

Update report			
Name of subgroup / associate group / consortium	Scottish Government	DATE	March 2021
		Author	Lindsay MacDougall
		Date of previous report	December 2020
Activity and progress from last report	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Outlined below is a summary of Scottish Government policy developments and relevant information regarding child protection. It covers developments that have taken place since the last update.</p> <p><i>The National Child Protection Leadership Group</i></p> <p>The National Child Protection Leadership Group last met on 11 December 2020. The Group received updates on the National Child Protection Guidance consultation, the Learning Review guidance, the public protection induction for Chief Officers, and Joint Investigative Interviews (JII) and Barnahus. The 2021 National Child Protection Leadership Group meetings are in the process of being scheduled.</p> <p>Information about the role and remit of the Group, membership, and minutes of previous meetings can be found here: National Child Protection Leadership Group - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</p> <p>If you would like to discuss further, please contact Fiona Marshall Fiona.Marshall@gov.scot</p> <p><i>Revision of the National Child Protection Guidance</i></p> <p>The Scottish Government consultation on the draft National Child Protection Guidance closed on 31 January. 161 responses were received and are being analysed by Craigforth, a social research company. Following the analysis, the draft National Guidance will be revised in light of the comments received. The intention is to publish the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland in late May/early June 2021. Early conversations are taking place with regards to planning for the implementation of the Guidance.</p>		

Covid-19 [Supplementary National Child Protection Guidance](#) was developed for Chief Officers, Chief Social Work Officers and Child Protection Committees. This was first published on 31 March 2020 and was last updated on 22 December 2020. The supplementary guidance will be updated further as necessary.

If you would like to discuss further, please contact Fiona Marshall Fiona.Marshall@gov.scot.

Improving Learning from reviews of Child Protection Cases

The consultation for the National Guidance for Undertaking Learning Reviews has now been completed, and the draft guidance has been subsequently updated. 31 responses from CPCs were received with one joint submission.

Learning from cases where children have died or been significantly harmed is a vital part of an effective and improving child protection system. Reflecting on learning provides the opportunity to identify good practice in protecting children and make any necessary practice changes are made, not only in the area where the harm occurred, but throughout the country to better protect children in the future.

The new systems will replace Significant Case Reviews (SCRs) and Initial Case Reviews (ICRs) with a single Learning Review, supporting a more proportionate and timely approach to case reviews which fosters a learning culture and the implementation of findings for improvement.

The guidance is now in the final stages of preparation, in advance of sign off by the Care Review Oversight Group and publication.

Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending involving children and young people

The Scottish Government continues to progress action to address the proposals made by the Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending involving Children and Young People, and develop policy on harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) more generally.

As part of Young Scot's DigiKnow campaign, a survey to seek the views of young people on online harmful sexual behaviour was launched on 26 January and will be live for 8 weeks. The survey, co-designed by young people, follows on from the

survey on online sexual attitudes carried out by the Expert Group in 2019.

At the December 2020 meeting of the National Child Protection Leadership Group, members agreed that a sub-group of the Leadership Group be established to consider and ensure successful delivery of the remaining proposals, report on progress, and offer advice, further expert input and oversight. There is cross-sectorial interest in representation on this delivery group, including education, social work, health, CPC Scotland, Police Scotland, COPFS, and third sector. Invites to Leadership Group members who indicated their interest were issued in January 2021, requesting nominees to join. The first meeting of this sub-group is provisionally planned for Tuesday 30 March 2021.

For further information please contact Caroline.Lauder@gov.scot or Francois.Roos@gov.scot.

Implementing the Children's aspects of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015

The Child Trafficking Strategy Group met remotely on Thursday 4 March 2021, the first time the group had convened in the last year. The meeting was used to take stock, following the completion of the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy in 2020 and for members to highlight any forthcoming work. The group will now return to meeting on a quarterly basis.

Work is continuing to implement the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian service to support children who have been, or are at risk of being, trafficked. The procurement process is ongoing and in December 2020, a Request for Information was issued to potential service suppliers. This closed in January 2021 and the results will inform the Specification of Requirements for the new service.

As part of the Home Office National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Transformation Programme, the Home Office have been considering an alternative model for the decision-making process of the National Referral Mechanism for child victims of trafficking, and are now looking to pilot the model in select local authorities which are responsible for children's social care. The aim of the pilots is to test whether determining if a child is a victim of trafficking within existing child protection structures can provide better alignment with the provision of local, needs-based support and any law enforcement response.

