

Guidance to help social workers respond to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

View this resource online at

<https://learn.sssc.uk.com/coronavirus/socialwork>

Please use the information here alongside local guidance, policies and procedures, which should be the main source of information for your role and setting.

Each section contains links to national legislation, COVID-19 specific advice and guidance as well as other useful resources.

Responding to COVID-19

There is a range of national guidance and advice about COVID-19, here are some key links to help you. This is not an exhaustive list.

Correct as of 14 April but please check the online resource for more recent updates

- [Coronavirus Act 2020](#), emergency UK legislation.
- [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#), emergency Scottish legislation. It has amendments specific to children, vulnerable adults and justice.
- Scottish Government has prepared [guidance on coronavirus](#).
- [Statutory guidance](#) for local authorities sets out changes to social care assessments resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020.
- SSSC has prepared [COVID-19 information and guidance](#).
- The [Mental Welfare Commission](#) has produced updates [on issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic](#), including emergency legislation being introduced.
- Iriss have provided [Guidelines for social workers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Further insights about COVID-19 and social work practice are available in the article [Social work during a health pandemic](#). Both are written by Lena Dominelli (University of Stirling and the International Association of Schools of Social Work, IASSW).
- [Iriss COVID-19 resource](#) also contains useful information for staff on infection control and health and wellbeing.
- [Social Work Scotland](#) (SWS) are providing regular updates about social work practice, policy and guidance.
- [Scottish Association of Social Work \(SASW\)](#) have regular news updates on COVID-19 for social workers.
- Care Inspectorate has provided [COVID-19 updates for services](#).

Statutory functions

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) provides a global update for the profession and an overarching definition of social work practice.

Legislation

The Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 is the primary legislation for social work intervention in Scotland and creates the duty under section 12 to 'promote social welfare'.

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 provides the range and scope of local authority intervention in the lives of children and their families and the duties and responsibilities.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 sets out the framework for the care and protection of children by the imposition of compulsory measures of supervision.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 concerns children's rights and services in Scotland.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 aims to protect those adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests and are at risk of harm because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, physical or mental infirmity.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines specific rights and duties upon organisations for both adult and young carers.

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 requires local authorities in Scotland to offer people four choices on how they can get their social care: direct payment; person receiving services directs available support; local authority arranges support; a mix of the other options.

The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) place obligations on responsible authorities to cooperate in respect of Registered Sex Offenders and Restricted Patients.

Coronavirus guidance

Scottish Government [advice](#) for unpaid carers.

[Supplementary national child protection guidance](#) from the Scottish Government.

[Statutory guidance](#) for local authorities which sets out changes to social care assessments resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020.

[Scottish Government guidance about changes to the adults with incapacity arrangements.](#)

Other information

[Role of the registered social worker in statutory interventions: guidance for local authorities](#) sets out the social work functions which registered social workers are accountable for.

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#) this document sets out the approach to child protection in Scotland. Appendix A sets out relevant legislation.

Additional relevant legislation since publication include the [Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) which reflects the harm that can be caused to children growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place and the [Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), which is due to be enacted in November 2020.

[National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland: Protecting Disabled Children from Abuse and Neglect.](#)

[National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People.](#)

[Scottish Government adult support and protection website.](#)

[Gender-based violence](#), [human trafficking](#) and [the misuse of alcohol and drugs](#) are other important areas to consider as part of the protection of children, young people and adults. A summary of national policy and links to key legislation in this area can be found at the [Scottish Government Violence Against Women](#) site.

[Statutory guidance](#) for local practitioners sets out their responsibilities to implement all aspects of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

The Carers' charter sets out carers' rights under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

SSSC Understanding Personal Outcomes provides guidance on using a personal outcomes approach in support planning with carers.

NHS Education Scotland and SSSC Equal Partners in Care (EPiC) has learning resources for identifying and supporting carers and young carers.

Social Work Scotland quick guide for practitioners is a reference point to the key principles and duties that should guide self-directed support practice.

Self-directed Support Scotland represents organisations run by and for disabled people and has a range of resources to implement self-directed support successfully.

Children and families

Social work with children and families includes a broad range of interventions and services which aim to promote the wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

Legislation

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 provides the range and scope of local authority intervention in the lives of children and their families and the duties and responsibilities.

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 sets out the framework for the care and protection of children by the imposition of Compulsory Measure of Supervision.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 concerns children's rights and services in Scotland.

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 raises the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland from eight to 12. It also provides certain safeguards to ensure that harmful behaviour by children under 12 can be responded to in an appropriate and meaningful way, which will not criminalise children.

Coronavirus related advice and guidance

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) COVID-19 advice for supporting children and young people.

CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) has gathered a range of resources and guidance on COVID-19 for people working with children and families.

Children's Hearings Scotland and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration statement on coronavirus and the children's hearings system.

Supplementary national child protection guidance from the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Court and Tribunals Service has a range of guidance about coronavirus, including compliance with family court orders.

[Scottish Government issued guidance on looked-after children and children's hearings provisions.](#)

[Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland](#) have gathered COVID-19 resources.

Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice has produced a [review report on the practice implications of coronavirus on children in conflict with the law](#). They also have published [guidance on supporting young people in conflict with the law](#).

Other information

[Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#) is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people.

