, under measures designed to help manage the potential effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) upon the prison system. These measures were designed to help prison and healthcare staff to continue to manage safely all those who remain in their care during the outbreak.</p> <p>The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 established powers for early release of prisoners. Release needed to be necessary and proportionate for the purpose of protecting (a) the security and good order of any prison to which the regulations relate, or (b) the health, safety or welfare of prisoners, or those working, in any such prison.</p> <p>Regulations were subsequently laid before Parliament to implement the release of a specific group of prisoners, who were eligible on the date of regulations were laid (4 May). The scheme was limited to those sentenced to 18 months or less and who on 4 May had 90 days or less left to serve. The release of prisoners under the regulations was subject to exclusions to ensure public protection, such as those who are imprisoned for life or with convictions for sexual offences, domestic abuse or terrorism offences. The regulations set out clear criteria which would limit the number of individuals involved, and the time period the process would be conducted in – to deliver an effective, proportionate and timely action that would reflect the intentions of the 2020 Act.</p> <p>The release process concluded on 1 June, after the scheduled 28 days of activity. By the completion of the process on 1 June, 348 of the 445 being considered had been released early. (27 others were released on their scheduled release date during May, and 7 requested a release on Home Detention</p>

		<p>Curfew instead). 63 eligible individuals had their early release vetoed by Prison Governors. No eligible prisoners had an early release held back on health grounds.</p> <p>The early release regulations made specific provision so that they include the release of young offenders. Those in prison custody who are designated as young offenders were considered as eligible for release providing that they fulfil the rest of the criteria set out in the regulations. One individual aged between 16-17 was released under these provisions.</p> <p>The criteria for early release in these Regulations needed to match the legislative powers for early release granted to Scottish Ministers by Parliament under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020. The debate in Parliament about the use of these powers, made quite clear the context for their use was in response to population wide challenges. The early release process did provide capacity estate wide to be able to deal with any vulnerability across the prison estate.</p> <p>In considering whether release in an individual case could be said to be necessary and proportionate, it is important to note that other forms of release for individual cases, such as compassionate release, have continued to operate over this period.</p> <p>While the SG will keep the overall position in respect of possible further release under review (in co-ordination with the SPS and other stakeholders), at this time a further release is not deemed necessary and we have no extant Regulations for further early releases.</p> <p>The SG and SPS recognise that the difficult but necessary decision to suspend in-person visits impacted on many in custody including young people and their loved ones.</p> <p>SPS put in place a series of measures to ensure contact and provide information to families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 2 days of the suspension of visits, a dedicated family COVID-19 helpline was set up to enable family members of those in prison custody to get advice and support.</li> <li>• People in custody could continue to communicate to their families through mail and the phone system.</li> <li>• The provision of an additional £2.50 per week of phone credit for everyone in custody.</li> <li>• SPS expanded and encouraged access to the Email-a-Prisoner and Prisoner Voicemail Scheme.</li> </ul> <p>From 15 June, the Scottish Prison Service commenced a roll-out of video conferencing facilities to enable virtual visits and this was in place across the estate with over 3500 virtual visits having now taken place. We are currently exploring opportunities to ensure that families affected by imprisonment are not adversely affected by digital exclusion and unable to take up the opportunity of virtual visits. With the exception of HMP Kilmarnock, who will be implementing in-cell phones, mobile phone access is being implemented across the estate and will be in place by August.</p>
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		<p>These measures have helped support the wellbeing and mental health of all those affected by imprisonment including young people in custody.</p> <p>On 24 July, SPS announced their intention to resume in-person visits with some restrictions. This was undertaken in consultation with Families Outside and other stakeholders to ensure this could be effectively communicated to families with loved ones in custody. This has commenced in some prisons and will be in place across the estate on 3 August.</p> <p>SPS will continue to follow the current guidance from Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland, and, in order to keep all safe, will be implementing some changes to visits such as restrictions on numbers able to visit. These will be kept under review and communicated to families.</p> <p>Information sheets for individual establishments detailing visits times and booking processes are also available on the SPS website.</p> <p>The use of these of virtual visits and mobile phones as forms of contact will continue to provide support to prisoners as the prison service transitions out of lockdown to full regime recovery.</p> <p>Immigration detention is reserved to the UK Government and handled by the Home Office. The Scottish Government understands that no children are detained in Dungavel, which is the only immigration removal centre in Scotland.</p> <p>The health and wellbeing of children living in secure care is a priority. Secure centres have contingency and business continuity plans in place, which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are able to deal with the impacts of the coronavirus. Scottish Government officials are in weekly and often daily contact with secure care providers to discuss concerns and challenges and to consider the continuation of education provided to those in their care, virtual visits and the reintroduction of social distance family visits.</p> <p>From the start of the COVID-19 crisis all children in secure care have been able to stay in regular contact with family and friends using a variety of methods including phone, zoom, face time, e-mail and letter. As we move through Scotland’s recovery route map the secure centres are offering safe risk assessed family visits.</p> <p>Article 37 of the UNCRC states “no child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time”</p>
