



17 December 2021 to 14
January 2022



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Covid-19 - General

[Updated policy framework on self-isolation guidance for health and social care staff](#)

The Scottish Government has issued an updated policy framework, setting out self-isolation guidance for health and social care staff. This is a result of changes to the Covid-19 self-isolation guidance for the general population, which applies from 6 January. The policy framework sets out the conditions that will enable health and social care staff who are Covid-19 index cases (confirmed as positive cases), or contacts of a positive Covid-19 case to exit isolation early, in line with updated guidance for the general population. The updated framework replaces the previous version dated 24 December 2021.

[New statement prioritises social care support](#)

The Scottish Government and COSLA have issued a joint statement on service disruptions caused by the prioritisation of social care during the pandemic. They explain why keeping life preserving services, including social care, open is essential and outline the work of Scottish ministers, COSLA and local partners to maximise social care support, calling for all public, private and voluntary sector services to make supporting social care a national priority.



Covid-19 - General

[People urged to get boosted as soon as possible](#)

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf has urged anyone who has not yet received their Covid-19 vaccination booster or third dose to come forward, to give the best possible protection against the Omicron variant. People who are 18 and over can receive a booster 28 days after they tested positive or if it has been at least 12 weeks since their second dose. Young people aged 12-17 can also attend for their second dose of the vaccine.

[Changes to Covid-19 reporting](#)

On 5 January 2022, the Scottish Government announced that people will no longer be asked to take a PCR test to confirm a positive lateral flow result. Instead, anyone with a positive lateral flow test should report the result online as soon as the test is done. Currently Public Health Scotland (PHS) only reports on PCR tests. In order to ensure that it continues to provide the most accurate information, from 13 January, PHS will begin reporting on the number of people with a Covid-19 infection confirmed by either a PCR or first lateral flow test. Lateral flow test positive cases that are followed by a negative PCR result within 48 hours will be denotified.

[New figures on long Covid released](#)

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has published estimates which suggest 1.3 million people in the UK were experiencing self-reported long Covid symptoms in early December. Of those self-reporting with long Covid, 21% thought it had been less than 12 weeks since they caught the virus, while 40% suggested they had caught Covid at least one year previously. Fatigue continues to be the most common symptom experienced, followed by a loss of smell, shortness of breath and difficulty concentrating.

[New measures to support remote treatment](#)

New remote monitoring tools to support people with Covid to stay safely at home, and free up hospital beds are among a range of steps being put in place to support the health and care workforce and maximise capacity. Measures include £500,000 to fund 25,000 remote monitoring kits, including additional pulse oximeters, and a dedicated team which will support the early identification of patients who would benefit from antivirals treatment and get these started as soon as possible. The Scottish Government will also expand existing programmes that allow patients to be treated in their own home and to receive the relevant treatment without admission to hospital.

[Updated analysis of the effectiveness of three doses of Covid vaccine](#)

The UK Health Security Agency has published updated analysis of the effectiveness of three doses of the Covid vaccine against symptomatic Covid and hospitalisation in adults aged 65 and older. The latest data showed booster doses have continued to



provide high levels of protection against severe disease from Omicron variant. Among those aged 65 and older, the UKHSA found protection against hospitalisation remained at about 90% around three months after receiving a third jab, while with just two vaccine doses protection dropped to around 70% after three months and 50% after six months.

Based on the findings, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that there is no immediate need to introduce a second booster dose for the most vulnerable, including care home residents and those aged over 80, but said it will continue to review the timing and need for further booster doses as the data evolves.

Alcohol and Drugs

[New Chair for Drug Deaths Taskforce](#)

The new Chair of the Drug Deaths Taskforce has been announced as David Strang, a former Chief Constable, who was also HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in Scotland. Additionally, the first step towards the development of a new proposal on how a safer drug consumption room might work within existing legislation has been made by Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, which has now provided the details of a new service proposal in relation to a potential safer drug consumption facility. The Scottish Government, working closely with Police Scotland and the Crown Office, and in line with the recent statement from the Lord Advocate, is examining this proposal to consider how any such facility would operate and be policed.

Alzheimer's/Dementia

[Free dementia training sessions from Age Scotland](#)

Age Scotland is offering free dementia training sessions between January and March for groups, organisations and individuals in Scotland. The training is open to those looking to learn more about dementia and how to be dementia-inclusive, as well as unpaid carers of people living with dementia who would like to better understand their rights. A self-study platform is also available for unpaid carers, which allows them to learn about their rights at a time that suits them.