The Home Office launched a competitive bid for local authorities across the UK to apply to be part of the pilot to devolve

decision-making process of the National Referral Mechanism for child victims of trafficking back in November 2020 and we are currently awaiting the outcome of the bid process. We continue to work closely with the Home Office and stakeholders on these proposals.

For further information, please contact shoba.galloway@gov.scot

Unaccompanied Children in Scotland

The Scottish Government has concluded its *Request For Information* as part of the pre-tender activity for the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG). Responses are under consideration and a decision will be made regarding the commencement of the tendering process in the summer.

For further information, please contact shoba.galloway@gov.scot

Online harms

A campaign has been launched to help children and young people recognise the signs of online harms including child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSE). The CSEthe Signs initiative aims to raise awareness among those aged 11 to 17 and their parents and carers of what constitutes CSE, and where they can go for advice and support if they have concerns. It is part of a coordinated response from the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and Child Protection Committees Scotland, who will each run campaigns during March to help keep young people safe online. More information can be found [here](#).

For further information, please contact Francois.Roos@gov.scot.

Barnahus

The Scottish Government is exploring the application of the Barnahus concept for immediate trauma informed support for child victims of serious and traumatic crimes within the context of Scotland's healthcare, child protection and criminal justice systems and to explore how Barnahus could work. Barnahus provides Scotland with an opportunity to design a genuinely child-centred approach to delivering justice, care and recovery for children who have experienced trauma, including, but not only, child sexual abuse.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) and the Care Inspectorate (CI) were commissioned by the Scottish

Government to develop Scotland-specific standards for Barnahus based on the European PROMISE Quality Standards which are based on best practice from the Nordic countries. This work has now resumed following a pause due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

We recognise the importance of remaining focussed at this stage on reaching a common child-centred vision for Barnahus across justice, child protection and health. It is crucial that the standards are in line with existing cross cutting policy and processes in Scotland and build on current good practice and improvements, aligned with GIRFEC, Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and delivery of the Promise.

For further information please contact Jack Murray-Dickson on 0131 244 6041 or Jack.murray-dickson@gov.scot

Joint Investigative Interviews

Police Scotland, Social Work Scotland and other Justice partners have been working in partnership with the Scottish Government to take forward the development of the new model for joint investigative interviewing of children in Scotland – the Scottish Child Interview Model. This is part of our response to the recommendations of the Evidence and Procedure Review Joint Investigative Interviews Work Stream: to improve the quality and process for joint investigative interviews with child victims and witnesses, and to develop a systematic approach to obtaining children’s evidence involving pre-recording of both evidence in chief and cross examination, in a child-focussed environment with wrap-around support, and so minimise the risk of further traumatising.

The focus now is firmly on determining how best to move from pilot to full national implementation of the new Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing, which is both trauma informed and achieves best evidence through more robust planning and interview techniques.

The JII practice model launched in pilot site one (Lanarkshire) on 10 February 2020 and in pilot site two (North Strathclyde) on 10 August 2020

The JII model is currently being further rolled out to the 3rd cadre in Dumfries and Galloway which started on 15th Feb and the 4th cadre in Glasgow planned start date is 22nd March. Fife have confirmed their interest in being the fifth pilot area.

The engagement activity by the National JII Implementation

Team with local authorities and police divisions is helping to shape the next stage of the work. which is about developing tools to help areas increase their readiness for implementation.

For further information please contact Jack Murray-Dickson on 0131 244 6041 or Jack.murray-dickson@gov.scot

Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019

Implementation of the Act continues. Three sets of commencement regulations have now come into effect.

The first set of commencement regulations came into force on 29 November 2019 which commenced sections 3 and 27 of the 2019 Act. They removed the offence ground of referring a child under 12 to a children’s hearing, and commenced the provision in relation to information for victims.

The second set of commencement regulations came into force on 31 March 2020. They commenced the guidance-making and regulation-making powers of the Act, and also commenced provisions that enable children’s legal aid to also be available for proceedings before the sheriff which relate to applications for orders under Part 4 of the Act.

The third set of commencement regulations came into force on 30 November 2020. They commenced provisions in Part 2 of the Act (which relates to disclosure) which had not already been commenced.

