



23 – 29 September 2022



bulletin

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## Covid-19 - General

### [Asymptomatic testing paused for health and social care](#)

Health and social care workers are no longer required to test for Covid-19 every week. The four UK Chief Medical Officers have agreed that it is safe to halt weekly asymptomatic testing. Testing will remain in place for admissions into care homes and to support appropriate clinical diagnosis and treatment for hospital patients and care home residents.

The Scottish Government has also updated Covid-19 guidance for [unpaid carers](#) and those who were on the [highest risk list](#) to reflect the pausing of asymptomatic testing.

### [Covid-19 guidance for prison settings published](#)

The guidance, published by Public Health Scotland (PHS), provides an overview of the public health measures that should be taken to prevent Covid-19 in Scottish prisons, including both residential and healthcare settings.



### [UKHSA has urged those eligible to take up free flu vaccine and Covid-19 booster](#)

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has urged those eligible for a free flu vaccine and Covid-19 booster to take up the offer as soon as possible. It has warned that most young children will not have encountered flu yet. This means they will not have built up any natural immunity to this virus, so it is particularly important for them to take up the flu vaccine this year. The UKHSA also noted early indications that Covid-19 rates are beginning to rise ahead of winter, increasing the threat to people's health.

### [PHS launches new digital dashboard on vaccination programme](#)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) has launched a new digital dashboard consisting of data on the winter flu and Covid-19 vaccination programme in Scotland. The dashboard provides integrated information on the uptake of both the flu vaccine and Covid-19 winter booster.

### [Recommendations from the Covid-19 communication of public health inquiry published](#)

The Covid-19 Recovery Committee has written to the Scottish Government with its conclusions regarding the Covid-19 communication of public health information inquiry. The Committee identified a number of issues and recommendations, including that the Scottish Government should prepare communication plans for future pandemics to ensure that any learning from the Covid-19 pandemic is reflected in these plans. The Committee also recommends that further consideration is given to an independent fact-checking service to tackle misinformation and disinformation as suggested by witnesses.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

### [Quarterly report on suspected drug deaths published](#)

The Scottish Government has published a quarterly report on drug deaths from April to June 2022. The report notes there were 277 suspected drug deaths during this period, 3% fewer than the previous quarter, January to March 2022, and 16% fewer compared to the previous year (April to June 2021). There were 562 suspected drug deaths during the first six months of 2022, 22% fewer than the same period of 2021.

### [Interim report on statutory funded residential rehabilitation published by PHS](#)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) has published its fourth report on Residential Rehabilitation within the Monitoring and Evaluation Programme. The report notes that 218 placements were approved for residential rehabilitation in Scotland for the first quarter of 2022/23, this is an increase of 78 placements compared to the first quarter of 2021/22. It also notes that between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2022, 758 placements for residential rehabilitation were approved in Scotland, with the total estimated cost at £5,198,25.



### [National drug and alcohol treatment waiting times data released by PHS](#)

The latest data release from Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports that between 1 April and 30 June 2022 there were 11,316 referrals made to community-based specialist drug and alcohol treatment services. It also notes that during this quarter, 8,708 referrals to community-based services started treatment. Of these, 90.6% involved a wait of three weeks or less.

### **Alzheimer's/Dementia**

#### [DSDC has published a blog on the role of Power of Attorney in Scotland](#)

The Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) has published a blog on the role of a Power of Attorney (POA) in Scotland. The DSDC note the importance of arranging a POA as early as possible for those diagnosed with dementia, preferably before they are no longer considered to have capacity to make complex decisions.

### **End of Life/Palliative Care**

#### [POST publishes briefing on the practice of assisted dying](#)

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) has published a briefing on assisted dying examining how it functions within health services in countries where it is a legal option. The brief provides an overview of assisted dying and includes ethical debate and opinions from stakeholders.

### **Mental Health**

#### [New approach to reducing suicide announced by Scottish Government](#)

The Scottish Government announced a new 10-year strategy will be launched to tackle the factors and inequalities that can lead to suicide. Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2032 includes a number of new approaches to prevent suicide, including widening support to anyone affected by suicide, investing in peer support as a way of giving people the chance to meet with peers to help guide their wellbeing and recovery, and focusing on safety planning as a way to support people to stay safe if they have suicidal thoughts.

#### [ALLIANCE highlights findings from the Scottish Mental Illness Stigma study](#)

The ALLIANCE has highlighted the findings of the Scottish Mental Illness Stigma study which aims to identify the experiences of stigma and discrimination faced by people living with severe, complex, and/or enduring mental illness in Scotland. The findings suggest that life areas where stigma and discrimination were reported to be experienced most frequently were relationships with family and friends, physical healthcare services, social media, mental healthcare services and mass media.



### [Research suggests carers likely to see long-term effects on mental health from pandemic](#)

Learning Disability Today (LDT) has highlighted findings from new research which suggest that relatives of people with a learning disability are likely to see long-term effects on their mental health following the pandemic. The study findings suggest that although the quality of life among relatives did not significantly change during the pandemic, it did pose non-negligible risks to their wellbeing.

