



4 - 10 December 2021



bulletin

 A decorative graphic consisting of four overlapping circles in shades of grey, teal, blue, and purple. To the right of these circles, the words "Adult and Health" are written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letter "A" in "Adult" is white and set within the purple circle.

Adult and Health

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Covid-19 - General

[Employees urged to work from home amid rising Omicron cases](#)

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has called for employers to enable any employee who worked from home at the outset of the pandemic to do so again, until at least mid-January, amid concern over rising Omicron case rates. In a statement to Parliament, the First Minister confirmed that case numbers of the new variant had risen from 9 to 99 in a week. She highlighted data that suggested Omicron was more transmissible than the Delta variant and urged people to take a lateral flow test before socialising with others.

[Flexibility to Covid certification scheme introduced](#)

The Scottish Government has announced that from Monday 6 December, the Covid certification scheme will include provision for a negative test for Covid-19, as an alternative to proof of vaccination. It is also working with local partners including local authorities and transport partners to further expand the availability of free lateral flow tests and identify further sites for them to be picked up, including shopping centres, supermarkets, garden centres, sports grounds, Christmas markets and transport hubs.

[Scottish Government marks one year of Covid-19 vaccinations](#)

More than ten million vaccination doses have been administered in Scotland since the first ones were given one year ago, the



Scottish Government has announced. The biggest vaccination programme ever undertaken has seen 4,355,063 first doses, 3,962,203 second doses and 1,922,604 boosters and third doses administered from around 1,200 locations. Recent figures from the World Health Organisation estimate that more than 27,000 deaths have been prevented in Scotland as a direct result of the rapid uptake of vaccinations.

[National study to test new Covid-19 treatments](#)

The Chief Medical Officer is encouraging people to come forward for a national study that will evaluate new antiviral treatment options for Covid-19. The PANORAMIC study, run by the University of Oxford, will prioritise those at greater risk of being severely ill if they test positive for the virus. It is open to people aged 50 and above, or 18-49 with certain underlying conditions. In addition to the study, from 16 December all people considered as extremely high risk of becoming severely ill with the virus, and who have tested positive, will be able to access a monoclonal antibody or antiviral treatment.

[Inquiry launched into excess deaths in Scotland](#)

An inquiry into the cause of excess deaths in Scotland since the start of the pandemic has been launched by the Scottish Parliament's COVID-19 Recovery Committee. Scottish Government data shows that deaths in Scotland are 11% above the average for this time of year and have been above average for the last 26 weeks. The inquiry will consider to what extent this is being caused by Covid-19, or indirect health effects of the pandemic. The call for evidence closes on 7 January 2022.

Alcohol and Drugs

[National campaign to tackle stigma of addiction launched](#)

A national campaign highlighting the damage caused by the stigma of problem drug and alcohol use has been launched by the Scottish Government. Adverts on TV, newspapers and billboards emphasise that a drug or alcohol problem is a health condition and judging individuals affected can significantly impact their ability to seek and access help and support. A webpage on NHS Inform will support the campaign with further information on how the public can help tackle the problem.

[Analysis of survey on recovery and rehabilitation framework published](#)

The Scottish Government has published an analysis of responses to a self-assessment survey as part of the framework for supporting people through recovery and rehabilitation during and after the pandemic. Completed by rehabilitation services across health and social care in Spring 2021, the survey identified positive activity in relation to development and delivery of rehab services, though some logistical challenges were noted. Growing demand for services as a result of the pandemic was also highlighted, as was an increased proportion of patients presenting with multiple and complex conditions. Ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention were observed alongside some skills gaps. Respondents called for greater emphasis on the value of rehab services in health and social care planning, increased funding and greater focus on preventative services.



[Improving holistic support for families affected by substance misuse](#)

The Scottish Government has published a framework for holistic whole family approaches and family inclusive practice regarding families affected by drug and alcohol use. In line with the national alcohol and drugs strategy's acknowledgement that families are assets and key partners, the framework outlines the need for the development of a holistic whole family approach, services which treat individuals with dignity and respect, resources to support delivery, partnership working, and a trauma-informed, compassionate workforce. The role of alcohol & drug partnerships as a key strategic catalyst for change is recognised.

