Alcohol and Drugs

Committee of MPs advises radical change to drugs policy

The UK Parliament’s Health and Social Care Committee has published the conclusions of its inquiry into UK drugs policy, which the committee said was “clearly failing” following a number of evidence sessions. The Committee recommends a “radical change” in approach to UK drugs policy, advocating a health focused and harm reduction approach with responsibility moving from the Home Office to the Department of Health and Social Care. Other recommendations include a Government consultation on the decriminalisation of drug possession for personal use from a criminal offence to a civil matter, and an examination of the Portuguese system where decriminalisation has been implemented. The Committee said in the report that the rate of drug-related deaths, particularly in Scotland, has risen to the scale of a public health emergency.

Alzheimer’s/Dementia

Care staff wear pyjamas so residents know it’s bedtime

A survey carried out by Carehome.co.uk has found 11 per cent of care home staff in the UK wear pyjamas when working at night so that residents know it is time for bed. The survey found 59 per cent of staff think this is a good idea to help people living with dementia distinguish between night and day. Care homes who have adopted the practice found that having pyjama wearing staff helps promote sleep at night and reduces pacing and disorientation, as well as leading to a reduction in night-time falls as less residents are awake at night.
Care Homes/Care at Home

**Care homes to benefit from digital nutritional support scheme**

Digital Health reports on a new digital nutritional support system to be used in over 100 care homes in Scotland, as developed by NHS Tayside in partnership with Inhealthcare. The system is designed to reduce the inappropriate prescribing of oral nutritional supplements. Care home staff can use the service to refer residents to dieticians via a digital questionnaire if they have concerns about their health and wellbeing. Care home staff can then be provided with advice on food and supplements where appropriate, and a schedule for regular monitoring can be established. The technology is thought to improve resident safety and increase the engagement of care home staff in resident care.

**Roll out of ‘home first’ model in Edinburgh**

The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board has approved plans to expand the home first approach, which helps promote approaches to care for people at home and in a homely setting. The model is already in place at the Western General Hospital, where a Home First Navigator supports clinicians to explore alternatives for patients to an extended hospital stay, tailored to the patient’s needs. The scheme is designed to reduce the number of people being delayed leaving hospital and improve the care patients receive in their own community. Edinburgh Integration Joint Board also announced that waiting times to leave hospital have improved, recording a reduction of nearly 2,000 occupied bed days attributed to delays.

**NHS Highland seeks to place Elmgrove residents in safer care**

NHS Highland has announced plans to take urgent action in order to safeguard residents at Elmgrove Care Home. Concerns were raised about residents’ safety and quality of care at the independently managed care home and the Care Inspectorate has taken urgent enforcement action by lodging an application for emergency cancellation and registration. NHS Highland confirmed it has withdrawn its contract with the care home provider and is urgently seeking to place all 24 residents to a safer alternative environment.

**Fresh concerns about future of Four Seasons**

A report in the Telegraph suggests the future of care home provider Four Seasons is in doubt after a deal to sell part of its care home business collapsed last week. The company, which is Britain’s second-largest care home provider, was due to offload 185 freehold properties to H/2 Capital, the US hedge fund that is its principal creditor. Concerns have been raised about the future of Four Seasons care homes which have around 16,000 residents across the country.

**Significant investment needed in council’s care homes, says report**

Scottish Borders Council has published a report setting out the levels of investment required at four of its care homes. The BBC reports that the local authority carried
out inspections of the homes earlier this month following concerns over its Deanfield facility in Hawick. The report states a £1.5 million investment is needed to bring the care homes up to an appropriate standard. Councillors will be asked to agree the need to prioritise capital investment in the estate which would then be considered as part of the future capital financial planning process for 2020/21 and future years.

**Mental Health**

**Themed visit report on support for people with autism and complex care needs**

The Mental Welfare Commission has published its first themed visit report on support for people with autism and learning disability or other complex care needs who are subject to mental health or incapacity legislation. The investigation was launched after the Commission became aware that people with autism have particular needs that are not always met in settings designed for people with other conditions. Findings suggest a wide variation in assessment and post-diagnostic support across Scotland. Of the 54 people met by the Commission, 45 were prescribed psychotropic medication on a regular basis, with 40 of those being prescribed regular antipsychotic medication. Additionally, a significant number of people who were living in hospital were found to be ready to leave but on delayed discharge, waiting for suitable accommodation.

