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December



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Covid-19 - General

[JCVI recommends all over 18s should be eligible for booster jab](#)

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended that Covid-19 booster vaccination eligibility should be expanded to include all adults aged 18 years to 39 years and the waiting period between second and third doses should be halved. The JCVI has also recommended children and young people aged 12-15 years should be offered a second dose. The Scottish Government has said it has begun work on implementing the advice from the JCVI.

[First cases of omicron variant in Scotland](#)

The first cases of the Covid-19 omicron variant have been identified in Scotland. At her update on 30 November, the First Minister confirmed nine cases of the new variant across Lanarkshire and Greater Glasgow and noted that while early indications suggested it may be more transmissible than Delta there was no evidence as of yet that the disease the variant caused is more severe.

[Transparent face masks approved for use in health and care](#)

The use of transparent masks in health and social care settings has been approved for use by the Scottish Government. The



masks have a clear front panel to allow lip reading, which will make communication easier and help reduce the challenges the pandemic has created for people with communication needs. The distribution of the new masks began in November and they will be in use from December.

[Research on impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's third sector](#)

Initial research into how Scotland's third sector has been impacted by the pandemic has been published by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. The Scottish Third Sector Tracker is a research community consisting of almost 600 organisations and its first phase findings suggest that nearly all organisations surveyed faced challenges since the start of the pandemic. Of the 585 organisations surveyed, 57% stated that demand had increased despite almost half facing financial issues. The vast majority saw emerging needs like mental and physical health from their services users and communities, while 9% had to make staff redundancies to cope with the impact of the pandemic.

Alcohol and Drugs

[Guidance among suite of new publications on access to residential rehabilitation](#)

A suite of publications providing guidance and insight on pathways into, through and out of residential rehabilitation has been published by the Scottish Government. The publications include guidance on good practice, a prison to rehab pathway report and a summary of findings from a survey of alcohol and drug partnership and providers. In a statement to Parliament, Minister for Drugs Policy Angela Constance outlined plans to ensure that by 2026, at least 1000 people are publically funded to go to rehab every year, a 300% increase on the number prior to the launch of the National Mission. She also announced that more than £11m has been awarded to the River Garden Auchincruive residential unit and to NHS Lothian to create capacity at Lothian and Edinburgh Abstinence Programme and the Ritson detoxification clinic.

Care Homes/Care at Home

[Advice on visiting professionals to care homes to be updated, letter confirms](#)

Public Health Scotland is expected to publish updated advice on visiting professionals to adult care homes next week, according to a letter sent to providers by the Scottish Government. The letter sets out the principles for supporting a full return of visiting professionals aligned with the Open with Care policy which recommends a return to indoor visiting for families and friends of residents.

[Care Inspectorate Chief Executive writes to care homes for adults and older people](#)

Care Inspectorate Chief Executive Peter MacLeod has written to care homes for adults and older people to share learning from inspections carried out over the past 20 months. The letter sets out some common themes emerging from inspection and looks ahead to the winter ahead and support for services through the ongoing pandemic.



Justice

[Scottish Government accepts recommendations of deaths in prison custody review](#)

The Scottish Government has in principle accepted the recommendations of a review into the response to deaths in prison custody. The review, published by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS), included the key recommendation that an independent body should investigate every death in custody as well as the recommendation that leaders of national oversight bodies should work together with families to support the development of a new single framework on preventing deaths in custody. In a [statement](#) to Parliament, Justice Secretary Keith Brown said a roundtable on the recommendations will take place early in the new year, while a full update on progress will be provided by summer 2022.

Older People

[Charity calls for pensioners in poverty to receive extra £50 to help with heating](#)

An extra payment of £50 to pensioners in poverty and low income would directly help more than 130,000 pensioners and relieve the pressure the NHS and social care face this winter, according to Age Scotland. The charity has urged the Scottish Government to introduce this new payment so that pensioners in poverty or on low and fixed incomes have enough money to meet the increasing cost of heating their homes to a safe level.

[Research suggests more than 105,000 older people will feel lonely this Christmas](#)

Around 105,000 older people in Scotland are expected to feel lonely this Christmas, while 74,000 older people in Scotland will not have anyone to celebrate with, according to Age Scotland. Research conducted in partnership with Age UK suggests 15% of older people fear that they will never enjoy a normal Christmas again. Last year, an estimated 285,000 people aged 65 and over in Scotland spent the holiday alone.

Other Health and Social Care

[Annual report of Sharing Intelligence for Health and Care Group published](#)

The sixth annual report of the Sharing Intelligence for Health and Care Group has been published. The Group is a partnership involving the following seven national organisations: Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland, Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, Public Health Scotland, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The report summarises key points about the work of the Group between April 2020 and March 2021 and renews and updates the Group's commitments for the future.

[Workshops for workers in adult social care and social work to manage wellbeing](#)

The Scottish Government is working with bereavement specialists Cruse Scotland to offer a series of workshops for people working in adult social care and social work to manage their wellbeing. The facilitated workshops will explore the personal impact of



grief and loss on staff and are intended to provide information, awareness, advice and strategies to cope with grief and loss experienced through working roles. The following four courses are available to book between end of November 2021 and March 2022: [Grief & Loss - An understanding](#); [Compassionate conversations over grief](#); [Wellbeing when working with grief, distress and trauma](#); [Self-care following distressing traumatic experiences](#)

[Panel appointed to consider financial redress applications](#)

A panel of experts has been appointed to consider applications for financial redress from survivors of historical child abuse in care in Scotland. The panel includes Anne Houston, Vice Chair of the Care Inspectorate, among members from across social work, education, legal enforcement, psychology and the charity sector. The scheme is established by the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 and will be open for applications to those who experienced abuse prior to 1 December 2004 in eligible residential care settings.

[Adult social care reform white paper published by UK Government \(England\)](#)

A white paper on adult social care reform has been published by the UK Government. The paper includes a 10-year vision to improve adult social care in England and provides information on proposals for the 3 next years. The paper sets out how £1.7bn will be allocated and identifies three key objectives for the decade: How we will support people to have choice, control and independence; How we will provide an outstanding quality of care; How we will ensure that care is provided in a way that is fair and accessible to everyone who needs it. The paper notes the new duty for Care Quality Commission to independently review and assess the performance of local authorities in delivering their adult social care functions.



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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