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	<p>Young people can be placed in secure care in Scotland on welfare grounds through the children's hearings system or on sentence or remand through the courts. All children placed in secure care through the children's hearing must meet the criteria set out in the in The Secure Accommodation (Scotland) Regulations 2013 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a)that the child has previously absconded and is likely to abscond again and, if the child were to abscond, it is likely that the child's physical, mental or moral welfare would be at risk;</li> <li>(b)that the child is likely to engage in self-harming conduct; or</li> <li>(c)that the child is likely to cause injury to another person.</li> </ul> <p>Secure placements are reviewed at least every 3 months if the young person no longer meets the secure criteria they must leave secure care.</p> <p>When a young person is sentenced to secure care Scottish Ministers have the option if appropriate to refer each young person to the Parole Board for consideration for early release. Section 7(2) of the Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act 1993 ('the 1993 Act') determines the qualifying period for parole when a child is detained under section 208 of the 1995 Act. "Detention" for this purpose includes children placed in secure accommodation. Therefore the earliest date of liberation is specified as follows - if the sentence is less than four years, they shall be released on licence by Scottish Ministers as soon as half the sentence has elapsed; if four or more years, they shall be so released as soon as two thirds of the sentence has elapsed. However, those young people subject to four or more years' sentence also have a parole qualifying date calculated on half the sentence - all are referred to the Parole Board for Scotland at this point.</p> <p>Mental health legislation in Scotland is underpinned by a set of rights and principles which promotes patients' rights and provides a range of tools to help them express their will and preferences. For those children who are subject to the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 there are specific principles which apply to the welfare of the child. A person discharging any function under the Act must do so in the manner that appears to that person to best secure the welfare of the child, take into account the wishes and feelings of the child and any views of the carers and the importance of providing appropriate services to that child.</p> <p>Statutory guidance sets out that the medical practitioner attending the child must consider whether the child is capable of understanding the nature and possible consequences of the procedure or treatment. If</p>
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		<p>the child is considered capable, the practitioner must seek the consent of the child rather than of the parent.</p>
9	<p>Prevent the arrest or detention of children for violating State guidance and directives relating to COVID-19, and ensure that any child who was arrested or detained is immediately returned to his or her family.</p>	<p>In the Stage 2 debate on the Coronavirus (No. 2) (Scotland) Bill, Parliament agreed to amend the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 so that Fixed Penalty Notices could no longer be given under the Regulations to those aged 16 or 17.</p> <p>Any fixed penalty notices given to those aged 16 or 17 when it was possible to do so remain in place.</p> <p>There are criminal offences under Schedule 21 of the UK Government’s Coronavirus Act 2020. In Scotland, the penalties for breach includes imprisonment for up to 12 months. The penalties in Scotland are aligned with the penalties in section 120 of the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008.</p> <p>However, it is for the Chief Constable to determine the operational approach that police officers should take in exercising the powers in Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and also in the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, as amended.</p> <p>Police Scotland have produced operational guidance on the proportionate application of these powers for dissemination to constables along with proactive communications and social media highlighting that, even in these exceptional times, their approach to policing will remain governed by consent, with “soft enforcement” as the default setting.</p> <p>Police Scotland recognises that the vast majority of children do not engage in criminal or other antisocial activity. If such activity occurs, the police will work with local communities and relevant partners to understand why these issues arise and to determine the causes of such behaviour. This includes activities that encourage positive outcomes for children and improve the quality of life for communities as a whole.</p> <p>In determining whether to arrest a child, police officers will take full account of the provisions contained in the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (“the Act”) and the guidance set out in the Care and Welfare of Persons in Police Custody; the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (Arrest Process); and Offending by Children Standard Operating Procedures.</p> <p>Section 50 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 states that “a constable must take every precaution to ensure that a person is not unreasonably or unnecessarily held in police custody”. Compliance with Section 50 is the responsibility of all police officers involved from the arresting and enquiry officers to the custody officer. This “beyond all reasonable doubt” test applies to children and adults alike.</p>



		<p>A public version of Police Scotland’s operational <a href="#">guidance</a> for officers and staff has very recently been published on Police Scotland’s website. [Some details have been redacted from the guidance for operational reasons].</p> <p>Finally, there are review and reporting mechanisms contained within the Coronavirus Acts, which require the Scottish Government to report regularly to the Scottish Parliament on the provisions contained in the legislation.</p> <p>Assessing whether legislative provisions remain necessary and proportionate is a core element of the ongoing process to ensure that human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled and equality objectives achieved.</p> <p>It is essential that the need for the legislation, and its operation, is kept under robust and regular review.</p>
