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## Child Protection Improvement Programme Update

18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

### ***The National Child Protection Leadership Group***

The National Child Protection Leadership Group were due to meet on 10 June 2020. This meeting has been cancelled due to Covid-19. The new Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group meets weekly and reports to the Communities and Public Services Ministerial Group led by the Deputy First Minister. The membership of this group closely mirrors that of the National Child Protection Leadership Group.

This group will have oversight on child protection during the Covid-19 period. We will continue to progress existing work and any additional Covid-19 related child protection work.

The next meeting of the National Child Protection Leadership Group is scheduled for 1 September 2020. This will be kept under review.

### ***Revision of the National Child Protection Guidance***

The planned Scottish Government consultation on the draft of the revised National Child Protection Guidance and the supporting engagement events have been postponed in light of Covid-19. Scottish Government is engaging with stakeholders to establish a suitable timeframe for launch of the consultation, and is developing options for virtual engagement.

The development of practice notes, and work on the participation of children, young people and families continues.

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 updated on 1 June 2020. The supplementary guidance will be updated further as necessary.

### ***Case Review Oversight Group – (Significant Case Reviews)***

The Case Review Oversight Group was established in May 2019. This Group is chaired by Alan Small and will co-ordinate CPIP/System Review recommendations relating to Significant Case Reviews and consider the purpose, criteria and governance of such reviews. This Group will make recommendations to the Child Protection Leadership Group on a proportionate and timely approach to reviews that supports a learning culture and also the successful implementation of findings to support improvement in child protection practice.

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#### ***Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending involving children and young people***

The Scottish Government continues its considerations regarding action to address the recommendations made by the Expert Group on Preventing Sexual Offending involving Children and Young People.

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

The Scottish Government published the Trafficking and Exploitation Third Annual Progress Report and Strategy Review on 29 May 2020.

Scottish Government is working with COSLA and other partners to deliver age assessment guidance training for first line-managers in Scotland. The first session took place in March 2020 and, due to the current pandemic, the remainder of the sessions will be delivered virtually over the coming months.

#### ***Unaccompanied Children in Scotland***

A consultation seeking views on the role, functions and responsibilities of an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian was launched in August 2019 and ran for a period of 12 weeks. The consultation was split into two themes with part one considering the technical aspects of the role of the Guardian as set out in Section 11(7) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015; and part two considering the broader functions of the guardian's role. The responses to the consultation were published in December 2019 and analysis of the responses were published on 11 May 2020.

The next steps will be drafting a specification and invitation to tender informed by the consultation responses. Then later in the year, a formal invitation will be made for applications from interested parties to manage the service. It is anticipated that the new service will be implemented in 2021.

#### ***Online Safety for Children and Young People***

Work continues to implement the actions of the National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People.

During the Covid-19 school closure period, much activity has been focussed on mapping and coordinating messaging across Government and by stakeholders, to promote online safety in Scotland to support children and young people, parents and carers, teachers, and professionals. The attached links to resources, guidance and advice as well as signposting to trusted sources, has informed a range of awareness raising activity by Government and stakeholders:

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#### General

- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> The UK Safer Internet Centre guidance aimed at promoting online safety
- <https://www.childnet.com/> Childnet resources on online safety
- <https://respectme.org.uk/> Guidance for online bullying
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/home-working> National Cyber Security Centre advice on home working: preparing your organisation and staff
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/key-messages-young-people-healthy-relationships-consent-resource-professionals-working-young-people/> Key Messages for Young People on Healthy Relationships and Consent

#### Children and Young People

- <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/digiaye> Young Scot hosts resources, advice, information and tips for staying safe online
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> National Crime Agency education programme on online safety
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/> NSPCC Childline for support
- <https://reach.scot/get-help/coronavirus/> Advice on home learning and coping while schools are closed

#### Parents and carers

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/> NSPCC advice and resources on how to talk to your child about online safety
- <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/online-safety> Barnardo's online safety advice
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/ukcis-social-media-guide-for-parents-and-carers/> Internet Matters guidance on social media
- <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/staysafestayhome-tech-advice-and-resources-to-support-families-at-home/> Online resources and advice to support families on how to make the best use of their tech whilst staying at home
- <https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/if-your-child-get-into-trouble-online.htm> Stop It Now! advice for children getting into trouble online
- <https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline/guidance-advice/online-safety-and-parental-controls/> Children 1st information and advice on Internet safety and parental controls

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#### Teachers and professionals working with young people

