

## **HOT TOPICS**

**10/08/18**

### **In the News**

- Doing more to tackle domestic abuse
- Further investment in cycle training
- SQA results: Higher passes remain strong
- Edinburgh and South East City Region Deal
- Record number of students from deprived areas accepted to university
- Support for asylum seekers threatened with eviction
- Suicide prevention plan
- Improving victims' experiences of the justice system

### **Parliamentary business**

**Holyrood** - in recess.

**Westminster** - in recess.

### **Social Media**

*Twitter*

[\*The Tory Home Office's heartless asylum policy has caused real issues in Glasgow - they must fix it\*](#)  
[\*Ten years ago we scrapped Labour's back-door university tuition fees\*](#)

*Facebook*

[\*The SNP is protecting the concessionary bus pass in Scotland\*](#)  
[\*A record number of Scottish students have secured a place at university on results day – up 4 per cent on last year\*](#)

## **IN THE NEWS**

### **DOING MORE TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE**

A “pioneering” programme that has been proven to change the behaviour of domestic abuse perpetrators is being rolled out to six more local authorities including Scotland’s biggest city. The Caledonian System is a specialist, court-mandated scheme to combat domestic abuse through the rehabilitation of male perpetrators, and works to improve the lives of the women and children affected.

A total of £2.8 million in the latest round will double the programme’s potential capacity to reach offenders.

Commenting, **Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf** said: *“Domestic abuse is a problem that continues to affect every community in Scotland. It is a priority for the Scottish Government to tackle violence against women and expand pioneering initiatives, like the Caledonian System, which combines a robust programme for male offenders, aimed at changing their behaviour, with a focus on reducing the risk of harm to women and children.”*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

### **FURTHER INVESTMENT IN CYCLE TRAINING**

£81k has been pledged by the Scottish Government to expand the innovative Play on Pedals partnership. The project is designed to help overcome barriers to cycling by providing skills training to people working in the early years and nursery settings.

Since its launch in Glasgow in 2014, more than 16,000 children have benefitted from Play on Pedals training.

Through additional funding, the training project will roll out to local authorities across Scotland, with the aim of enabling all pre-school children to have access to cycling before starting school.

Commenting, **Transport Secretary Michael Matheson** said: *“Additional funding will help bring this exciting project to more local authorities, meaning more children in their early years will have the opportunity to become familiar with the fun, excitement and various benefits of cycling.”*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

### **SQA RESULTS: HIGHER PASSES REMAN STRONG**

The number of Higher passes has remained stable over the past year despite a fall of more than 2.4% in the S5 and S6 school roll, new figures from the SQA show. There were 147,000 Higher passes, with a pass rate of 76.8%, compared to 77.0% in 2017.

The results showed a record number of entries for Advanced Higher (24,331) since changes to this qualification were made in 2015/16, with attainment rates remaining high at 80.5%.

Commenting, **Deputy First Minister John Swinney** said: *“Results day is a time to celebrate the achievements and dedication of learners right across the country, especially in this the Year of Young People. Higher passes remain stable despite a continuing fall in the number of young people on the school roll, while the number of Advanced Highers being taken continues to grow.”*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

### **EDINBURGH AND SOUTH EAST CITY REGION DEAL**

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has formally signed off the Scottish Government’s investment in the ambitious Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

The £1.3 billion deal will deliver inclusive economic growth across the region through housing, innovation, transport, skills and culture. The Scottish Government and the UK Government will each invest £300 million over the next 15 years.

The Scottish Government’s investment will contribute towards 41,000 new homes, 21,000 jobs and improve the skills of an estimated 14,700 people.

Commenting, **First Minister Nicola Sturgeon** said: *“Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland is an area of huge importance to the Scottish economy. The region contains over a quarter of Scotland’s population and contributes £33 billion to the Scottish and UK economies. Our investments will ensure businesses and communities from across the region benefit from the opportunities created by this the city region deal.”*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

### **RECORD NUMBERS OF STUDENTS FROM DEPRIVED AREAS ACCEPTED TO UNIVERSITY**

A record number of students from Scotland’s most disadvantaged areas have successfully gained a place at university according to UCAS statistics published this morning – the third year in a row a new record has been set.

The UCAS figures show the number of prospective students from the 20% most deprived areas successfully getting a place at a UK university has risen by 5% to a new record level for all ages and by 9% for 18 year olds, taking the increase for 18 year olds to 21% since 2016.

Commenting, **Deputy First Minister John Swinney** said: *“We want every young person in Scotland to have an equal chance of success no matter their background or circumstance. These figures show that we are making good progress*

*on widening access with the number of students from Scotland's most deprived areas accepted into university increasing to a record high for the third year in a row."*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

## **SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS THREATENED WITH EVICTION**

In response to the threat of asylum seekers in Glasgow facing homelessness and destitution, emergency Scottish Government funding will allow charities to provide support until their legal options have been exhausted.

The Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS) is being given £110,000 for the next six months, allowing three partner charities to double their capacity to help people back into asylum support and provide stable and safe accommodation. They are The Scottish Refugee Council, The Refugee Survival Trust and The British Red Cross

Commenting, **Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell** said: *"The plight of people threatened with eviction demands a resolute and humanitarian approach and we cannot see people turned on to the streets because of the failure of the Home Office's asylum policy. We all have a moral duty to do what we can to help those most in need and this additional funding, while a short term solution, will provide urgent assistance needed."*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

## **SUICIDE PREVENTION PLAN**

Scotland will reduce its suicide rate by 20% by 2022, Mental Health Minister Clare Haughey has said as she announced the country's new prevention plan.

Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan sets out ten measures to continue the strong decline in the country's rate of deaths by suicide. The plan was developed following extensive engagement with mental health and suicide prevention organisations, people affected by suicide, and academics.

To implement the plan, the Scottish Government will set up a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG) by September 2018 and support it with a new £3 million innovation fund. Former Deputy Chief Constable Rose Fitzpatrick will chair the group.

Commenting, **Mental Health Minister Clare Haughey** said: *"Every life matters and no death by suicide should be regarded as either acceptable or inevitable. Over the past decade, Scotland has made real progress in reducing deaths by suicide but we have far more to do. We want a Scotland where suicide is preventable, and where anyone contemplating suicide or who has lost a loved one gets the support they need."*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).

## **IMPROVING VICTIMS' EXPERIENCES OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Scotland's prosecutors and courts are to get extra funding of £1.1 million to respond to the growth in sexual offence reports and reduce the time such cases take to progress through the justice system.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service will use the extra funding to deal with the additional caseload, work to reduce the time which cases take to come to court, and to improve information provided to complainers.

Commenting, **Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf** said: *"Many victims of sexual offences are understandably anxious about the criminal justice process and there is a risk that without appropriate support and reassurance the prosecution process can compound their trauma. That is why we are providing this extra funding to help ensure cases reach court as quickly as possible and to improve communication with victims."*

The Scottish Government press release can be found [here](#).