[New interview highlights benefits of virtual resource centre](#)

Alzheimer Scotland launched the UK's first Virtual Resource Centre on Tuesday 21 September - World Alzheimer's Day 2021. They have now published an interview with the centre's coordinator on the benefits of accessing the centre and its progress to date.



Care Homes/Care at Home

[New guidance on safe staffing during winter](#)

The Care Inspectorate, in partnership with Scottish Care and CCPS have published a new guide for adult care services to help with staff planning over the winter period, with helpful advice and suggestions. Early in 2022 we will also be running virtual events to share examples and discuss staffing to support services. You can find out more information about our Safe Staffing Project on [The Hub](#).

Carers

[Increased support for unpaid carers](#)

The Scottish Government has outlined a £4m package to expand support services to unpaid carers in recognition of the extra pressure they have faced as a result of the pandemic. £3m has been allocated to local carer centres, £200,000 to the Young Carers Package, £377,000 to Family Fund support and £590,000 to wellbeing support services.

[Results of carers census published](#)

The Scottish Government has issued the second publication of results from the Carers Census, covering unpaid carers supported by local services in 2019-20 and 2020-21. There were 32,690 and 31,760 cases supported by local services in 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively. The most commonly reported impact of providing unpaid care was on emotional wellbeing, with around four in five carers experiencing impact.

Disability

[Adult disability payment launch dates announced](#)

The Scottish Government's next benefit, the Adult Disability Payment will open for new applications in the pilot local authority areas of Dundee City, Perth and Kinross and the Western Isles from 21 March 2022. The new payment, to be administered by Social Security Scotland, will replace Personal Independence Payment, which is currently delivered by the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions. Further council areas will be introduced in phases until national rollout from August 2022.

Justice

[New report outlines changes required in the Scottish justice sector](#)

The Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee has outlined some of the short and long-term changes it wants to see made in the Scottish justice sector. The Committee held a series of hearings looking at justice issues including: the impact of Covid on the sector, youth offending, community justice solutions and alternatives to custody, and the misuse of drugs and the criminal justice system. The report sets out



60 actions it wants to see taken by the Scottish Government and partner agencies to improve outcomes in these areas and attempts to find solutions to some of the wider problems in the system. Actions include:

- Ensuring under-18s are in secure care rather than HMPYOI Polmont
- Rapidly implementing the recommendations of the Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce
- Ensuring a co-ordinated approach from the justice, social justice and health sectors to fill the service gap between what is currently being provided to help those with a drug problem and what is needed.

Mental Health

[Increasing mental health support in the community](#)

Investment of up to £40m per year will provide more mental health and wellbeing services within GP practices and community settings, the Scottish Government has announced. Under the new system, patients who need mental health support will find a range of professionals available through their GP surgery, rather than relying solely on their GP or referral. These could include mental health nurses, psychologists, peer support workers, occupational therapists, and link workers. [Guidance](#) has been published to support local planning and implementation of these services.

Workforce

[Health and care visa scheme expanded to include social care](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has welcomed the UK Government's announcement of a temporary expansion to the existing Health and Care Visa Scheme. The key changes, due to come into force early this year, mean that for 12 months, care assistants, care workers, carers, home care assistants, home carers and support workers in nursing homes will be eligible to apply for the Health and Care Visa and be added to the Shortage Occupation List. These changes will reduce the minimum salary requirement to £20,480, reduce the visa fee and remove the £2,496 health surcharge fee. Applicants for the Health and Care Visa also benefit from fast-track processing and dedicated resources in processing applications.

[SSSC consulting on a register for the future](#)

The SSSC is seeking views on its plans to create a register for the future in a new consultation, which runs until 14 March. Changes are being proposed to the register, processes and the qualifications accepted for registration. The proposed changes aim to make SSSC registration simpler and easy to understand for workers and employers. They will also help to make sure people know about the benefit and value of being registered and the standards, skills and qualifications needed to deliver high quality care.



[RCN publishes results of employment survey](#)

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has published a [report of its 2021 employment survey](#), revealing how members are feeling nearly two years into the pandemic. The findings, drawn from 9,577 responses to a survey conducted in October 2021, show nursing staff routinely working unpaid overtime, delaying or not taking annual leave and feeling exhausted. Respondents also expressed a growing sense of disillusionment after 18 months' of the pandemic, with many citing feeling undervalued as a reason for wanting to leave their jobs.