- <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/digilearn/remote/> Education Scotland resources are intended to support practitioners in planning and delivering online learning
- <https://rshp.scot/> A national resource for relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) education for children and young people
- <https://parentzone.org.uk/online-safety-hub> Parentzone resources to address a wide range of online safety issues with the families you work with
- <https://swgfl.org.uk/online-safety/> South West Grid for Learning resources and training to keep children and staff safe online
- <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/develop/developing-knowledge/digital-youth-work/safe-secure-empowered/> YouthLink Scotland information and insights for youth workers and those working with children, on being safe online.
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/helping-school-staff-to-work-safely-online> National Cyber Security Centre advice on Helping school staff to work safely online

#### Reporting harmful content

- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> National Crime Agency's CEOP command for advice if you are worried about online abuse or the way someone is communicating with you online
- <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/> Report Harmful Content advice on reporting routes for social media services
- <https://www.iwf.org.uk/> Internet Watch Foundation to help anonymously and confidentially report online harmful content

#### ***Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation***

The delivery report reflecting on the achievements and actions of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation will be published shortly.

#### ***Amending Section 12 ("cruelty to persons under 16") of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937***

A public consultation on proposed changes to section 12 ("cruelty to children") of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 2019 was carried out in late 2018. The Scottish Government published an Analysis Report of consultation responses on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

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We are currently considering how best to amend criminal legislation to reflect our modern understanding of the nature and impact of neglect in a way which does not unfairly criminalise vulnerable groups of parents in light of analysis of these responses and further engagement with key stakeholders.

#### ***Disclosure (Scotland) Bill***

The Bill passed the Scottish Parliament on 10 June 2020. The new legislation will transform how Disclosure Scotland operates and will strengthen the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme. PVG scheme membership will be mandatory for those carrying out regulated roles with children. Individuals holding power or influence over children in respect of an activity a child is taking part in or in respect of a child's future recruitment, training or employment will be required to join the PVG Scheme. This means that the PVG Scheme has been expanded to include some roles which were not previously captured, such as youth sports agents and foreign aid workers. Building on the provisions in the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019, there will also be new protections for people who were involved with the justice system as children.

The passage of the Bill does not mean Disclosure Scotland's operations will change overnight. The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent over the summer, however, implementation of the new Act will be a gradual process. Further stakeholder engagement is essential to laying secondary legislation and to ensure organisations which use state disclosure are ready to transition to the new provisions.

#### ***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 in our adversarial system, which includes cross-examination. 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.

HIS and the Care Inspectorate have been 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.

In consultation with Scottish Government, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate are redeploying resources to focus on maintaining only essential statutory and regulatory duties in response to Covid-19. For the Barnahus Standards, this has meant the suspension since March 2020 of all work on this project. This includes development group

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meetings (in person and virtual), events and consultation. Dialogue will continue between partners to identify when this work can resume.

***Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019***

Scottish Government officials are continuing to liaise with partner organisations in relation to developing the list of places of safety required under the Act, and supporting guidance for that, and for investigative interviews.

The next set of regulations, which provide for a fairer and more proportionate approach to the disclosure of information, were scheduled to commence in June this year but has had to be delayed due to the necessary rescheduling of the Scottish Parliament timetable to deal with legislation relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. Scottish Government officials are hopeful that the regulations will be able to be commenced at some point in 2020, but that very much depends on the current situation.

***Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019***

This Act will remove the common law defence of “reasonable chastisement” from the law of Scotland, making all physical punishment of children unlawful. The removal of this defence will come into force on 7 November 2020.

The Act also requires the Scottish Ministers to raise awareness about the removal of the reasonable chastisement defence. This obligation is already in force.

The Scottish Government has formed an Implementation Group which is working on what is required to implement this legislation. Information about the work of this group can be found on the Scottish Government’s website.

***Children’s Hearings System:***

Arrangements for reopening children’s hearings centres – in common with courts and tribunals buildings – are included in phase 1 of lifting the current lockdown restrictions. No dates or timescales have been set for ‘face to face’ hearings. The First Minister has made it clear that the basis on which a move to each phase is dependent on meeting stringent criteria.

The children’s hearings system is a critical public service – so focused preparatory work to support service recovery has begun. Once that is complete, the responsible agencies have confirmed that the lead-in time – to prepare premises, train and equip staff, make system adaptations and ensure physical distancing – is considerable.

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No physical hearings will be possible for a number of weeks after the point that it is agreed it is safe to hold them. This long lead-in, and the intrinsic complexity of holding hearings, were key factors behind children's hearings' inclusion in phase 1.

In the meantime, virtual children's hearings continue to operate in line with the guidance issued by the Principal Reporter of SCRA and the National Convener of CHS on 20 April 2020. See link:

<https://www.chip-partnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Childrens-Hearings-update-Monday-20-April-2020.pdf>

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 decision of the court is expected soon.

