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THIRD SECTOR NEWS

[IMPORTANT CHANGES TO DISCLOSURE SERVICES](#)

Make Sure You're Ready!

The Disclosure Act will improve the disclosure system in Scotland by removing unnecessary barriers for people with convictions as they seek employment or other opportunities and enhance the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. Upcoming changes will be introduced in 1 April 2025 and charities, particularly those who work with vulnerable adults or children, should be aware of what's changing.

Key Changes from 1 April 2025:

- Reduction in Disclosure Products
- Applicants control their information, sharing disclosures or seeking reviews.
- Tailored approach to childhood offences and conviction reviews.
- Mandatory PVG Scheme: Required for regulated roles with children and protected adults.

For more details [visit the Disclosure Scotland website](#), read more on the [Volunteer Scotland website](#) or subscribe to the [VSDS Newsletter](#).

[VOLUNTEER SCOTLAND IS HOLDING FREE ONLINE SESSIONS TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THESE CHANGES](#)

Several dates are available and sessions start from Tuesday 7 January 2025. More information on [Training sessions can be found here](#).

[BUY SOCIAL SCOTLAND'S ETHICAL CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2024](#)

Buy Social Scotland are excited to launch their 2024 Ethical Christmas Gift Guide! The guide includes gift options from incredible social enterprises from all around Scotland, with something for every budget.

[CELEBRATING RURAL RESILIENCE: THE MICHAEL DOWER AWARD](#)

The Michael Dower Award honours individuals and communities building rural resilience across Europe. It showcases impactful work on economic, environmental, and social challenges, fostering local empowerment. [Apply here](#) by **February 14, 2025**, to share your initiative or individual efforts for a stronger rural future.

[THE HEAT NETWORKS REGULATION: IMPLEMENTING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS CONSULTATION IS OPEN](#)

[The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#) and [Ofgem](#) have launched the [heat networks regulation: implementing consumer protections consultation](#). They are seeking your views on consumer protection requirements such as standards of conduct, protections for vulnerable consumers and more. This consultation will be of particular interest to consumer groups, those in the heat network industry (such as developers) and local government.

Ofgem are hosting a series of [webinars](#) to explain the key proposals in the consultation and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

The consultation will close at 11:59pm on Friday 31 January 2025.

NEWS FROM THE CHARITY REGULATOR

[HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR ONLINE ANNUAL RETURN?](#)

Almost 20% of Scottish charities have a deadline in December. If your charity's deadline is coming up soon, please ensure you are ready to submit your online annual return, along with annual accounts, a Trustees' Annual Report and an external scrutiny report. This is a legal requirement, and charities must send this information to us within 9 months of their financial year-end date.

Read our [guidance and tips on submitting your online annual return](#)

[WEBINAR - GETTING IT RIGHT: YOUR ONLINE ANNUAL RETURN AND ACCOUNTS, WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2024 FROM 1PM-2PM](#)

Join OSCR's accounting experts for a free online webinar which explains more about your annual duties, how to submit, and what your online annual return and accounts should include. The webinar will be held on Wednesday 11 December 2024 from 1pm-2pm, and you can [sign up for free now](#).

OSCR OFFICE CLOSURES

OSCR will be [closed during the festive period between Christmas and New Year](#). Our phone lines will close at 12 noon on Tuesday 24 December 2024. The office will then be closed for the holidays, and the office and phone lines will reopen at 9.30am on Friday 3 January 2024.

If you have an online annual return deadline of 31 December 2024, please log in to OSCR Online now to ensure you have access, and submit well ahead of the deadline if possible. We will not be able to assist with any queries during the holiday period.

[REVITALISING TRUSTS PROJECT RECOVERS SCOTLAND'S MISSING MILLIONS](#)

The Revitalising Trusts project, a collaboration between the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and major funder, Foundation Scotland, has so far released over £5 million of dormant funds for public benefit since the project launched in 2021. The project has to date identified over 300 inactive charitable trusts of varying sizes and purposes, with forgotten funds often lying dormant in accounts for several decades and in some cases well over a century.

[SCVO & OSCR WEBINAR RECORDING: CHARITY LAW IS CHANGING: HOW YOUR TRUSTEES AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT MAY BE AFFECTED](#)

The [implementation of important new measures in charity law](#) is currently under way. One important change is that The Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Act 2023 will extend the range of criteria that result in automatic disqualification. This could affect both your trustees and senior management. Find out more about the changes at this webinar.