[Scottish Government Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) resources](#)

[Scottish Government GIRFEC National Practice Model.](#)

[Scottish Government GIRFEC Guidance on Supporting Disabled Children, Young People and their Families.](#)

[Protecting Scotland's Children National Policy and Child Abuse Prevention](#) policy documents set out the Scottish Government's vision of how we protect Scotland's children and young people.

[National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People.](#)

[Scottish Government website on looked after children](#) outlines the statutory responsibilities and associated legislation, policy and guidance for looked after children.

[Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\)](#) is responsible for the management Children's Reporters and associated proceedings.

SCRA has [information and guidance for social workers on the Children's Hearings system](#).

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: [National Guidance on Part 12: Services in relation to Children at Risk of Becoming Looked After, etc.](#)

[Preventing Offending: Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People](#), an overview of the whole systems approach from the [Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice](#), which supports improvements in justice in Scotland.

[Scottish Government youth justice webpage.](#)

Scottish Government guidance for local authorities on the assessment of young people who present a risk of harm through sexually harmful and/or violent behaviour.

The CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection) knowledge bank provides links to a variety of relevant resources and is home to the Protecting Children resources.

Children in Scotland resources on how we best support implementation of the GIRFEC model.

Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland provides a range of resources on protecting the rights of children and young people.

Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum.

Adults

Social work with adults can include working with older people, dementia, frailty, palliative and end of life care, mental health, drug and alcohol, learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, autism and support to carers.

Legislation

The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 provides ways to protect and safeguard the welfare and finances of adults who lack capacity to take some or all decisions for themselves because of a mental disorder or an inability to communicate.

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 places duties on local councils to provide care and support services for people with mental disorders.

Under the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016, the police must provide support for persons in custody who are unable to sufficiently understand what is happening or communicate with the police because of a mental disorder.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 aims to protect those adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests and are at risk of harm because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness, physical or mental infirmity.

Coronavirus related advice and guidance

Statutory guidance for local authorities sets out changes to social care assessments resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020.

[Scottish Government guidance about changes to the adults with incapacity arrangements.](#)

The Mental Welfare Commission has produced updates on issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Scottish Court and Tribunals Service has a range of guidance about coronavirus, including attending court.

Other useful information

Scottish Government appropriate adult guidance for local authorities outlines statutory duties relating to the provision of Appropriate Adult services.

[Guidance on supervising and supporting welfare guardians](#) (Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland).

Scottish Government adult support and protection website.

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland protects and promotes the human rights of people with mental illness, learning disabilities, dementia and related conditions.

The School of Forensic Mental Health promotes education, training and research.

The Mental Health Tribunal Scotland considers applications for Compulsory Treatment Orders under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act.

Justice

Social work in justice settings such as court, prisons and in the community aims to reduce reoffending, increase the social inclusion and rehabilitation of those involved in offending behaviour and help protect the public from serious harm.

Legislation

The Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 replaced community service orders, supervised attendance orders and probation orders with Community Payback Orders.

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced new ways to assess serious violent and sexual offenders and strengthened existing prison throughcare arrangements.

The Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 outlines the circumstances whereby a court must obtain and consider a report from a local authority officer.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were introduced in 2007 following implementation of the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005. The Act places statutory obligations on responsible authorities to cooperate in respect of Registered Sex Offenders and Restricted Patients.

Coronavirus related advice and guidance

Scottish Prison Service (SPS) COVID-19 updates.

Social Work Scotland and Parole Board Scotland statement on working arrangements relating to COVID-19.

A briefing from Social Work Scotland and the Scottish Parole Board to the Judicial Institute on the current impact of COVID-19 on justice social work.

Letter (PDF) to Chief Social Work Officers (CSWOs) about Justice Social Work from Director of Justice and Chief Social Work Adviser (20 March 2020).

Letter (PDF) to Chief Social Work Officers (CSWOs) about Coronavirus (Scotland) Act provisions from the Director of Justice and Chief Social Work Adviser (3 April 2020)

Community Justice Scotland provides [COVID-19 news updates](#). This includes information on the Caledonian programme and SHORE.

The Scottish Court and Tribunals Service has a range of [guidance about coronavirus](#), including attending court.

Other information

Scottish Government [national guidance on bail supervision](#) set out guidelines for the operation of bail supervision services by local authority justice social work.

Scottish Government [Community Payback Orders \(CPOs\) practice guidance](#) informs practitioners and managers in the delivery of justice social work and specifically CPOs.

Scottish Government [Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\): national guidance 2016](#) outlines the working arrangements for assessing and managing the risk posed by certain categories of offenders

Scottish Government [Criminal Justice Social Work Reports and Court Based Services Practice Guidance](#) (PDF) provides direction on the completion of social work reports and delivery of court based services.

[Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice](#) provides information relevant to broad range of justice issues and practice.

[Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector Forum](#) is a collaboration of voluntary sector organisations working in criminal justice in Scotland.

[SACRO](#) works independently and collaboratively within Scotland's communities to provide support, prevent conflict and challenge offending behavior.

[Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research](#) produces research that informs policy and practice and advances understanding of justice.

[National Objectives for Social Work Services in the Criminal Justice System: Standards: Throughcare](#) provide details on statutory prison throughcare. **Note:** This document is currently being reviewed but may offer some learning.

The Scottish Prison Service [Guidance for Agencies on Home Detention Curfew \(HDC\)](#) outlines the role of justice social workers.