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

In March 2017 the independently chaired Child Protection Systems Review submitted their report recommending the Scottish Government review measures available to protect 16 and 17 year olds.

The 2019-20 Programme for Government made a commitment to consult on 'enabling joint reporting to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Principal Reporter of all 16 and 17 year olds' offence cases'.

Ministers agreed to widen the consultation to seek views on increasing the age at which children can be referred to the Reporter for care, protection and offence grounds. This includes young people at risk of exploitation, abuse or harm due to their own behaviour or the behaviour of others. Proposed changes will enable agencies to provide child-centred support for all under 18 years old.

The consultation opened on 17 June 2020 and will run for 4 months, closing on 7 October 2020. The consultation can be found at <https://consult.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/>

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The Scottish Government is continuing to work with COSLA to agree how best to take forward the recommendations of the Review, with a view to implementation later this year. This will improve consistency and transparency for looked-after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

#### *Independent Review of Care*

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’.

On Thursday 21 May 2020 the Deputy First Minister announced to Parliament the appointment of Fiona Duncan as Chair of the Care Promise Oversight Board. The Covid-19 emergency response has undoubtedly impacted upon the ability of the Scottish Government and key partners’ ability to progress with implementation as quickly as we would have originally anticipated. However, the Scottish Government will work closely with Fiona Duncan to ensure she has everything in place that will be required to deliver “The Plan” in partnership with the wider sector and as set out as part of the Independent Care Review’s final reports.

Whilst we have not been able to move as quickly on implementation as we originally aimed to, it remains a key priority and the Scottish Government has been working hard to ensure that the principles of the Care Review’s “Promise” are reflected in our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including in practice guidance and policies underpinning emergency legislation.

The Independent Care Review reports published on 5 February 2020 are a culmination of three years of work to understand how experience of care shapes a young person’s life, as well as those caring for them, and the impact and often unintended consequences that our decisions and actions can have. The reports also call for the sector to work together with care experienced people to find the solutions that will deliver the Care Review’s vision. The First Minister has committed the Government to work with all of our energy and focus, along with local authorities, care providers and all relevant stakeholders, to make the changes to the system that the Care Review considers necessary and to deliver that change as quickly and as safely as possible.

#### *Children (Scotland) Bill*

The Children (Scotland) Bill was introduced into the Scottish Parliament on 2 September 2019. The Bill was referred to the Justice Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny and is currently under consideration.

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The Bill has been 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 Bill 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 Bill covers a range of areas. The key areas of the Bill are:

- 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 in some circumstances;
- 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 Bill; and areas that are for longer term work. It includes the PFG commitment to keep siblings together where it is in their best interests.

### ***UNCRC Incorporation Bill***

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a human rights treaty with a list of rights for all children and young people. To help make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up, the Scottish Government is absolutely committed to incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law by the end of this Parliamentary session in spring 2021.

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Incorporating the UNCRC and Optional Protocols 1 and 2 into Scots law means the rights of children and young people are legally protected and if necessary children, and people acting on their behalf, can defend their rights in the Scottish courts. The UNCRC and Optional Protocols 1 and 2 includes a specific obligation for Governments to protect children and young people from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. We will seek to incorporate the Convention in full and directly – using the language of the Convention – in every case possible. Our only limitation will be the limit of the powers of this Parliament.

However, we expect that we can incorporate the vast majority of the UNCRC's provisions. The Bill will also make provision to allow incorporation of those parts of the Convention currently beyond our powers into our domestic law if – and when – the powers of the Scottish Parliament change in the future. This will make sure that the rights contained in the UNCRC are given the highest protection and respect possible within the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

As part of our response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Minister for Children and Young People has written to stakeholders to confirm that we are still absolutely committed to the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and will introduce a Bill to incorporate it this year, in line with the original timescale. The Bill will aim to 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 is our intention that the Bill will result in the highest protection for children's rights possible.

### ***Children's Rights and Participation***

The 31<sup>st</sup> 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

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take effective action to prevent, protect against, delay or otherwise control the incidence or transmission of coronavirus.

In the *Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-2021*, we committed to developing a strategic approach to children and young people's participation, as part of the Year of Young People legacy. The first action to be taken forward was to establish and publish an evidence base of existing research, good practice and policy areas that have consulted with children and young people. This action was completed on Monday 2 March, with the output taking the form of a series of webpages published on the Scottish Government website.

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/decision-making-children-and-young-peoples-participation/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/children-and-young-peoples-participation-practice-examples/>

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, we held our fourth annual Cabinet meeting with children and young people, members of the Children's Parliament, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Cabinet Ministers discussed the most important issues affecting children and young people in Scotland. Topics included: a childhood free from the impact of alcohol, food security, children's human dignity at school, environmental protection, young carers mental health, suicide awareness training at school, gender recognition, youth work budget cuts, housing and homelessness, and school meal quality.