[New figures show increase in alcohol related deaths](#)

The Office of National Statistics has published figures which show there were 8,974 alcohol related deaths in 2020 – a 18.6% increase compared with 2019, with rates of deaths among males more than double the rate for females. Scotland and Northern Ireland had the highest rates of alcohol-specific deaths (21.5 and 19.6 deaths per 100,000).

Care Homes/Care at Home

[Supporting visiting in care homes over the festive season](#)

The Care Inspectorate has set out how it expects care homes to continue to support visiting during the festive season. While recognising the complex and difficult circumstances that care homes have been operating under during the pandemic, the statement outlines the expectation that care homes support normalised visiting during the festive season, so that residents can have meaningful contact with their family and friends. It also acknowledges concerns about visiting, particularly with the new Omicron variant, but stresses that any concerns must be balanced with the human rights of residents, which must be at the heart of decisions about visiting arrangements. Effective infection prevention and control measures are essential to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and protect vulnerable residents.

Disability

[CQC publishes progress report on restraint, seclusion and segregation \(England\)](#)

More progress must be made in reducing restraint, segregation and seclusion in England, according to a new report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). 'Out of sight – who cares?' was first published in October 2020, making a number of recommendations to support changes in care for people with a learning disability, autistic people and people with mental ill health. The progress report notes that although the health and care system has made a commitment to increase the range of community support available to help prevent hospital admissions, this needs to be converted into real change. People are still being placed in services not able to give them the right care, while commissioning the right support and services for people with a learning disability and autistic people is not happening quickly enough.



Justice

[Overview report on first three years of justice related scrutiny and assurance work](#)

The Care Inspectorate has published an overview report on the first three years of justice related scrutiny and assurance work, outlining key messages and highlighting consistent themes. The report provides an overview of inspections which initially focussed on evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of court-imposed community payback orders in five local authority areas across Scotland. A further five community justice partnership areas were supported to undertake a validated self-evaluation to help gauge their progress in embedding a new community justice model in Scotland to deliver on national priorities. Inspectors also supported a focussed review on the extent to which community justice social work services were delivering on their statutory responsibilities in relation to people released from prison subject to throughcare supervision.

[Catherine Dyer appointed Chair of Community Justice Scotland](#)

The appointment of Catherine Dyer as Chair of Community Justice Scotland has been confirmed by Justice Secretary Keith Brown. Ms Dyer is a lawyer with extensive experience of public sector policy, strategy, delivery and leadership and was the first woman to be appointed as Crown Agent for Scotland acting as Chief Executive of the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service.

Mental Health

[Consultation on system for investigation of deaths during compulsory treatment](#)

A consultation on a new system for the investigation of deaths during compulsory care and treatment has been launched by the Mental Welfare Commission (MWC). The proposed system would see the MWC take on responsibility for initiating, directing, and quality assuring the process of investigating all deaths during compulsory care and treatment under mental health laws in Scotland. The MWC would have a role distilling learning from investigations; publishing an annual report to summarise findings; and sharing the main messages to the relevant audiences. The MWC would also have a role in ensuring services implement follow-up actions from local investigations, and escalating cases where recommendations were not implemented satisfactorily. The consultation will run to 15 February 2022.

Workforce

[Staff Vacancies in Care Services 2020 report published](#)

New figures on the levels of staff vacancies in Scotland's social care services have been published by the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Social Services Council. The annual Staff Vacancies in Care Services report provides a national overview of vacancy levels reported by care services registered with the Care Inspectorate. It shows the level of reported vacancies in social care is more than three times that across all types of employers. At 31 December 2020, 36% of services reported having vacancies, a fall of 3% in the last year. However, in the context of the wider



labour market, the Employer Skills Survey in 2020 found that 11% of establishments across all sectors in Scotland reported having a vacancy. Service types reporting the highest levels were housing support (60%), care at home (59%), care homes for older people (55%) and care homes for adults (48%).

