Alcohol and Drugs

Leave to appeal minimum unit pricing given

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has been given leave to appeal the plans for minimum unit pricing for alcohol, the BBC reports. A hearing at the Court of Session in Edinburgh gave permission to the SWA to appeal to the UK Supreme Court, following a decision earlier this year that the plans for minimum unit pricing were legally sound.

Heavy drinkers could be sent for scans to detect early liver disease (England)

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is consulting on a draft quality standard which advises GPs to send people for scans for cirrhosis in their liver if men are drinking more than 50 units of alcohol per week or 22 pints and women are drinking more than 35 units of alcohol per week or three and a half bottles of wine. Access to the two recommended tests, transient elastography and acoustic radiation force impulse imaging, is currently varied across England, whilst the first is available in at least 120 UK hospitals, the latter is a newer technology that is not as widespread. Draft guidance also calls for all those diagnosed with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease to be regularly tested for advanced liver fibrosis – so they can manage their condition and prevent it developing into cirrhosis.
Alzheimer's/Dementia

How professionals can empower and support carers

The Dementia Services Development Centre has published a blog by Professor Emma Reynish, Nicola Thomson and Jane Robertson, on the challenges facing carers for people with dementia and how professionals can recognise these challenges and provide support. Common challenges identified include increased disease severity and periods of time when neuropsychiatric symptoms such as mood disorders, delusions, hallucinations and behavioural disturbance are present. Professionals are encouraged to provide support by ensuring carers are provided with clear information, signposting or referring to local services, and involving carers as “equal partners in care.”

Emmerdale screens episode through eyes of character with dementia

Care Appointments reports on the “sensitive portrayal” of dementia in an Emmerdale episode shown from the perspective of character Ashley Thomas, who suffers from stroke-related early onset vascular dementia. The special episode uses changes to camerawork and editing to show the character’s confused point of view, and the Emmerdale producers worked closely with the Alzheimer’s Society and MHA (Methodist Homes) throughout the storyline.

Care Homes/Care at Home

Protecting people from falls

The Care Inspectorate is encouraging everyone who spends time with a loved one in a care setting this Christmas to be on the look out for potential fall hazards, after recently launching a drive to improve the way care homes across Scotland protect residents from the danger of falls. Older people in care homes are three times more likely to fall than older people who live in their own home. The rate of emergency admissions to hospital as a result of a fall is also almost four times higher among care home residents than older people living in their own homes. Earlier this year the Care Inspectorate launched a new good practice resource full of information on how best to prevent and manage falls. It will be distributed to every care home in Scotland and help them minimise the risk of falls, and better support people who do experience a fall.

Report on Scottish Care Conference 2016

Scottish Care has published a blog on its recent National Care Home Conference 2016. The theme for this year’s Conference was “Care Homes at the Heart”, with speakers exploring the place of care homes at the heart of their communities. An interview with Rami Okasha and Kevin Mitchell from the Care Inspectorate saw Scottish Care’s Carlyn Miller lead with a series of questions to the panel regarding care homes at the heart of Human Rights based regulation in addition to the new National Care Standards. Conference slides and audio from the event can be found on the blog.
End of Life/Palliative Care

St Andrew’s Hospice decant plans during refurbishment

St Andrew’s Hospice will undertake a refurbishment of their Henderson Street building commencing early 2017 and lasting around 15-18 months. During the refurbishment they will continue to provide inpatient specialist palliative care services from their decant facilities at Wester Moffat Hospital in Airdrie.

Updated RCN guidance on assisted suicide

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has published updated guidance, ‘When Someone Asks For Your Assistance To Die: RCN guidance on responding to a request to hasten death’, for nursing staff on how to respond to requests from patients related to assisted suicide. The guidance, originally published in 2011, sets out the legal position for health care workers and reinforces the fact that assisting a suicide is illegal. It also provides practical examples of how to deal with difficult conversations and deliver good quality end of life care. The guidance covers the legal position in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, where assisting another person to commit suicide is an offence. It draws on the experiences of nurses working in all areas of care, and aims to support the relationship between patients and nurses and protect the vulnerable.