There will be [a further update on the charity law changes at an OSCR event at the Gathering in February](#) plus lots of other useful sessions. [You can book your slot now.](#)

RESOURCES

[THE COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE FUND](#)

The [Community Learning Exchange fund](#) from the [Scottish Community Alliance](#) offers funding to support community learning visits. This will help local community groups to connect and share peer learnings across Scotland. This fund supports learning visits that take place virtually and in-person.

[SCOTLAND'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE REPORT 2024](#)

Scotland's Local Government Workforce Report 2024 has been published by the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland, Solace Scotland and the Improvement Service. The Executive Summary states that 'Scotland's councils are facing significant challenges in maintaining and developing workforce capacity caused by a range of factors including financial pressures; an ageing workforce; increased service demand; recruitment difficulties; differing population changes across the country; skills gaps and pay competition from other sectors.

MENTAL WELFARE COMMISSION [SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE](#)

The guide was produced for the Commission by Jill Stavert, Professor of Mental Health and Capacity Law, Edinburgh Napier University. It sets out why supported decision-making is an important concept. It explains how adults with mental illness (including dementia), learning disabilities and other related conditions, who may have difficulty making decisions, can be supported to ensure that decisions made, by or about them, genuinely reflect their choices'.

[HEALTH IMPROVEMENT SCOTLAND - STANDARDS FOR THE CARE OF OLDER PEOPLE](#)

The new Standards for the care of older people have been published (November 2024) by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). 'These standards update and replace Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Standards of Care for Older People in Hospital (2015). They apply in all settings where older people living with frailty receive health and social care.

[THE EQUALLY SAFE DELIVERY PLAN \(PDF\)](#)

The Equally Safe Delivery Plan: Summer 2024 - Spring 2026 has been developed by COSLA and the Scottish Government with a range of partners. The new plan sits below the refreshed Equally Safe strategy and provides information on tangible actions which will be taken to realise the ambitions of the strategy.

[ADULT PROTECTION AND THE LAW IN SCOTLAND](#)

The Third Edition of this resource fully updates the text and includes coverage of:

- The evolving understanding of wider types of harm such as hoarding behaviour and coercive control
- The Revised Codes of Practice on the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and Adult Protection Committees
- Human rights developments, including incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, authorisation of deprivation of liberty, issues with use of section 13ZA of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, and local authority applications for guardianship.

[RSABI ENCOURAGES APPLICATIONS FOR £400 HEATING GRANT](#)

RSABI is offering £400 [Help for Heating grants](#) to support Scotland's **agricultural community** struggling with heating costs this winter. The charity also provides emotional, practical, and financial assistance. Apply via 0808 1234 555 or the RSABI website. Their 24/7 helpline ensures confidential support. #KeepTalking to spread awareness and help others stay warm.

[FREE THIRD SECTOR CRISIS RECOVERY SERVICE](#)

Are you a community group, social enterprise or third sector organisation really worried about your future sustainability or facing very severe challenges and not sure where to turn? Follow the link to the [FREE Third Sector Crisis Recovery Service](#) run by partners such as Community Enterprise, DTAS and InspirAlba and someone will be in touch quickly.

FORTHCOMING TRAINING AND EVENTS

MAKING WORK WORK: PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN SOCIAL ENTERPRENEURS (READY TO RISE)

The Challenges Group and Firstport have announced a new programme of support for women social entrepreneurs. Expressions of interest can be submitted now, with applications opening in January.

Ready to RISE is for you if you are a woman in Scotland who:

- has an early-stage idea to start an organisation with a social or environmental purpose (like a social enterprise or charity) but aren't sure where to start; AND/OR
- can see a problem that needs fixing in our society or your local community but aren't sure how to galvanise people around you to help; AND/OR
- think starting an impact-driven business is the way to achieve the (work)life blend and purpose you seek.

UHI CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ONLINE OPEN DAYS

In these sessions we will offer information including an overview of the following programmes

- [BA \(Hons\) Child and Youth Studies](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Child and Youth Studies with Community Learning and Development](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Childhood Practice](#)
- [Masters in Children and Young People's Participation and Leadership](#)
- [Building Resilience: Understanding the Impact of ACEs \(SCQF level 11\) CPD Award](#)
- How to select the right programme for the individual
- Explanation of fully online delivery and how this supports successful study

The open days are taking place on:

- Thursday 9th January 2025 18:30-19:30
- Thursday 6th March 2025 18:30-19:30
- Thursday 1st May 2025 18:30-19:30
- Thursday 7th August 2025 18:30-19:30
- Thursday 2nd October 2025 18:30-19:30

To register and book please follow the links here:

[Study with us - Open days and information sessions - come and see us!](#)

If you would like any specific information, please contact the following:

- Dr Mei-Li Roberts BA (Hons) Child and Youth Studies and BA (Hons) Child and Youth Studies with Community Learning and Development Programme Leader Mei-Li.Roberts.perth@uhi.ac.uk
- Debbie Corbett BA (Hons) Childhood Practice Programme Leader, Debbie.Corbett.perth@uhi.ac.uk
- Katrina MacIntyre MA Children and Young People's Participation and Leadership Programme Leader Katrina.MacIntyre.perth@uhi.ac.uk

WEBINAR: MEET THE FUNDER WITH SCOTTISH LAND FUND & SSE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

The latest in Funding Scotland's series of "Meet the funder" webinars will take place on **WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER AT 14:00 - 15:00**, featuring speakers from the Scottish Land Fund & SSE Community Investment.

Anyone can attend for free. This webinar is aimed in particular at community groups/organisations looking for funding to support their community. [Book your place here!](#)

Are you looking for funding to purchase land or a building to benefit your community? Or perhaps to ensure the sustainability of your local community group? Join SCVO's [Rachel Boyd](#) for an online meet the funder session to hear from the [Scottish Land Fund](#) and [SSE Community Investment](#) about their grant programmes.

You can watch a recordings of on [SCVO's YouTube channel](#).

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IN VILLAGES LEARNING EXCHANGE

Scottish Rural Action and Community Land Scotland invite you to a free IN PERSON learning exchange in Thornhill on **January 30th, 2025**. Discover how the Old School Thornhill became a community asset, enjoy lunch, and connect with peers. Learn funding tips, join discussions, and network. Spaces are limited—[sign up](#) today! Travel bursary support available for delegates – please note at the time of registration if you will need it.

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON ISLANDS, 11 DECEMBER 2024, 13:00 - 14:00, ONLINE

Join MSPs and Paul McLennan, Minister for Housing, on December 11th for an online discussion about housing challenges and opportunities in Scotland's islands. Hosted by the Cross Party Group on Islands, this event invites you to share insights, ask questions, and help shape future policies for island communities.

TREASURER TRAINING, MON, JAN 20, 2025 AT 6:00 PM- 8.30PM, MARKET HOUSE, LERWICK

Join Wendy Hand on this **FREE** course for voluntary/community groups to improve their treasurer skills. Topics Covered:

- Treasurer role and responsibilities
- Recording income and expenditure
- Recording petty cash
- Reconciling the books with the bank statement
- Keeping files, receipts and forms
- Presenting financial information

UNDERSTANDING FINANCES, SAT, FEB 22, 2025 AT 10:00AM - 12.30PM, MARKET HOUSE, LERWICK

This **FREE** course is for anyone who is involved with a committee/ has a treasurer role who would like to understand more about finances. The workshop, designed for voluntary groups, will help you develop the knowledge and confidence to understand, monitor and question financial information and to use this to contribute to Board decisions regarding financial planning and expenditure.

Are you a dad with a child 5 years or under?

Well Dads Group

This service is for dads over the age of 18 years to speak about how they are feeling as they adapt to being a dad, and the everyday pressures they face.

Our wellness practitioners are available for **low level wellbeing support**, to provide appropriate signposting to local agencies, and lend a listening ear.

This wellbeing group meets weekly on Saturday mornings at Islesburgh Community Centre from 10.00am - 12.00 noon.

The group is drop-in, with no obligation to stay for the whole session and children 5 years or under are welcome. Our aim is to provide a supportive space for dads that is convenient and accessible for them.

We have a small selection of toys available but Dad's remain responsible for their child/children at all times.



Scan me to find this information online!

@mindyourhead

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FREE E-LEARNING FROM JUST ENTERPRISE

Prefer to learn at a time, place and pace of your own choosing? [Just Enterprise eLearning programmes](#) are split into short, focused modules that help you fit essential training into your busy schedule. Choose the courses that are relevant to you and your organisation and learn at your own pace via desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. [REGISTER NOW](#)

CLIMATE NEWS

[SCOTTISH ONSHORE WIND SECTOR DEAL – COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS UPDATES](#)

The community commitments in the recent Scottish Onshore Wind Sector Deal cover community engagement, community benefits and shared ownership, and they aim to generate, circulate and retain more wealth in communities and localities. Progress towards these commitments is being monitored and reported on the [Scottish Renewables website](#).

