




Adult and Health



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Covid-19 - General

[Changes to self-isolation rules announced](#)

The Scottish Government has announced changes to the self-isolation rules for double vaccinated close contacts of Covid cases to maintain lifeline services and critical national infrastructure. It is now possible to apply for exemption for those in critical roles where staff shortages are in danger of putting essential services, such as health and social care, transport and the provision of food supplies at risk. It will only be granted in respect of staff who voluntarily agree not to self-isolate, and the employers' duty of care to all their employees must be respected. A number of conditions must also be met.

[Guidance for social care staff as self-isolation rules change](#)

The Scottish Government has published information about the removal of the requirement for fully vaccinated social care staff to self-isolate in exceptional circumstances. The changes follow the government's decision for double vaccinated social care staff who are self-isolating to voluntarily return to work, including those who have been contacted as a close contact by NHS Test & Protect or advised to self-isolate by the NHS Scotland COVID app. The government has also included [accompanying documents](#) with employer and service provider checklists, and a staff fact sheet on isolation exemptions.



[First Minister urges younger age groups and pregnant women to get vaccinated](#)

Speaking at the latest Covid briefing, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has urged younger age groups and pregnant women to take up an offer of vaccination as she warned of the risks posed if individuals underwent intensive care treatment. Responding to media questions on the government's vaccine delivery targets, she flagged this as a matter of semantics with the government meeting objectives to offer a vaccine to those aged 40-49. This comes as figures from Public Health Scotland showed 75.8% of the group had been double dosed. The First Minister is due to deliver a statement in parliament on Tuesday 3 August, updating members on whether the Scottish Government would proceed with plans to further ease legal restrictions on Monday 9 August.

[Latest Covid characteristics published](#)

The Scottish Government has published the latest COVID characteristics data for Scotland, based on the findings of the ONS infection survey. In the community population in Scotland between 1 December 2020 and 12 July 2021, 58.2% of people who tested positive for COVID with a strong positive reported having "any symptoms". The most commonly experienced symptoms in the community population in Scotland were fatigue or weakness, headache and a cough.

[Update on vaccine deployment plan](#)

The Scottish Government has published an update on the vaccination programme. As of Friday, 3,992,327 people have received their first vaccine dose and 3,044,903 people have received their second dose. The government also confirmed it is working with health boards to plan for a potential booster programme, pending further advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), and it expects Scotland to be able to access the Janssen vaccine, which has recently been given temporary authorisation for supply in the UK by the MHRA.

[Latest ONS Covid infection survey results published](#)

The Scottish Government has published the latest Office of National Statistics (ONS) Covid infection survey results. In the week of Sunday 11 to Saturday 17 July, the estimated percentage of the community population positive for Covid in Scotland was 1.24%. Estimates for the other nations of the UK during the same period are England at 1.36%, Wales at 0.47%, and Northern Ireland at 0.59%.

The latest [state of the epidemic report](#) for week ending 18 July has also been published, which suggests that the current R rate is estimated as being between 0.9 and 1.2.



Alcohol and Drugs Misuse

[Rise in drugs-related deaths](#)

Statistics published by the National Records of Scotland reportedly show a rise in drugs-related deaths in 2020 of 5% from 2019. 1,339 drug-related deaths were registered in Scotland in 2020, which is the largest number of drug-related deaths since records began in 1996. Other key findings show:

- The number of drug-related deaths has increased substantially over the last 20 years – there were 4 and a half times as many deaths in 2020 compared with 2000
- Men were 2.7 times as likely to have a drug-related death than women, after adjusting for age
- After adjusting for age, people in the most deprived parts of the country were 18 times as likely to die from a drug-related death as those in the least deprived
- Almost two thirds of all drug-related deaths were of people aged between 35 and 54. The average age of drug-related deaths has increased from 32 to 43 over the last 20 years
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde had the highest drug-related death rate of all health board areas, followed by Ayrshire and Arran and Tayside
- Scotland's drug-death rate continues to be over 3 and a half times that for the UK as a whole, and higher than that of any European country

[Work to reduce drug-related deaths ahead of standards launch](#)

The Scottish Government has highlighted an East Ayrshire project that offers same-day support for people seeking help for drug use, ahead of new treatment standards for Scotland. A total of £4 million was announced in May to fund Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards, which will mean people who use drugs receive help the day they ask for it regardless of where they live. The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership in East Ayrshire started the RADAR (Rapid Access to Drug and Alcohol Recovery) project in April in response to requests for quicker access to treatment. All patients who present for help on weekdays are given appropriate support the same day with an emergency service available at weekends.