Learning Disability

Asset based approach to working with people with learning disabilities

The Scottish Commission for Learning Disability has published a guest blog by Ellie Wolf, manager of Health and Happiness, on the ‘Tell it Like it Is (TILIS)’ project. The project is located in the Highlands and takes an asset based approach to working with people with learning disabilities, by training community journalists to support people with learning disabilities to tell their own story in their own words.

New picture book scheme to get people with learning disabilities into employment (England)

Learning Disability Today reports that the UK Government has launched a new two-year project that aims to use picture book and group discussion to help people with learning disabilities to get back into employment. Launched by the Work and Pensions Secretary Damian Green, the project is being run by Beyond Words, a social enterprise that produces books, services and training for people who find pictures easier to understand than words. The project will include four new picture books to promote group discussions on finding and keeping a job. It builds on the success of book groups for people with learning disabilities and autism and will be the start of a new focus on four stages of employment including leaving school or college, exploring work, finding and staying in a job.
Mental Health

Funding for innovations in mental health and wellbeing support

The Scottish Government has announced £10 million funding to fund innovative ways to support mental health and wellbeing in primary care settings. The funding is part of efforts to improve early intervention and put more focus on prevention. Funding will be for improved support in rural areas and places with high social deprivation, and GP link workers will play a key role, helping to signpost people to local community resources such as peer support and helping them to manage their own conditions.

Health Committee sets out key issues to improve mental health treatment

The Scottish Parliament’s Health and Sport Committee has published a letter to the Minister for Mental Health, setting out the key issues they believe will improve mental health treatment in Scotland. These key issues were identified following an inquiry into the provision of mental health services for children, adolescents and adults. Whilst focusing on the issues facing child and adolescent mental health, the Committee’s letter states that addressing the inequalities in adult mental health should be at the heart of the Scottish Government’s new mental health strategy to be published next year.

Local visit reports published by Mental Welfare Commission

The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) has published seven new local visit reports, including visits to NHS hospital wards, care homes, and a prison. The MWC hopes that by publishing the reports with negative and positive findings and recommendations for change where necessary, they will share good practice where they find it and call for change where services are lacking.

Report published to inform suicide prevention strategy (England)

The Health Committee at Westminster has published an interim report to allow the emerging themes to inform the updated suicide prevention strategy. A full report will follow next year, but the key messages identified by the Health Committee so far are:

- A clear implementation strategy is needed, with strong national leadership and clear accountability
- Recommendation for improvements in both primary and secondary care and services for those bereaved by suicide
- Better training for professionals and consensus on sharing information with families
- Timely and consistent data is needed to enable swift responses to suspected suicides
- Media guidelines are being ignored and greater attention must be paid to dealing with breaches by the media, at national and local level
**Older People**

**Minister urges people to remember older people in their neighbourhoods**

The Social Security Minister, Jeane Freeman, has sent a Christmas message asking everyone in Scotland to remember the older people in their neighbourhoods and communities, and check in on them over the festive period. Ms Freeman in her message is sending a reminder that some people can be lonely at Christmas and “a simple action such as having a quick cup of tea with an elderly neighbour can make a huge difference to alleviate loneliness and isolation experienced by people at this time of year.”

**Other Health and Social Care**

**Care Inspectorate zero tolerance policy**

Earlier in the year, the Care Inspectorate introduced a [zero tolerance policy](#). The vast majority of interactions we have with services are positive, even when discussing complex and difficult issues, but for the tiny minority of cases where our staff are subject to harassment, we will take a zero-tolerance approach, which is covered in this policy.

**National delivery plan for health and social care published**

The Scottish Government has published a health and social care delivery plan setting out a programme to “further enhance health and social care services.” The plan brings together health and social care integration, the National Clinical Strategy, public health improvement and work on NHS board reform. Setting out how people can live “live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting” with a health and social care system that is integrated; focuses on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management; will make day-case treatment the norm, where hospital treatment is required and cannot be provided in a community setting; focuses on care being provided to the highest standards of quality and safety, whatever the setting, with the person at the centre of all decisions; and ensures people get back into their home or community environment as soon as appropriate, with minimal risk of re-admission.