THE ROYAL COUNTRYSIDE FUND: NEW FUNDING FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Do you have an idea that will generate a new income stream for the local community, or create training opportunities for young people? Or perhaps a project that will improve environmental sustainability or help your community plan for climate change? New funding is available from The Royal Countryside Fund to deliver transformative community-led initiatives in rural areas, unlocking the huge potential for positive change in the countryside.

What's on offer: Community-led organisations can apply for up to £25,000 over a period of 24 months to deliver projects along the themes of:

- Keeping Young People in the Countryside
- Powering up Rural Communities
- Increasing Environmental Sustainability
- Building Emergency Resilience in Rural Areas

If you have any questions about the type of projects that they are supporting and how to apply, join the [RCF webinar on Tuesday, December 17th at 18:00](#) or visit the [RCF website](#).

CLIMATE SPRINGBOARD

This is a free online programme helping Scottish businesses prepare for net zero. Open to any SME, this unique beginner-friendly programme helps companies to navigate the changing economy and find opportunities for low-cost but meaningful action to reduce their carbon emissions.

The programme runs approximately every six weeks. NB Although the information says the programme is open to Scotland-based businesses in any sector but must be trading and have a turnover between £1m and £25m, ignore the turnover limits as some small community groups have participated on the programme.

[Read our short how-to guides for SMEs](#). They cover a range of topics, from measuring your carbon footprint to laying out a long-term climate strategy.

SCOTTISH ORGANISATIONS DEMAND CLIMATE ACTION FROM FIRST MINISTER

In an open letter, 74 Scottish organisations urge the First Minister to deliver [robust climate action following new emissions legislation](#). They call for fair funding to transition away from fossil fuels, improve transport, insulate homes, and support sustainable farming. Immediate action is essential for a greener, healthier Scotland and global climate justice.

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS CLIMATE HUB NEWS

MEET THE FUNDER: SHETLAND COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND, THURSDAY 16TH JANUARY 2025, 7PM - 8.30PM

Come along to learn about how Shetland Community Benefit Fund can support your community.

SUSTAINABLE SPACES

Back for 2024-25, the Hub's Sustainable Spaces programme is now open to support community building's transitions to becoming sustainable. Our Development Officers are on hand to identify opportunities, source sustainable solutions & help secure funding.

CLIMATE ACTION FUND

Our Climate Action Fund remains open on a rolling monthly basis. Our members are invited to apply for up to £500 for new community organisations, new climate action projects or community engagement. T&Cs apply.

PAST EVENT RECORDINGS

- [Sustainable Spaces Launch](#) (October 2024)
- [Challenging Poverty through Climate Action: Challenge Poverty Week 2024](#) (October 2024)
- [Sustainable Event Planning with Ullapool Unpacked](#) (September 2024)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES/ VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

No Updates This Week

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

REPORTS

[EDUCATION \(SCOTLAND\) BILL REPORT](#)

The [Education, Children and Young People Committee](#) has published its [stage 1 report](#) on the [Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#).

LEGISLATION

[SOCIAL SECURITY \(AMENDMENT\) \(SCOTLAND\) BILL](#) – PASSED ON 3 DECEMBER 2024

This bill seeks to amend the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 to make changes to the Scottish social security system. It also aims to improve the experience of people using the services provided by Social Security Scotland.

[SCOTTISH ELECTIONS \(REPRESENTATION AND REFORM\) BILL](#) – STAGE 3 PROCEEDINGS SCHEDULED FOR 17 DECEMBER 2024

This bill seeks to change the law affecting Scottish Parliament elections and Scottish local government elections.

[EDUCATION \(SCOTLAND\) BILL](#) – STAGE 1 DEBATE SCHEDULED FOR 18 DECEMBER 2024

This bill would establish a new body called Qualifications Scotland. It would also create a new office: His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland

CALLS FOR VIEWS: [THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT IS OPEN TO HEARING YOUR VIEWS ON A RANGE OF TOPICS:](#)

[PROPOSED YOUTH WORK \(SCOTLAND\) BILL](#)

Deadline: 21 February 2025

[FUTURE OF FOSTER CARE CONSULTATION](#)

Closes 6 Feb 2025

[DEVELOPING A UNIVERSAL DEFINITION OF 'CARE EXPERIENCE'](#)

Closes 8 Jan 2025

[CRIMINAL JUSTICE MODERNISATION AND ABUSIVE DOMESTIC BEHAVIOUR REVIEWS \(SCOTLAND\) BILL](#)

Closing date: 10 January 2025

[RIGHT TO ADDICTION RECOVERY \(SCOTLAND\) BILL](#)

Closing date: 20 December 2024