### **Older People**

#### [Age Scotland reveals 76% of older people always concerned about paying fuel bills](#)

Age Scotland, in partnership with SGN, has released the findings from its new research which highlights 4 in 10 older people feel they are living in fuel poverty, around 15 percentage points higher than the Scottish Government's estimate. The charity also notes a dramatic fall in the proportion of older households able to heat their home to a comfortable level, from 88% in 2018 to 46% in 2022.

### **Workforce**

#### [New guidelines launched on media reporting of social workers](#)

BASW has highlighted new guidance developed for journalists reporting on the work of social workers. The guidelines have been developed by the Social Workers Union (SWU), in consultation with the UK's approved press regulator IMPRESS, and looks to avoid unbalanced reporting on social work and social workers. The guidance includes information on understanding the role of a social worker and also includes a best practice guide with simple ways to improve reporting on social work and workers.

#### [CCPS highlights social care careers](#)

The Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) has published information about the career opportunities in social care within the voluntary sector. The fact sheet contains information on who can work in social care, the range of roles available, information on personal care and career progression within social care.

### **Other Health and Social Care**

#### [Inquiry report on tackling health inequalities in Scotland published](#)

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee has published its inquiry report on tackling health inequalities in Scotland. The Committee has urged the Scottish Government to ensure the impact on inequalities and health inequalities is a primary consideration in the future design and delivery of all public services and notes reducing inequalities must continue to be a core objective of public service reform. The Committee has also called on the Scottish Government to set out what progress has been made towards implementing the Christie Commission recommendations,



particularly as these relate to reducing inequalities and addressing health inequalities.

### [Chair of the Independent Review of Inspection Scrutiny and Regulation appointed](#)

Dame Sue Bruce has been appointed Chair of the Independent Review of Inspection Scrutiny and Regulation. She will be supported by former COSLA Health and Social Care spokesperson, Stuart Currie, as vice chair. The review follows on from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and runs alongside the ongoing development of the National Care Service. The review will be supported by an Advisory Panel and a Practitioner and Stakeholder Panel appointed by the Chair and is due to start in October 2022, with a report delivered in June 2023. An [easy read](#) version of the details of the review has also been published.

### [The National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map has been published](#)

The Scottish Government has published its National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2022, providing direction and a framework for action in order to meaningfully improve outcomes for island communities. The plan sets a number of actions around improving and promoting health, social care and wellbeing, including that all of Scotland's islands are attached to Integration Authorities which serve the specific needs of those island communities. The plan also notes that integration authorities will continue to work closely with their communities to develop strategic plans for delivery of health and social care services most suitable to the specific needs of their communities.

### [CCPS publishes briefing on the winter pressures in social care](#)

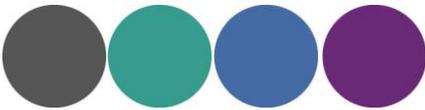
The Coalition of Care and Support Providers (CCPS) has provided a briefing to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on the current pressures facing not-for-profit social care and support sector. The report highlights the immediate pressures on third sector providers, including increasing demand, recruitment and retention, energy costs, and financial sustainability.

### [Scottish Government launches new Cost of Living website](#)

A new website providing information on what advice and financial support is available to people struggling with the cost of living has been launched by the Scottish Government. The Cost of Living Support Scotland website includes information on accessing Scottish and UK social security payments, information on help available to meet rising energy, housing and other costs, and also includes information on health and wellbeing support.

### [ALLIANCE publishes joint letter to First Minister on Human Rights Incorporation Bill](#)

The ALLIANCE, alongside a group of other Scottish civil society organisations, have written to First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, to express their concerns about the delay to the consultation on the Scottish Human Rights Incorporation Bill. The ALLIANCE has noted Scottish Government first committed to introduce the Bill in March 2021,



with a consultation on the Bill expected to be announced in spring 2022. This however has been delayed with the consultation now expected in 2023.

[Annual report on whistleblowing disclosures published by GMC](#)

The General Medical Council (GMC) has published its annual report on whistleblowing disclosures. The report notes that 62 concerns were raised by whistle-blowers to the GMC between April 2021 and March 2022. Of those, 34 were made by doctors, 14 by other healthcare professionals and 14 were anonymous. The majority of complaints, 59, were assessed by the GMC's fitness to practise team.

[CQC launch new resource to support the delivery of urgent and emergency care \(England\)](#)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published PEOPLE FIRST, an online resource for system leaders and service providers. The resource suggests a number of actions for individual services and the wider system to help make the best use of resources, build capacity, and ensure safety remains a priority. The CQC noted that this practical resource has been designed to help embed the principles of person-centred, urgent and emergency care within (and between) integrated care systems, and encourage innovation and share examples of good practice.

**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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