



# Adult and Health



## [Alcohol and Drugs](#)

## [Alzheimer's/Dementia](#)

## [Disability](#)

## [Infection Prevention and Control](#)

## [Mental Health](#)

## [Older People](#)

## [Other Health & Social Care](#)

## [Other](#)

### **Alcohol and Drugs**

#### [Scottish drugs conference announced](#)

The Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council are hosting a joint conference on drug use in Glasgow on 26 February at the SECC. Sessions will include contributions from Public Health Minister Joe FitzPatrick and Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council. The discussions will help inform Scottish input to the UK Drugs Summit in Glasgow the following day. There will also be training in the use of Naloxone which reverses the effect of an opioid overdose and a demonstration model of a safer drug consumption facility.

#### [Minimum unit alcohol pricing to start in Wales \(Wales\)](#)

The law introducing minimum unit alcohol pricing will become effective in Wales from 2 March, after its introduction was delayed because of objections from Portugal. Portugal was also one of the five countries who objected in 2013 to the Scottish Government's plans for a similar policy. In preparation for the legislation's introduction, a government awareness campaign will be in place from next week. There are no current plans for similar policies to be introduced in England or Northern Ireland.



## **Alzheimer's/Dementia**

### [Yearbook estimates future prevalence of dementia in Europe](#)

An annual report estimating the prevalence of dementia across Europe has been published by Alzheimer Europe. Based on collaborative analysis of recent prevalence studies, the 2019 Dementia in Europe Yearbook suggests that, despite a marked reduction in the prevalence of dementia, the number of people with dementia is set to double by 2050.

## **Disability**

### [Motability scheme to continue](#)

Disabled people will continue to be able to lease mobility vehicles under Scotland's new social security system, Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville has announced. Speaking at the launch of the Accessible Vehicles and Equipment Scheme, Ms Somerville revealed the Scottish Government has accredited the charity Motability Scheme to provide cars, wheelchair accessible vehicles, scooters and powered wheelchairs that can be adapted to meet disabled people's needs.

### [EHRC legal action over failure to move people into appropriate accommodation \(England\)](#)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has launched a legal challenge against the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for the failure to move people with learning disabilities and autism into appropriate accommodation. The EHRC has sent a pre-action letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, arguing that the DHSC has breached the European Convention of Human Rights for failing to meet the targets in moving patients from inappropriate inpatient care to community-based settings, and reducing the reliance on inpatient care for people with learning disabilities and autism.

## **Infection Prevention and Control**

### [Update and guidance on coronavirus published](#)

An update and guidance on coronavirus have been issued by Health Protection Scotland. The update includes background information on the emergence of the illness and guidance for a variety of settings in Scotland.

### [Coronavirus preparations praised by CMO](#)

Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Catherine Calderwood, has praised the preparations of NHS and frontline health workers in responding to the increased pressures during the global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19). Coronavirus screening laboratories in Glasgow and Edinburgh have tested 202 possible cases in the first 10 days since testing began in Scotland.



## **Mental Health**

### [ISD publishes update of suicide database figures](#)

People in Scotland who took their own lives were “significantly more likely” than the general population to have used an ‘unscheduled care service’, such as NHS 24, an out-of-hours GP or an ambulance, a new report from ISD Scotland has found. The Scottish Suicide Information Database has been updated to include contact with unscheduled care services prior to death. Researchers found that nearly half of those who took their own lives contacted an unscheduled care service in the year before their death. The most common contact was with the ambulance service, with people six times more likely to have had at least one contact in the 12 months before their death.

## **Older People**

### [Charity publishes loneliness blog in response to research](#)

Communities across Scotland hold the key to tackling loneliness and connecting people, according to a new blog from Age Scotland. Referring to its own research that found 100,000 older people in Scotland say they feel lonely “all or most of the time”, the charity has produced a blog that highlights “the best and most inspiring solutions” to loneliness and isolation that people could do to connect more with others around them.

### [Study finds Mediterranean diet has potential to promote healthier ageing](#)

Eating a Mediterranean style diet in old age can limit frailty and cognitive decline by improving gut health, according to new research from University College Cork. The scientists followed 612 people between the ages of 65 and 79 from across the UK and Europe over the course of a year. At the end of the study, the Mediterranean diet was associated with increasing types of bacteria which have been previously associated with signs of reduced frailty and better brain function, including better walking speed, hand grip strength and memory. However, the researchers also noted that there could be practical difficulties to improving older people’s diets, especially those in settings such as care homes where residents may have dental problems or difficulty swallowing solid foods.

## **Other Health and Social Care**

### [Concerns over impact of new immigration system on social care in Scotland](#)

Scottish Care has expressed its disappointment following publication of the UK Government’s immigration plans. Home Secretary Priti Patel launched a new [points-based immigration system](#) that, from 1 January 2020, will end free movement and assign points for specific skills, qualifications, salaries or professions, with visas only awarded to those who gain enough points. ‘Skilled workers’ will need to meet a number of relevant criteria, including specific skills and the ability to speak English, while a minimum salary threshold of £25,600 will be introduced. Scottish Care CEO Dr Donald Macaskill said the salary threshold and requirements “don’t speak to the



reality of social care” and are likely to result in “significant damage” to the care sector in Scotland. The Scottish Government also responded to the announcement, reiterating its call for a ‘Scottish Visa’ to be introduced.

#### [New report on social connections published](#)

A report on Scottish “social capital”, the social connections that contribute to people’s quality of life, health, economy and wellbeing in the neighbourhoods where they live, has been published by the Scottish Government. The report evaluates four aspects of social capital: social network, community cohesion, social participation, and community empowerment. A separate [study](#), which considers how stories and case studies can provide insight into the nature of social connections and places in Scotland, has also been published.

#### [Latest statistics for carers allowance eligibility published](#)

The Scottish Government has published its latest statistics providing information on recipients of Carer’s Allowance in Scotland at August 2019 and recipients of the Carer’s Allowance Supplement (CAS) to the October eligibility date 2019. Key statistics include that there were 78,252 carers in Scotland in receipt of Carer’s Allowance, an increase of 3% since the previous year and 1% since the last quarter, while a further 44,243 were entitled to Carer’s Allowance but did not receive a payment – the majority of these were 65 or over. Over two thirds of Carer’s Allowance payments (69%) were made to female carers. Of those in receipt of payments, 45% were aged 50 or over, while only 12% were under 30.

#### [New Chairs appointed to NHS Boards](#)

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport has announced the appointments of Lesley Bowie as Chair of Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board, Janie McCusker as Chair of Forth Valley NHS Board, and Meghan McEwen as Chair of Orkney NHS Board.

#### [Report explores use of personal experience statements in fitness to practise process](#)

The value the voice of the public can bring to fitness to practise proceedings has been highlighted in a report commissioned by Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The Traverse report emphasises a number of regulatory benefits that the use of personal experience statements could bring. The NMC is exploring how the use of personal experience statements could be heard and valued in its fitness to practise proceedings.

#### **Other**

#### [Jackson Carlaw elected leader of Conservatives and appoints shadow cabinet](#)

Jackson Carlaw has been confirmed as the new leader of the Scottish Conservatives, the BBC reports. Mr Carlaw, who has been the party’s interim leader since Ruth Davidson stepped down in August 2019, defeated fellow MSP Michelle Ballantyne by 4,917 votes to 1,581. Mr Carlaw has confirmed his new shadow cabinet, including the following appointments:



- Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health – Miles Briggs
- Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Justice – Liam Kerr
- Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Education – Jamie Greene
- Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Communities & Social Security – Graham Simpson

### **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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