[Nursing and midwifery trainees double in last decade](#)

Student nurses and midwives entering degree programmes will increase by 8.7% in 2022-23, to a total recommended intake of 4837 students, the Scottish Government has announced. This will be the 10th successive increase in recommended student numbers, with the intake doubling over the last decade. To address the mental health and wellbeing impacts from the pandemic, mental health nursing will increase to a recommended intake of 888 places, up 20% from the previous year, and 146.7% over the course of the last 10 student intakes.

Commenting on the announcement, in addition to the increasing student numbers, [RCN Scotland](#) has called for the Scottish Government to implement the Health and Care (Staffing)(Scotland) Act “as soon as possible” in order to “grow the workforce to ensure safe and effective staffing for the population’s future needs”.

[World Social Work Day 2022](#)

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) has announced that it will host a full month of activities and events to promote and celebrate the social work profession, to mark World Social Work Day on 15 March 2022. BASW national teams will each be leading a week of events and activities throughout the month, with SASW leading activities in the final week, looking back and reflecting on the month as a whole. BASW UK is also hosting an event to explore this year’s theme – Co-building a New Eco-Social World - Leaving No One Behind – through a UK-wide lens. This event will take place on World Social Work Day itself.

Other Health and Social Care

[Care Inspectorate Chief Executive to retire](#)

Peter Macleod is retiring from his role as Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate on 10 February 2022 following a period of ill health. Peter has been Chief Executive since January 2019, having worked for almost 35 years in public service. Edith Macintosh, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Strategy and Improvement, will become interim Chief Executive until future arrangements are put in place.



[HIS annual report published](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has published its annual report and accounts for year ending 31 March 2021. The report reflects on the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, while noting the “shared and strong impact” HIS has made during the period in partnership with other national bodies such as NHS Education for Scotland, Public Health Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.

[World Congress on capacity to be held in Edinburgh](#)

The 7th World Congress on capacity is due to be held in Edinburgh on 7-9 June. Aimed at professionals such as lawyers, doctors, social workers and researchers, the congress will consider how well laws work across the world for adults who need someone to help them make decisions or to take decisions for them.

[New adults with incapacity briefing from SPICe](#)

The Scottish Parliament’s Information Centre (SPICe) has published a briefing on the two acts that currently regulate the management of the affairs of adults with incapacity in Scotland. The briefing provides a definition of incapacity, the types of intervention currently available, how interventions are supervised and outlines proposals for reform.

[CCPS Annual Review 2020-21](#)

The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) has published its annual review for 2020-21. The review notes the support CCPS provided to its members in coping with the pandemic response. It also highlights the work it undertook with national partners to produce guidance and its involvement in national working groups.

[Calls for more government support for older people during winter](#)

The Older People Network UK, a group of organisations representing older people across the UK recently released a statement calling for increased winter support for older people. The group, chaired by the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales and including Scottish Care and Age Scotland, highlights a number of key issues facing older people this winter, including tackling loneliness and isolation, access to health and social care services and fuel poverty. Following this statement, Scottish Care and Age Scotland have further called on the UK Government and Scottish Government to take the action necessary to support older people through this winter. This includes utilising all available resources to retain and recruit staff into the social care sector and investing in local community and voluntary services to support older people’s physical and mental health, enabling older people to remain well at home.

[Think tank calls for commission on care funding](#)

Following December’s budget announcement, think tank Reform Scotland has reiterated its call for all political parties to work together during 2022 to consider how care should be funded in Scotland in the long term. In its report published in October



2021 – [The Cost of Caring: Getting Serious About Funding and Improving Social Care in Scotland](#) – the think tank called for a cross-party commission to develop a sustainable social insurance model to pay for care. Following December’s budget announcement, Reform Scotland Research Director, Alison Payne, said it was “clear that a move to a model of social insurance is both necessary and inevitable.”

[New entrants to social care workforce to have fees paid](#)

The Scottish Government has announced that new entrants to the social care workforce will have their Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration paid until the end of March 2022. The scheme will include staff taking up direct care posts in adult social care, along with comparable roles in children’s social care services and the justice sector, and will cover local authority, private and third sectors.

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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