[Recording from SSSC event on career in social care course](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has published a recording of an awareness event for employers on a new college course to help people prepare for a career in social care. The SSSC has also announced a course to help mobile testing unit operatives start careers in health and social care and a free course for people over 25 who are unemployed and considering a change of career to learn about social care.

[SSSC seeking volunteers for communications review](#)

The SSSC has announced it is seeking volunteers from different parts of the Register to take part in a project to review its communications during December and January. Volunteers will be sent examples of fitness to practise letters and emails, before being asked to answer a few questions. For example, are they easy to read, do you know what action to take and is there enough information. Volunteers can sign up via an [online form](#).

[SSSC annual report published](#)

The SSSC has published its annual report for 2020-21, the first in its 2020-2023 strategy. Key points in the report include the creation of a Temporary Social Work Register to increase capacity during the pandemic and the conclusion of registration of the last category of care workers. The report also notes partnership with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) which produced guidance for employers, and work with the **Care Inspectorate** to map and meet staffing demands.

[New workforce statistics show increase in NHS Scotland nurse vacancies](#)

New workforce statistics published by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) show that at September 2021, 5,761 nursing and midwifery posts were vacant – 8.2% of all posts. The NHS in Scotland currently has a shortfall of 4129.7 whole time equivalent registered nurses, with over half of these vacancies in adult services. Some health boards were found to be more adversely impacted, with NHS Highland, NHS Shetland, NHS Orkney and NHS Dumfries and Galloway experiencing more than one in 10 unfilled nursing and midwifery posts. In response the NMC has called on the Scottish Government to increase investment in the nursing workforce across health and social care.

Other Health and Social Care

[Scottish Government publishes proposed Budget for 2022-23](#)

Finance Secretary Kate Forbes has delivered a statement on the Scottish Government's proposed Budget for 2022/23. Ms Forbes said the budget was



“transitional”, focusing at Covid recovery as well as looking to the future. Proposals include: record funding of £18bn for health and social care, including £1.6bn for integration; a minimum hourly rate of £10.50 for staff within adult social care; a £50m Whole Family Wellbeing Fund; £544m to support the delivery of funded ELC for eligible children; and a [public sector pay policy](#) focused on those on low incomes.

[National Care Service engagement events – summaries published](#)

The Scottish Government has published summaries of a series of national online engagement events that were held between August and November 2021 for people to share their views on the National Care Service consultation. Each event covered all aspects of the consultation, with some themed towards specific aspects, such as regulation, fair work and valuing the workforce, scope and remit.

[Preparing to transition to a National Care Service – procurement policy note](#)

The Scottish Government has published a Scottish Procurement Policy Note that advises public bodies involved in the commissioning and procurement of social care services about the action they can take to prepare for the transition towards a National Care Service. The note advises public bodies to: review current strategic commissioning plans to identify opportunities for alignment with ethical commissioning and procurement principles; consider the impact of decisions on resources and the social care market to enable a collective focus on implementation, considering the use of contract extensions or modifications where feasible; and maximise opportunities in new procurement decisions to introduce ethical procurement principles and use the flexibility of the ‘light touch regime’.

[First CPG on social work to take place in January](#)

The first meeting of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Social Work will take place on 12 January, from 6pm to 7.45pm. The topic will be “Perspectives of Social Work”, bringing an opportunity to hear directly from people with experience of using services and experience of delivering social work services. The CPG on Social Work, which is convened by SNP MSP Fulton MacGregor, received formal recognition by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee of the Scottish Parliament in November.

[Getting the right care in the right place for health and social care needs](#)

The Scottish Government has published a guide on which NHS service people should go to for different health concerns. The guide, which aims to alleviate pressures on the health and social care system, also includes advice on looking after one’s health during winter.

[Revised model code of conduct for board members](#)

A revised model code of conduct for board members of devolved public bodies has been published by the Scottish Government. The code is issued as required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 and sets out the conduct expected of those who serve on the boards of public bodies in Scotland.

**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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