The fourth (and final) set of commencement regulations will bring into force those provisions which have not already been commenced. These provisions are, essentially Part 4 (which relates to police powers) and sections 1 and 2 (which effectively raise the age of criminal responsibility).

SG officials continue to work with operational partners to develop guidance and processes to implement the Act. Short consultations have taken place on draft Ministerial guidance for section 28 (the power to take a child to a place of safety), for section 57 (investigative interview), and for the proposals for child interview rights practitioners. Responses to the consultations are being considered, and documents are in the process of being amended.

If you would like to discuss further, please contact Kenzy Thomson (Kenzy.Thomson@gov.scot)

Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act

2019

This Act removed the common law defence of “reasonable chastisement” from the law of Scotland, making all physical punishment of children unlawful on 7 November 2020.

The Act also requires the Scottish Ministers to take steps to promote public understanding and awareness about the removal of the reasonable chastisement defence. This obligation came into force on 8 November 2019.

The Scottish Government has published details about the Act, its background and where support can be obtained on a dedicated [webpage](#).

The Scottish Government formed an Implementation Group which has worked on what is required to implement this legislation. Information about the work of this group can be found on the Scottish Government’s [website](#). The Group is continuing to meet so as to consider anything further required on implementation.

As part of its implementation work, the Scottish Government issued a [letter](#) and [framework document](#) on the Act to statutory bodies. These documents are intended to inform a consistent approach to implementation of the Act across delivery bodies and they have been published on the Scottish Government [website](#).

For further information about this Act, or if you have any questions, please contact sarah.meanley@gov.scot.

Children’s Hearings System

The first face to face children’s hearing since lockdown took place on 15 July 2020. Work is progressing on schedule to facilitate face to face hearings in every hearings centre nationwide, with modifications required in some centres to ensure the safety of attendees. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts from the responsible agencies, this marks a significant step on the road to system recovery.

The resumption of ‘Face-to-face’ children’s hearings - where safe to do so - was included in Phase 1 announced on 21 May 2020. Safety remains paramount, and no child, family member, volunteer, staff or professional will be called to physically attend a hearing unless the responsible agencies are satisfied that it is safe. Virtual and hybrid hearings have been in place across the whole country from 4 May last year, ensuring that the service

has continued to operate to the fullest extent possible.

The children's hearings system is vital to determining the rights and life chances of Scotland's most vulnerable children. But service recovery is not straightforward. Remedial plans are in place to respond to the demands of Covid suppression.

The intrinsic informality of the hearings system and layout of hearings centres bring their own complexities to recovery planning. It was felt vital to move at pace to set in hand preparations for the resumption of face to face hearings at the earliest possible point.

We introduced extraordinary flexibility measures to support the system in last April's emergency Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020. Every 2 months Scottish Government has provided a report to Scottish Parliament on the use of the powers with the 5th report published in February. Work is currently underway on whether the children's provisions in the Act should be extended beyond the end of March for a further 6 months. Recommendations are that all but one of the children's hearings provisions require to be extended.

SCRA sent recovery proposals to Health Protection Scotland in mid-June and received detailed feedback. The risk assessment work was resubmitted and updated in light of the new variant, and therefore remains current.

The Scottish Government is in regular dialogue with the children's services sector and children's hearings partners to monitor the impact of the pandemic on service provision and the protections afforded to children. We want to quickly apply the learning from how the system has coped in this crisis. We will want to hold on to good innovations. The 'new normal' must enable children's hearings partners to 'keep the promise' we made to children and young people and the Independent Care Review.

The Scottish Government has made more than £2m available to support the swiftest possible system recovery and renewal. Recovery plans are in place for hearings to return to a steady state by autumn 2021.

£0.5m has been allocated to key early 2021 priorities by multi-agency Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership.

For further information, please contact Iain Fitheridge
iain.fitheridge@gov.scot

The Supreme Court has heard arguments that siblings views should be considered at all stages when a child is referred to a children's hearing, with social work assessments of key family relationships being the starting point. The court has now decided that the children's hearing system if operated sensibly is ECHR compliant. New provisions offering an opportunity to participate have been passed in the Children (Scotland) Act.

16/17 year olds within the Children's Hearings System

The Scottish Government recently consulted on raising the age a young person can be referred to a children's hearing to protect them or address their behaviour.