[UK Government appoint independent advisor on drug misuse \(England\)](#)

The UK Government has appointed Dame Carol Black as an independent advisor on drug misuse and highlighted that it will publish a new drug strategy later this year. This follows the publication of its [initial response](#) to the independent review of drugs, Chaired by Dame Carol.



Alzheimer's/Dementia

[Supporting people living with dementia during isolation](#)

The Scottish Government has published guidance on supporting people living with dementia in care homes to remain safe during periods of isolation. Amongst other guidance, in summary, sedation or restraint should not be used, in any circumstances, to enforce compliance with isolation or infection prevention and control measures, and care homes should consider the specific additional support, meaningful activities, and/or one-to-one care which may be necessary to support the persons needs.

Care Homes/Care at Home

[Date for care home conference announced](#)

Scottish Care has announced that its annual Care Home Conference and Awards will take place on Friday 19 November. It is anticipated that these will take place in person in Glasgow, but this may be subject to change due to government Covid guidance at the time of the event.

Disability

[BASW call for social workers to take part in research study](#)

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has announced that it is looking for social workers who work with adults to take part in a research study on the use of digital technologies with disabled service users. Working with user-led organisation Shaping Our Lives, BASW wants to understand the pros and cons of the use of digital communication technologies for different people and for different task. Those that apply can participate either in a research interview or by taking part in a co-production workshop.

[UK Government publishes National Disability Strategy \(England\)](#)

The UK Government has published its National Disability Strategy. The strategy, supported by £1.6bn, sets out 100 commitments across employment, housing, and travel. This involves plans to consult on disability workforce reporting for businesses with over 250 staff and the launch of an online advice hub on disability discrimination and obligations around reasonable adjustments.

Mental Health

[Rise in numbers of people being detained for mental health care](#)

The Mental Welfare Commission has published a report analysing the use of detention of people for mental health care and treatment during the pandemic. The analysis reportedly shows a rise of 9.1% in detentions in 2020-21, and, for the first time, the percentage of emergency detentions without a mental health officer's consent dropped below 50%



Older People

[New partnership to help older people stay hydrated](#)

Age Scotland has partnered with Scottish Water to launch a new campaign to help older people across Scotland stay hydrated this summer. The campaign, supported by Age Scotland's Hydration Matters publication and Scottish Water's Your Water Your Life campaign, focuses on increasing awareness around drinking enough water, as well as ensuring older people know how to spot the tell-tale signs of dehydration. Vulnerable older people have also been encouraged to sign up to Scottish Water's Priority Services Register, which helps look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs.

[Walking football for exercise and community \(England\)](#)

Age UK are highlighting their walking football programme in partnership with Sport England and The Football Association. Walking football offers physical activity and an environment to connect and interact, while playing the game at a slower pace.

Other Health and Social Care

[Applicants invited to join NHS Near Me improvement programme](#)

Iriss has announced that the NHS Near Me team, in partnership with Scottish Government, is inviting applicants to join its improvement programme which aims to support the effective and sustainable use of Near Me video calling within social work. Up to £30,000 of funding is available per organisation, for local senior leadership and project support, and the initial focus will be on developing and testing processes that will support duty social work and inform local scale-up. The deadline for applications is Wednesday 4 August.

[Future vision of health and social care nursing event](#)

Scottish Care has shared the recording and presentation slides from its Thursday 24 June event on the future vision of health and social care nursing.

[Roundtable events to explore climate change in social care](#)

Scottish Care is co-hosting a series of virtual roundtable events to explore climate change in the context of social care with the Health & Social Care Academy. These roundtables will be held online on Wednesday 11 August, Wednesday 15 September, and Wednesday 20 October.

[Funding to tackle gender-based violence](#)

The Scottish Government has announced £5m funding for frontline services that help women and girls affected by gender-based violence. The funding will be allocated to rape crisis centres and domestic abuse services to cut waiting lists and will comprise



approximately £4.5m to be split between Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland.

[Racism in social work report published](#)

The Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW) has launched a report exploring racism in Scottish social work. The snapshot report is the result of ongoing work undertaken by SASW including a survey, which ran towards the end of 2020, and an anti-racism roundtable in March 2021. The report provides evidence that:

- Racism exists within social work in Scotland
- It is experienced in both employment and education settings, from colleagues, managers and people who use services
- The impact of racism on social workers from BAME backgrounds is significant
- When racism is reported it is rarely dealt with in a satisfactory way
- Racism experienced within social work is harmful, both to individuals and to the profession.

[CQC publishes response to responsive regulation consultation \(England\)](#)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has issued its response to a recent consultation on changes for more flexible and responsive regulation. The proposals were designed to allow the CQC to assess and rate services more flexibly, so it can update ratings more often in a more responsive and proportionate way. The consultation received 566 responses indicating broad overall support across all proposals.

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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