

20 - 26 March 2021







# COVID-19 - General

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### COVID-19 - General

# Latest COVID-19 figures published by Public Health Scotland

Public Health Scotland has published its weekly COVID-19 statistics. By 21 March, there had been 213,888 confirmed cases, with 3,515 in the latest week. In the week ending 21 March, there were 185 admissions to hospital with confirmed COVID-19 and 17 new patients treated in intensive care.

#### Trials to test effectiveness of treatments

The UK Government's Department of Health and Social Care has announced that clinical trials will develop and test treatments to prevent people catching COVID-19. The PROTECT-V trial, run by the University of Cambridge, will look at potential COVID-19 treatments' effectiveness in reducing the spread of the virus amongst immunocompromised groups. The PROTECT-CH trial, run by the University of Nottingham, will also look at treatments for reducing transmission and serious illness from the virus, for care homes, their residents and staff.



# Evaluation of scaling up use of Near Me video consultations

Findings of an external evaluation of the rapid scaling-up of the Near Me video consultation service across health and care services in Scotland during 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have been published by the Scottish Government. The evaluation explores the process of scaling-up and expanding the use of Near Me within hospital and community care settings, GP services and care homes. It makes recommendations relevant to future scaling-up, spread and sustainability of video consulting services in health and care.

# Single guideline for management of COVID-19

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published a single guideline for the management of COVID-19 in children and adults. The guideline puts all essential information about managing COVID-19 in a single piece of guidance, and lists the key symptoms of COVID-19 for identifying patients with severe illness, including confusion, reduced oxygen levels, and shortness of breath.

# Effect of COVID-19 on different groups and existing health inequalities

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) has published a briefing paper examining the effect of COVID-19 on different group and how existing health inequalities have been exacerbated. This briefing explains what health inequalities are in a Scottish context, and looks at how they are being and might continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Annual report of COVID-19 committee

The Scottish Parliament's COVID-19 Committee has published their annual report for 2020-21, setting out the work of the Committee and evidence on the next steps inquiry scrutinising the Scottish Government's strategic response to COVID-19 going forward, including its refreshed strategy and the expiry of its emergency powers.

## Alzheimer's/Dementia

# Equality impact assessment of the dementia and COVID-19 action plan

An equality impact assessment (EQIA) has been published by the Scottish Government, focusing on their national action plan to continue to support recovery for people with dementia and their carers. The EQIA describes actions that are considered necessary in helping to achieve the Dementia and COVID-19 National Action Plan, which aims to support people with dementia and their families to continue to get the right care, treatment and support at the right time as we live with, and come through, the COVID-19 pandemic.



#### Care Homes/Care at Home

# Reflections on family experiences within care home lockdowns

A 'rapid COVID study' on the experiences of families within care home lockdowns has been publicised by the ALLIANCE. A team of 13 researchers from the University of Edinburgh, University of the West of Scotland and University of Strathclyde used a variety of research methods to explore family carers experience of care home lockdown, to identify what helped them and describe the consequences for family carers in terms of their own health and wellbeing. Most participants in an online survey reportedly agreed that they were preoccupied with the wellbeing of their relative in the care home and more stressed than before visiting was stopped. The majority also indicated losing sleep due to worry and being more depressed and unhappy than usual.

# Weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland

Weekly figures on the number of COVID-19 deaths in care homes have been published by the Scottish Government. In the week commencing Monday 15 March, 7 of the 191 deaths which took place in the period were with confirmed COVID-19. Visiting status data has also been published.

# Disability

# Progress report on Fairer Scotland action plan

Work carried out under the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People action plan over the past five years has been judged as a "good start" in a progress report published by the Scottish Government. A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People sets out the Scottish Government's approach to policy for disabled people, and the report examines progress made under each of the five ambitions and 93 practical actions.

# Outcomes of disabled people to those of non-disabled people

A comparison of the outcomes and experiences of disabled people to those of nondisabled people using indicators drawn from Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) has been published by the Scottish Government. Across the outcomes for which the report has data, a considerable number of indicators suggest that disabled people face some barriers to fully participating in Scottish society, such as:

- the rates of combined material deprivation and low income have been consistently higher in families with a disabled member
- relative poverty rates were consistently higher where a household had a disabled member than where they did not
- disabled people are more likely to have experienced food insecurity than nondisabled people



- there is lower mental wellbeing among disabled adults, along with higher levels of loneliness, higher engagement in health risk behaviours, and higher rates of difficulties among disabled children
- there are lower rates of cultural participation and attendance among disabled people along with lower rates of access to green (parks, woods and countryside) and blue (rivers, lochs, coasts) space and visits to the outdoors

# Action plan for respecting rights of autistic people and people with learning/intellectual disabilities

The Autism and Learning/Intellectual Disability Transformation Plan has been published by the Scottish Government and COSLA looking at the actions needed to shape supports, services and attitudes to ensure that the human rights of autistic people and people with learning/intellectual disabilities are respected and protected and that they are empowered to live their lives, the same as everyone else. The plan has 30 actions and aims to start conversations on how to change people's lives, and putting the voice of autistic people, people with a learning/intellectual disability, and unpaid carers at the centre of work going forward.