We sought views on whether this should be increased to include all under 18s at risk of exploitation, abuse or harm due to their own behaviour or that of others. We also asked about structural, resourcing, service design and practice implications of the proposed changes; and whether additional protections and support are necessary for victims of crime.

The consultation ran from June to October and an [independent analysis](#) was published on 7 December 2020.

There was overwhelming support to raise the maximum age of referral to 18 for care, protection and offence cases, allowing equal opportunities for young people to get the right support at the right time.

We are now working with partners to explore the practical implications of this proposed change and develop responses to the issues raised (reflecting the Government's commitment to UNCRC incorporation and the recommendations of The Promise).

For further information, please contact Alison Melville Alison.melville@gov.scot.

National Review of Care Allowances

The National Review of Care Allowances reported in September 2018 and published 12 recommendations for improvement. The report can be read here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/final-report-recommendations-national-review-care-allowances-9781787812109/>

The Scottish Government is committed to working with COSLA to agree how best to take forward the recommendations of the

Review, with a view to implementation as soon as possible. This will improve consistency and transparency for looked-after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

If you would like to discuss further please contact Fiona Howe at Fiona.Howe@gov.scot

The Promise

The Scottish Government remains fully committed to deliver on its pledge to care experienced people in Scotland by accepting and responding to the care review conclusions and to put into place quickly the infrastructure to develop and deliver an Action Plan to implement the outcomes reached and '#KeepThePromise'.

- The 2020/21 Programme for Government illustrates our unwavering commitment to delivering The Promise, highlighting three early steps:
- Firstly, we are committed to creating a structure that can facilitate the re-design of whole system approaches to care and support. This begins with embedding the commitments that have already been made to care experienced people into policy and delivery, with significant and intensive work across the entirety of government policy;
- Secondly, an Oversight Board is now in place and had their first meeting on 28 January 2021, established to hold Scotland to account, with Fiona Duncan – Chair of the Care Review – appointed to lead it. At least half of the members of the Oversight Board are care experienced, because we cannot build a new approach without having those with lived experience at the heart of accountability;
- Finally, we have supported the establishment of a dedicated, independent Promise implementation Team and we have invested £4 million in the Promise Partnership Fund to help embed and scale-up holistic family support.

The £4m Promise Partnership Fund launched on 1 February 2021 to help organisations with early intervention and to deliver changes to better support children, young people and families in or on the edges of care. The fund closes for applications on 1 March. This fund is being administered by the CORRA Foundation.

Consideration is also currently being given to the establishment of The promise as an independent entity, as the current incubation of The Promise within the Scottish Government ends in March.

If you would like to discuss further please contact Stacey Heather-Brash at Stacey.Heather-Brash@gov.scot

Children (Scotland) Act

The Children (Scotland) Act gained Royal Assent on 1 October 2020.

The Act was informed by the outcome of a consultation on the Review of Part 1 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (the 1995 Act). Part 1 of the 1995 Act covers parental responsibilities and rights and contact and residence cases relating to children when parents are no longer together.

The key policy aims of the Act are to:

- Ensure that the child's best interests are at the centre of any contact and residence case or Children's Hearing;
- Ensure that the views of the child are heard;
- Ensure further compliance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- Further protect victims of domestic abuse and their children in family court proceedings.

The Act covers a range of areas including:

- Establishing a register of Child Welfare Reporters and curators ad litem;
- Regulating child contact centres;
- Encouraging the views of younger children to be heard by decision makers;
- Protecting victims of domestic abuse by prohibiting personal contact of a case in certain circumstances and authorising special measures to be used in family court cases; and
- Promoting of contact between looked after children and siblings.

We recognise that primary legislation is only part of the action necessary to improve the operation of family justice. A Family Justice Modernisation Strategy was published on 3 September 2019. This sets out work that is ongoing by Scottish Government and others; work that can be done via secondary legislation or by improved guidance; areas covered by the Act; and areas that are for longer term work. It includes the PFG commitment to keep siblings together where it is in their best interests.

The Act will take time to implement as a number of the provisions require secondary legislation, changes to court rules or significant further consideration.

The following sections of the 2020 Act came into force on 17 Jan 2021:

section 15 (clarification of order-making power),

section 23 (funding for alternative dispute resolution),

section 24 (pilot scheme for mandatory alternative dispute resolution meetings).