**Other Health and Social Care**

**Audit Scotland report on Scotland’s NHS**

The latest report on the NHS in Scotland has been published by the Auditor General. The report recognises growing pressure on the health service from the ageing population and says the NHS must refocus its priorities to speed up health and social care integration. The NHS treated more people on time in 2018-19 but Audit Scotland raised concerns about the impact of rising demand for care on staff, highlighting that only two out of eight key waiting time standards were met. A number of recommendations are made, including the publication of an integrated health and social care workforce plan and public progress reports on the health and social care delivery plan. The report also calls for improvements in NHS governance and cultural improvement in the workplace.

**New Health and Social Care Director in Fife**

Nicky Connor has been appointed Director of Health and Social Care at NHS Fife. Ms Connor has worked in a number of public service roles over the last 20 years including nursing, acute, specialist and community roles. She has also lead on regional and national work.

**GP practices receive investment for upgrades**

The Scottish Government has announced funding to upgrade GP practices and their IT systems. Over £9 million will be allocated to facilitate improvements and enhancements to make the best use of existing space. The Government said this
will improve internet connectivity and also support the deployment of Attend Anywhere - an online virtual clinic that patients can link into wherever they are. The funding includes investment in Integration Authorities to carry out digitisation of GP paper records and money to support the implementations of Primary Care Improvement Plans.

Ministers announce plans for ‘care robots’

The UK Government has announced funding for the development of “health care robots” which would be capable of providing support for people experiencing care. A research programme dedicated to making autonomous systems safe and trustworthy for public use has been launched which could help develop robots to fulfil tasks such as helping older people after a fall, delivering food at mealtimes and ensuring medication is taken at the right time.

SCIE Chief Executive to step down

Chief Executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Tony Hunter, will step down from his post next year. Mr Hunter, who will officially stand down on 31 March 2020, has led the organisation for six years. SCIE is now seeking a new Chief Executive to work closely with the Chair, Paul Burstow, and the Board, to lead the organisation.

Diet and health weight monitoring report

Statistics on the prevalence of adults and children being overweight or obese, Type 2 diabetes, fruit and vegetable consumption, and sales of soft drinks, confectionary, etc, have been published by the Scottish Government setting out the latest results against the obesity indicator framework. In 2018, 65 per cent of adults aged 16 and over were overweight, including 28 per cent who were obese. Levels of overweight and obesity for adults aged 16-64 increased between 1995 and 2008, but have remained broadly stable since then.

Workforce

Consultation on new whistleblowing standards

The Scottish Parliament’s Health and Sport Committee has issued a call for views on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Whistleblowing Order. The Committee is interested in two areas: views on the order, principles and standards and whether there are any outstanding issues. The Public Services Reform (The SPSO) (Healthcare Whistleblowing) Order 2019 amends the SPSO Act 2002 to insert ‘healthcare whistleblowing’ as a matter the SPSO is entitled to investigate. The Order creates a new route for whistleblowers in the healthcare sector to bring complaints to the SPSO and extends the list of bodies to whom the Ombudsman can disclose information obtained in the course of an investigation to include certain bodies that have a role in improving healthcare in Scotland. The Committee has also highlighted the Draft National Whistleblowing Standards produced by the SPSO and the whistleblowing principles. The deadline to respond is Tuesday 12 November.
Presentation slides on effective supervision

The Scottish Social Services Council has produced a new presentation to help facilitate discussion around effective supervision. Slides and accompanying notes are available on the SSSC website and can be used to help new or existing managers of teams needing to focus more on supervision, as part of an organisation’s induction programme or to support managers’ CPD.

Social Work England to go live on 2 December

The new regulator of all social workers in England will go live on 2 December 2019, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has confirmed. Social work registrants have been assured they will not have to do anything and that the transfer from current regulator HCPC will happen automatically on that date. The BASW and Social Work England representatives have continued to hold meetings regularly to ensure the input of social workers is integral to the development of the new regulator as it comes into force.

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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