#### **Mental Health**

# Support for COVID-19 patients

The Scottish Government has announced that patients who have been hospitalised due to coronavirus (COVID-19) will have access to more support through a new dedicated network of mental health clinicians, which will itself be supported by a national strategic advisory group offering clinical expertise and guidance. Clinicians will proactively contact all patients who have been hospitalised due to COVID-19 over the course of the coming year and it is anticipated that roughly 3,000 people will benefit directly from treatment.

# Further update to advice for people using services

The Mental Welfare Commission has published version six of their advice on the COVID-19 situation for people using mental health, learning disability and dementia services and their family/carers.

# **Older People**

# Research into housing needs of older people

The results of focus group research into the housing needs of older people have been published by Age Scotland. The research suggests that community links and relationships with others nearby are key to decision making about housing choices, with people more willing to make do with a home that does not fully suit their needs if they feel settled in their area. A serious life event such as deteriorating health is the most likely catalyst for older people to move home, and these moves often occur later than required. There is a need to increase the availability of accessible and



adaptable homes so that people can live well and independently for as long as possible.

# Developing a strategy for older people's health and social care

A statement of intent on how the Scottish Government plan to approach older people's health and social care, and develop a new integrated health and social care strategy, has been published by the Scottish Government's Healthcare Quality and Improvement Directorate. Building on 'A Fairer Scotland for Older People – A Framework for Action', whilst health and social care services are rebuild and remobilised following the pandemic, the statement's vision is for safe, integrated, person centred health and social care, where older people are able o live independently, and drive the decisions about their health and wellbeing; with their human rights respected and their dignity protected.

#### Other Health and Social Care

# How the Scottish Government and COSLA will work together on adult social care

A joint statement of intent has been published by the Scottish Government and COSLA outlining how they will work together to deliver the key foundation pillars set out in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (IRASC). An agreement has been reached for the Scottish Government and COSLA to have outline plans in place to deliver, by May 2021:

- an end to charging for non-residential services as soon as possible
- shared ethical commissioning principles
- the overhaul of the current mechanism of eligibility criteria to ensure an approach to social care support that is based on human rights and needs
- a mechanism which ensures the voices of those with lived experience are at the heart of policy development, service design and service delivery
- ensuring that unpaid carers are fully supported to have a life alongside caring, in order to protect their health and wellbeing and better sustain caring roles

# Committee work in this Scottish Parliament session

Committees in the Scottish Parliament have begun publishing legacy reports ahead of the dissolution of the current session. The reports summarise work during the current session, reflect on lessons learned and look ahead to the work of any successor committee in the next session. The Health and Sport Committee has published their legacy report, and amongst their summary of their activity they recommend a new dedicated committee for social care.

# New centre for adult social care

Scottish Care has announced that they will be partnering with University of Birmingham, as part of a broader consortium of key stakeholders from across the UK, to develop a brand new Centre for adult social care called IMPACT (Improving



Adult Care Together). The Centre will aim to put evidence into practice to promote and maintain people's independence and wellbeing.

# Framework for further implementation of SDS

A framework of standards written specifically for local authorities to provide them with an overarching structure, aligned to legislation and statutory guidance, for further implementation of the self-directed support (SDS) approach and principles. Evidence shows that some local areas have embedded SDS well, while others are challenged to make the changes required for successful SDS implementation, and the standards, action statements and core components in the framework aim to ensure consistency of outcomes and approaches in SDS practice across Scotland experienced by supported people (children and adults) and carers, building up a framework of good practice in assessment for support, support planning and in provision of care and support resources.

As part of the development of a national framework for self-directed support, Social Work Scotland commissioned a small-scale <u>learning review</u> to map the approach taken by the self-directed support team and bring together the learning from throughout the project.

# Adult social care market report (England)

A report on the adult social care market in England has been published by the National Audit Office (NAO), examining the current care market and the Department of Health & Social Care's role in overseeing the market now and in the future, with the aim of offering insights and recommendations ahead of future social care reforms.

# Update on regulatory approach (England)

The Care Quality Commission has published an update on its regulatory approach, acknowledging that their regulatory role has not changed during the pandemic, but they are looking to their role in encouraging system-wide recovery. Their update also sets out their activity in sectors such as adult social care services, hospital and primary medical services and registration.



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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 <a href="Newsdirect">Newsdirect</a>, <a href="Community Care">Community Care</a>, <a href="Children & Young People Now">Children & Young People Now</a> and <a href="ISD">ISD</a>
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