The following sections of the 2020 Act will come into force on 26 July 2021:

section 13 (promotion of contact between looked after children and siblings),

(b)section 14 (duty to consider contact when making etc. compulsory supervision order),

(c)section 25 (opportunity to participate in hearing),

(d)section 26 (appeal against relevant person decision).

We are planning to launch consultations on the register of child welfare reporters, curators ad litem and solicitors appointed where a person has been prohibited from personally conducting a case themselves and the regulation of child contact centres shortly.

If you would like to discuss this further please contact Hannah Frodsham on Hannah.Frodsham@gov.scot.

UNCRC Incorporation Bill

On 1 September 2020, a Bill to incorporate the UNCRC and Optional Protocols 1 and 2 to the maximum extent of the Scottish Parliament's powers was introduced to the Scottish Parliament. The Bill will ensure that there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. This will mean that children, young people and their families will experience public bodies consistently acting to uphold the rights of all children in Scotland. It will mean that for the first time that children and young people, or their representatives, can enforce their rights in the courts. It is our intention that the Bill will result in the highest protection for children's rights possible.

On 20 January 2021, the Scottish Parliament unanimously

agreed to the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill after the Stage 1 debate. The Bill completed Stage 2, where the Bill was amended to commence 6 months after Royal Assent. The third and final stage of the Bill is expected to take place on 16 March 2021.

Once passed, the Bill will put in place a strong framework for the protection and progressive realisation of children's rights. The Bill does not, however, represent the end of the journey in making children's rights real. Instead it will require the continual consideration and prioritisation of children's rights in law, policy and practice.

Children's Rights and Participation

On 20th November 2020 we published our progress report on our Action Plan on Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland 2018-21. The Report provides an update on the progress made in taking forward the strategic actions within the Action Plan since November 2019.

The 31 March 2020 marked the end of the initial reporting period for the duties placed on public authorities under Part 1 (section 2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The duty states that those public authorities, listed under Schedule 1, should report, "as soon as practicable" after the end of each 3 year period, on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requirements.

We are clear that promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children has never been as important as it is now, in what will be worrying and confusing times for many. We also realise that Covid-19 will be placing a significant burden on colleagues working in public authorities at this time in terms of both planning and delivery of public services and individual personal circumstances.

In light of this, Part 3 (duties in respect of reports and other documents), paragraph 8, of Schedule 6 (Functioning of Public Bodies) of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, allows for Scottish Public Authorities to postpone publishing reports or laying reports before the Scottish Parliament if they are of the view that doing so is likely to impede their ability to take effective action to prevent, protect against, delay or otherwise control the incidence or transmission of coronavirus. These

provisions were originally due to expire on 30 September 2020 but following approval from the Scottish Parliament, they have been extended until 31 March 2021. They can now only be extended one further time, to 30 September 2021 and cannot be extended longer than that. As of 23 February, we are aware of 5 public authorities who have, or are in the process of, publishing their report and a further 2 who have, or are in the process of, publishing a statement confirming a delay.

There are widespread concerns about the impact of Covid-19 and the response to it on the rights of children and young people, including by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child who published 11 recommendations for governments. The Scottish Government has produced [four reports](#) for Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) on the action being taken in relation to these recommendations, and have committed to providing further updates.

Because children's rights and wellbeing matter now more than ever, Scottish Government are embedding children's rights into our response to Covid-19. Ministers have a clear expectation that Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs) will be undertaken on all new policies and legislation. A CRWIA was prepared and published for the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act, and we were commended for doing so. A CRWIA has also been prepared and published for the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No. 2) Act and Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Bill. We have prepared and published a number of CRWIAs where decisions have had a direct impact on children and young people. These include: the closure and reopening of schools, the Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, the re-opening of childcare, the Coronavirus restrictions on children and young people (including 2 further updates), Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 – Children's provisions (update in relation to children's hearings), the temporary closure of child contact centres at level 4 for in person contact and the teacher and lecturer estimates - 2020 results. CRWIAs are a practical tool enabling us to assess the likely impacts of intended actions on children's rights and wellbeing and to put mitigations in place.

We have made available [collated lists of all published Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments \(CRWIA\)](#), covering December 2015 to January 2021. These can be found on the Scottish Government website.

Equally Safe

Last year, we invested an additional £5.75m to rapid redesign of services and ensure continued support for victims and survivors during Covid-19.