**Health and Sport Committee publishes work programme**

The Health and Sport Committee has published its work programme from 16 January to 7 February 2017. Inquiries include Preventative Agenda, Technology and Modernisation in the NHS and Sport for Everyone. In addition, the Committee will continue its work on the budget and consider the approach to NHS Governance. It will also undertake a series of short inquiries, lasting no longer than two weeks. The first of these will be on healthcare in prisons. An evidence session with the [Care Inspectorate](#) is planned.

The Health and Sport Committee has also published a [note of their work to date](#), including the eight short inquiries they have undertaken.
New certificate in Care Qualification (England)

SFJ Awards has brought in a new ‘Skills for Health Level 2 Certificate in Care Qualification’ aimed at frontline staff who are not registered nurses but deliver hands-on care in hospitals, care homes and in people’s homes, Skills for Health reports. Created in response to concerns about the consistency of local assessment of learners undertaking the Care Certificate, the Qualification will provide robust and rigorous external quality assurance. It will provide confidence to learners, staff, employers and the public that those in caring roles have attained the primary skills, knowledge and competence associated with compassionate care. The qualification will support learners in their career by, not only assuring the attainment of the primary skills they need, but also by being transferable within and across the workplace.

Ombudsman report on benefits of integrating health and social care complaints (England)

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) have published a report, ‘Working together to investigate health and social care complaints’, on the benefits of adopting an integrated approach to investigating complaints about health and social care. The report explains the work of the ombudsmen’s Joint Working Team (JWT), which was set up to investigate the most complex joint health and social care complaints and carried out 180 investigations during its first year. The JWT is made up of investigators from both the LGO and PHSO, enabling a more streamlined approach and single point of contact, and benefits include a reduction in the time taken overall to resolve complaints.

New framework promoting a shared commitment to quality (England)

The National Quality Board, made up of the Department of Health, Public Health England, NHS England, Care Quality Commission, NHS Improvement and the National Institute of Care Excellence, has published a new framework to help promote improved quality across all national health organisations. The framework provides a nationally agreed definition of quality and a guide for managers and leaders of health and social care organisations to help them improve quality, and enables the health and social care system to work together more effectively.

Other

Scotland’s Place in Europe document published

The Scottish Government has published a position paper which sets out the Government’s approach to the European Union following the result of the EU Referendum. The paper sets out the importance of continued European Single Market (ESM) membership for Scotland. It then describes the Government’s strategy for ensuring Scotland can remain a member of the ESM even if the UK Government’s pursues a different policy; and details the further constitutional consequences of Brexit.
New Scottish Social Services Awards

New national awards are launching in January 2017 in order to highlight best practice and people in the social service sector who are helping to lead the way and making differences to the lives of people they help to support. The awards will be run by the Social Work Services Strategic Forum. Individuals, teams or organisations may enter, as well as being nominated by other.

Part two of the Community Empowerment Act comes into force

Part two of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 came into force on 20 December 2016, placing new expectations on public services to work together with local communities. The law ensures that local public sector bodies like councils, NHS Boards and Police Scotland must secure the participation of communities through working together in community planning, ensuring services are shaped to meet local needs. Guidance on Part two of the Act has also been published by the Scottish Government, to help support those who wish to take part in community planning, explaining the purpose of community planning and what difference effective community planning can make to improving outcomes and reducing inequality.

Disclaimer

This weekly bulletin is produced as an update on the key issues concerning adults and health.

Each item in the bulletin has a hyperlinked headline that will take the reader to the original source.

We collate items from our parliamentary and Scottish Government monitoring covering health and social care news from throughout the UK, and current research and policy development. We use a variety of sources for the bulletin, including alerts from Newsdirect, Community Care, Children & Young People Now and ISD Scotland.

We aim to be representative rather than comprehensive, so we try to cover only the main Scottish stories, along with some stories from the rest of the UK. The purpose of the bulletin is to alert readers to items of interest. It should be noted that these items are the works of others and are neither authorised nor endorsed by the Care Inspectorate, with the exception of publications which are identified as Care Inspectorate publications.

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