10	Disseminate accurate information about COVID-19 and how to prevent infection in languages and formats that are child-friendly and accessible to all children including children with disabilities, migrant children and children with limited access to the Internet.	<p>Scottish Ministers consider it of paramount importance at this time to ensure that children and young people can source clear, and accessible information about the virus and for their voices to be heard in the decision making process.</p> <p>We are working with Children in Scotland, Children’s Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament, Young Scot and others to ensure clear and consistent messaging is developed and communicated to children and young people about COVID-19. Young Scot have received £46,992 from the Immediate Priorities Fund to enhance its digital capability to inform young people and encourage them to support the movement to flatten the curve of Coronavirus in Scotland. This investment is part of the Scottish Government’s wider £350 million Communities Funding.</p> <p>On 15 May we published an <a href="#">easy read version</a> of ‘COVID-19: A Framework for Decision Making’. Additionally, NHS Scotland has published a number of easy read, audio and BSL versions of its coronavirus advice on NHS Inform Website <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>We are also gathering intelligence on how organisations are supporting disabled users to access key messaging by sharing it in accessible formats. For example, the charity PAMIS, which supports people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) has received a grant from the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund to create and publish multi-sensory stories. These stories aim to support families and staff to explore with people with PMLD both how they have recently been feeling, and what support would be beneficial to them as we move through and out of the crisis. This resource is almost completed and PAMIS intend to create an online course to accompany it.</p> <p>The Parent Club website has regularly updated information for families. The Scottish Government marketing team are working with a number of partners, including BEMIS, to produce and disseminate, through partner organisations, key information to parents within minority and seldom heard groups</p>

		<p>(including translations in a number of languages). The Parent Club website endeavours to conform to level Double-A of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. Parent Club website content and associated marketing assets are updated/created regularly to ensure latest guidance on restriction changes relating to families, is clear and easily accessible.</p> <p>Young carers often have additional concerns and therefore require specific tailored information on help available for unpaid carers. The Scottish Government is working with Young Scot to convert any carer related information, such as access to PPE and testing, into an appropriate format. This is then being published on the Young Scot young carer platform.</p>
11	<p>Provide opportunities for children's views to be heard and taken into account in decision-making processes on the pandemic.</p>	<p>The First Minister has answered video questions from children and young people about COVID-19 on 3 occasions (23 March, 7 April and 29 April). The videos have been released on the Young Scot YouTube channel and shared across Scottish Government, including Parent Club, and relevant partner social media channels.</p> <p>The Scottish Youth Parliament, in partnership with Young Scot and YouthLink Scotland, delivered "<i>Lockdown Lowdown</i>", an online survey developed by young people for young people, to help identify what they need from the Scottish Government, the NHS, COSLA, local authorities and others.</p> <p>The Children's Parliament has delivered "<i>Children and the <a href="#">Coronavirus: How are you doing?</a></i>", an online survey of nearly 4000 children, aged between 8 and 14 years old, from across Scotland on their concerns about COVID-19. The survey has run 3 times between April and June 2020, with a further survey planned for the Autumn to coincide with the return to school. This allows Scottish Government and its partners to monitor any trends during and out of lockdown and provide CYP further opportunity to voice their experiences over the course of the pandemic.</p> <p>The reports from both surveys have been shared widely with Scottish Government officials and will inform ongoing policy development, and help inform the work of the CYPFAG as it captures the lived experiences of children, young people and families.</p> <p>The CYPFAG will consider how best to ensure feedback is provided to those children, young people and families, whose input has helped influence decision making.</p> <p>Scottish Government analysts are providing regular research briefings to inform the work of the Children and Families Collective Leadership Group which cover the breadth of COVID-19 impacts on CYP, including research with CYP directly, and with a particular focus on children, young people and families with vulnerabilities. This work is ongoing and includes an assessment of evidence gaps which the SG is working towards addressing. We continue to work collaboratively with partner organisations (e.g. Public Health Scotland) and academic institutions to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on CYP.</p>

		<p>Embedding Children’s Rights and ensuring meaningful engagement with children and young people is a priority for Scottish Government. Our COVID-19 - Communications with Children and Young People Working Group (Children in Scotland, Children’s Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament Together and Young Scot) was set up in late March as a mechanism for highlighting emerging issues. This work enriched the communication between the Scottish Government and children and young people. The Group has now evolved to form the Children, Young People and Families Advisory Group in support of the C&amp;F Collective Leadership Group.</p> <p>The CYPFAG has been set up to ensure that the voices of those groups considered most vulnerable during the pandemic are able to share their lived experience and to participate in solution-based discussions. Following the second meeting of the CYPFAG on the 15 July, a work-plan is being developed to enable the group to support the participation of vulnerable groups in the work of the CLG. The CYPFAG has adopted a rolling chair model to support shared leadership and decision making with Children in Scotland taking on the role for the first 3 month period. The membership of the Group has been extended to include family focused organisations and representation from The Promise. The CYPFAG is constituted by bodies as diverse as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Parliament</li> <li>• Scottish Youth Parliament</li> <li>• Member Scottish Youth Parliament</li> <li>• WhoCares? Scotland</li> <li>• Independent Care Review – The Promise</li> <li>• Together – Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights</li> <li>• Young Scot</li> <li>• YouthLink Scotland</li> <li>• Children in Scotland</li> <li>• Parent Network Scotland</li> <li>• Home Start UK</li> <li>• Parenting Across Scotland</li> <li>• One Parent Families Scotland</li> </ul>
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