Our aim is that no change to the level of support, response, or help available is felt by victims of domestic abuse because of the Covid-19 crisis; but that it is adapted to fill their needs within the current climate. Last year, we invested an additional £5.7m for the rapid redesign of services and ensure continued support for victims and survivors during Covid-19.

A total of £61,771 was awarded to the Encompass Network under the Scottish Government's Immediate Priorities Fund. The [Encompass Network](#) is a network of Scottish agencies working with people who are currently involved in and/or planning to exit prostitution.

We have now published the Equally Safe Year Three Report which was produced jointly with COSLA and the Improvement Service.

The Equally Safe Joint Strategic Board is co-chaired by the Minister for Older People and Equalities and COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Cllr Kelly Parry. The most recent meeting of the Board-was held virtually on 25 February 2021 and offered our key stakeholders and partners the opportunity to discuss what things we have done well and where we could do better within the current Equally Safe delivery plan. This comes as the current Equally Safe Delivery Plan comes to an end this year and we look to consult with stakeholders about the next iteration it will take.

Membership of the Equally Safe K-Hub group has grown steadily, and we continue to use the space to share resources and papers. Those with an interest are encouraged to join and share within your networks.

<https://khub.net/group/equally-safe>

If you would like to discuss further, please contact Kirstin McPhee on 0131 244 9783 or Kirstin.Mcphee@gov.scot.

Child Protection in Domestic Abuse Settings

In response to deeply concerning data showing an increase in child protection referrals to services in which domestic abuse has been a significant factor during the pandemic, the Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group has established a subgroup to bring focus to this area of concern.

Bringing together expertise from Police Scotland, CPC Scotland, CCPS, COSLA and Social Work Scotland, the remit of the group will be to find ways of identifying in providing effective interventions. The first meeting will take place on Thursday 3rd March.

For further information please contact Jack Murray-Dickson on 0131 244 6041 or Jack.murray-dickson@gov.scot

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Act was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 19 March 2020 and received Royal Assent in April.

Due to the pressing nature of some of the issues arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, this work was paused for several months. However, it is now resuming and officials are in the process of developing plans on what this will look like in the Covid-19 context.

The National Action Plan to Prevent and Eradicate FGM was launched in 2016 and expired last year. Our Equally Safe Delivery Plan is due to run until the end of this year, so we are beginning to consider what Equally Safe might look like in the future; this will include our approach to FGM and other forms of honour based violence moving forward. We will be taking forward engagement on this over the course of this year. If you would like to discuss further, please contact Nadia Abu-Hussain on 0131 244 6950 or Nadia.Abu-Hussain@gov.scot

Support to Disabled Children and Young People

The Support to Disabled Children and Young People Team currently has a particular focus on the co-ordination of support to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on disabled children and their families; and on improving planning and support for young people who require additional support to make the transition from school to young adult life.

We are very aware, from the data and intelligence provided through stakeholder surveys, and through our Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group of the ways that disabled children, young people and their families have been uniquely or disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. We continue to work across key policy areas to promote a coordinated response to the challenges facing disabled children and their families, and to build on opportunities to increase and improve support to these families.

The Scottish Government has this year provided an additional £622k to the Family Fund in recognition of the increase in applications for support seen by the Family Fund since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the provision of these extra resources, Family Fund anticipates that, this year, Scottish Government funding will help them to deliver grants to a minimum of 7400 families on low incomes raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people for items they might otherwise not afford, including white goods, furniture, sensory toys or outdoor play equipment.

As part of our commitment to improving transitions for young people, the Support to Disabled Children and Young People Team continue to work in partnership with ARC (Association for Real Change) Scotland and the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) to develop and deliver the 'Principles into Practice' framework trial programme.

This is an improvement programme which aims help embed the seven 'Principles of Good Transitions' into policy, planning and practice, and to measure the difference they are making. This trial aims to improve the lived experiences of young people (14 to 25 years) who require additional support to make the transition to young adult life, and to address long running and well-documented challenges associated with coordinating support at this important time.

The purpose of the trials over the next 2 year are to:

- Support the improvement of transitions support available to young people and their parents and carers in the participating trial areas.
- Test and bring the draft of Principles into Practice and associated resources to completion to support its implementation more widely across Scotland.

Ten local authority areas are participating in the trial programme. These are Dundee; Falkirk; Aberdeen City; City of Edinburgh; Midlothian; Inverclyde; North Lanarkshire; Shetland; Perth and Kinross; and Scottish Borders.