### ***Equally Safe***

Work is on-going across Government to ensure assess the impact of the crisis on victims and survivors of gender based violence and to help shape our response.

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. Over £1.5 million has been allocated to Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland to support this.

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 22 April 2020 and offered our key stakeholders and partners the opportunity to discuss our response to the crisis and identify areas we need to do more. We have now published the Equally Safe Year Two Report which was produced jointly with COSLA and the Improvement Service. The report can be viewed here.

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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>

### ***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, some of the work regarding the implementation of the Act is on hold for the time being. Aside from lack of resources, we are currently unable to conduct community engagement in the way that we think is required to ensure we get statutory guidance absolutely right. We look forward to working on this in the future once the situation has been deemed safe and lockdown restrictions have been lifted.

In the meantime, we are continuing to keep in close contact with stakeholders working in this area during lockdown to ensure we remain informed on the issue and any impact lockdown may be having on provision of services or risk to victims.

We are continuing to implement Scotland's national action plan to prevent and eradicate FGM, which was published in 2016. We published a Year 3 Progress Report on the Action Plan on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2019. You can view the report [here](#).

The FGM stakeholder summit was held in July 2019, at which officials gathered views on the new legislation, and on the National Action Plan more generally. The Minister for Older People and Equalities opened the event, and re-confirmed the Scottish Government's commitment to protecting women and girls from the practice of FGM.

### ***Families affected by disability***

We know that Covid-19 is already disproportionately affecting some groups of children more than others. 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.

A Covid-19 Children and Families Collective Leadership Group was established on 7 May 2020, to promote collective leadership of activity to support children and young people with vulnerabilities. This remit includes those children and young people affected by disability.

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We have worked with partners to gather intelligence on how the current situation is impacting children and young people with disabilities. This has identified the following key concerns

- Decreased Income
- Reductions in Support Packages (including access to respite care)
- Mental health
- Transition planning
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Resilience

At an early stage we updated the Scottish Government's 'Supporting Disabled Children, Young People and their Families Information Website' to signpost disabled children, young people and families to additional avenues of support which may be beneficial to them during the coronavirus pandemic.

It is proposed that moving forward we will focus on the following priorities for families affected by disability:

- Co-ordination – We will continue to work with our partners to provide a coordinated response to the challenges facing families affected by disability. This will include inputting into work to reopen schools and further easing of restrictions going forward.
- Social Care – Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown will have had a significant impact on the social needs of children and young people with disabilities. This could be because they are no longer attending school or have reduced access to support within their wider family and community. As a result there is a growing need to revisit and revise existing social care packages, address existing waiting lists and assess new emerging needs.
- Engagement and Participation – Work with colleagues and external stakeholders to strengthen the engagement of children affected by disability, ensuring their voices are heard, their rights considered, and communications are inclusive, as we move through the phases of the route map.
- Transitions – We will continue to work with ARC to adapt their Principles of Good Transitions into practical guidance which can support service providers to develop and adapt processes for transition planning in the current context.

### ***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

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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 has already commenced including engagement with key networks and organisations, although is currently paused until pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic subside.

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.

#### ***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.

#### ***Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry***

In summer 2019, Phase 4 of hearings commenced with evidence relating to investigations into residential child care establishments run by male religious orders with a particular focus on:

- Residential establishments run by the Congregation of Christian Brothers with a particular focus on their provision at St Ninian's in Falkland, Fife.

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- The Order of Benedictines and their provision at Carlekemp in North Berwick and the Fort Augustus Abbey School.
- In September 2019 a case study began into the Marist Brothers and their provision at St Joseph's College, Dumfries and St Columba's College in Largs.

The Inquiry has also published two case study findings to date on Daughters of Charity (October 2018) and Sisters of Nazareth (May 2019) with further case study findings to published in due course.

On 3 December 2019 Phase 4 of hearing began into the Child Migration case study. This phase relates 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.

A case study investigating abuse at residential boarding schools throughout Scotland is planned for later in 2020. Details of which schools will fall within the case study will be announced in due course. In 2019 Lady Smith announced that a case study will be held into foster care. 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.

On 12 May 2020 the Chair of the Inquiry, Lady Smith confirmed that the work of the Inquiry is continuing despite a pause in public hearings as part of the Covid-19 outbreak. Investigative work, research and analysis, and preparation for announced case studies continue.

Work on analysing the evidence from the Christian Brothers, Benedictines and Marists case studies is well underway and findings will be published as soon as possible

Lady Smith is also exploring possible options which might enable them to continue hearing case study evidence remotely with the immediate priority to complete the child migration case study.

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