For further information, please contact Kayleigh.Miller-Lambie@gov.scot

Getting it right for every child Update

The Scottish Government is updating Policy and Practice Guidance on Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) to promote and support GIRFEC good practice. This will provide

organisations and practitioners with confidence, clarity and practical support to deliver GIRFEC, underpinned by necessary, relevant and proportionate information sharing. We will also develop information and guidance for children, young people, and parents.

This guidance will be developed in partnership with delivery partners and stakeholders including children, young people and parents. Work had been progressing well, in partnership with key delivery partners but was paused as a result of COVID. Implementing GIRFEC is essential to responding to, and recovering from, COVID and we are considering options for re-engaging with key delivery partners resuming work that was paused due to COVID.

Scottish Government has been engaging with local authorities to explore how they are working together with families, communities and third sector organisations to continue to provide children with the support they need.

For further information, please contact the GIRFEC mailbox, GIRFEC@gov.scot

Getting it right for every child Leadership Programme

Delivery of GIRFEC requires the services that support children to work collaboratively together to improve outcomes for the children and families that they are working with. Covid-19 has seen some excellent innovative practice being developed and we will want to build on that going forward.

In order to improve collaborative children's services, we have undertaken a project exploring a collective leadership offer aligned to the delivery of GIRFEC. The GIRFEC Leadership Programme aims to increase capability and capacity around collective leadership in partnerships to drive forward integration and fully embed GIRFEC at the local level, using a 'place-based' approach, providing necessary support to leaders at all levels in their local partnerships, enabling them to apply learning to live situations as part of the 'day job'. A trial of the Programme in two partnership areas (Argyll & Bute, and Fife), is currently on hold due to the impact of the coronavirus.

In addition, SG are working with local partnerships across Scotland to deliver a series regional leadership seminars to address common challenges, with a particular focus on collective leadership, integrated practice and GIRFEC. Four seminars have been delivered to date, with a further four

currently on hold due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

For further information, please contact the GIRFEC mailbox, GIRFEC@gov.scot

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

The Inquiry has also published a number of case study findings to date including on Daughters of Charity (October 2018) and Sisters of Nazareth (May 2019), Quarriers, Aberlour and Barnardos (January 2020) and Christian Brothers (February 2021). Further case study findings will be published in due course.

On 3 December 2019 Phase 4 of hearing began into the Child Migration case study and it concluded in October 2020 following a pause in hearings due to the pandemic. This phase related to investigations into the abuse of children whose departure from Scotland to countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand was part of the child migration programmes.

On 17 November 2020 the Inquiry began hearings examining the actions of Scottish Government in relation to issues arising out of non-recent abuse of children in institutional care.

A case study investigating abuse at residential boarding schools throughout Scotland was paused in late January 2021. This will include children who were boarded out as well as children who were placed in foster care. The Inquiry is recovering evidence from all 32 Scottish local authorities and is gathering evidence from applicants whose care was arranged by any Scottish authority. The case study is expected to begin in 2021.

For queries relating directly to the Inquiry, please contact: information@childabuseinquiry.scot.

Serious Organised Crime

Child criminal exploitation takes a variety of different forms. It can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. They can also be enticed or coerced into transporting drugs from one part of the country to another as part of a "County Line".

The latest National Referral Mechanism statistics reported that 47 out of 88 children and young people were referred to the NRM as victims of criminal exploitation in Scotland from Jan

	<p>2020 until September 2020, this is the highest number recorded.</p> <p>Given the cross-cutting nature of this policy area, links are being made at a policy level by Child Protection, Youth Justice and Serious Organised Crime Unit.</p> <p>We are committed to tackling any form of child exploitation, as set out in our National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation; our Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy; Serious Organised Crime Strategy; Youth Justice Strategy and our National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People.</p> <p>A conference on Child Criminal Exploitation and Serious Organised Crime was held in November 2019 to raise awareness and re-frame the narrative around children involved in serious organised crime as victims of exploitation. Work arising from the conference is being taken forward by the Divert Strand of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce. In all cases where it is suspected that a child may be a victim of exploitation or trafficking, the child's safety is paramount and child protection procedures must be activated immediately.</p>
<p>Decisions/Actions required from CPCScotland</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Contact details</p>	<p>Please see individual sections for relevant policy lead contacts and for general child protection enquiries please contact: child_protection@gov.scot.</p>