




Adult and Health



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Covid-19 - General

[Long Covid Inquiry launched](#)

The Covid-19 Recovery Committee has launched an inquiry into long Covid which will focus on diagnosis, treatment, and the current support available to those with long Covid. The Committee is now seeking views around three main themes: awareness and recognition, therapy and rehabilitation, and study and research. The call for views will close on 10 February 2023.

[Covid-19 guidance for health protection teams](#)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) has updated its Covid-19 guidance for health protection teams. The guidance includes updated information for infectious period to highlight the variance in infectious period in SARS-Cov-2 variants.



[Covid-19 advice updated for those who were on Highest Risk List](#)

The Scottish Government has updated its Covid-19 advice for those who were previously on the Highest Risk List. The overview and guidance section for people who remain at a higher risk because of a suppressed immune system have been updated. The updated guidance notes that vaccination and the availability of new medicines to treat Covid-19 mean that the majority of people who were on the Highest Risk List are at no greater risk from the virus than the general population.

Alcohol and Drugs

[Scottish Government publishes response to Drugs Deaths Taskforce report](#)

The Scottish Government has published a cross-government response to the Drugs Deaths Taskforce report, 'Changing Lives'. The response includes a cross-government action plan, response to Taskforce recommendations and a stigma action plan. The action plan notes third sector and grassroots organisations, that are receiving Scottish Government funding via Corra, will be offered a 5% uplift to address the cost-of-living pressures and that for the year 2022/23 the Scottish Government is investing over £59 million in No One Left Behind which looks to simplify the employability system.

[Stakeholder engagement report on MUP evaluation published by PHS](#)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) has published a stakeholder engagement report which includes feedback from a range of stakeholders on the way the Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) evaluation has been completed. The PHS team who carry out the MUP evaluation commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to deliver an online workshop to gather views on how the evaluation was conducted. The report includes feedback received through an online workshop that took place in October 2022.

Justice

[Updated tables on justice social work statistics published](#)

The Scottish Government has published additional tables on justice social work statistics. The tables provide data from 2004-2005 up to 2020-21 and include information on various areas of social work at local authority level.

Mental Health

[NICE guideline recommendations on stopping antidepressant medication](#)

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended a staged withdrawal of antidepressants for adults who want to stop taking medication. NICE notes that reducing the dose of antidepressants in stages helps to reduce withdrawal effects and long-term dependence on the medication.



Other Health and Social Care

[New paper published on how pharmacy teams can tackle health inequalities](#)

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has published a position paper setting out what pharmacy teams can do to tackle health inequalities. The paper sets out a number of actions that can be taken by pharmacy teams in order to reach more people, particularly those from underserved populations which it notes are most at risk of health inequalities. Some of these actions include understanding the health inequalities that people using the pharmacy service face, understanding bias, identifying pharmacy related barriers, and understanding and improving pharmacy culture.

[Gender Recognition Reform \(Scotland\) Bill not to proceed to Royal Assent](#)

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack has made an order under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998, preventing the Scottish Parliament's Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill from proceeding to Royal Assent. The legislation intends to improve the system by which transgender people can apply for legal recognition through a Gender Recognition Certificate and includes safeguards to prevent misuse of this system. The Scottish Secretary raised concerns the "legislation would have an adverse impact on the operation of Great Britain-wide equalities legislation". The UK Government has published a [statement of reasons](#) for halting the Bill.

[Health Boards to identify patients who are clinically safe to be discharged](#)

The Scottish Government has set out actions to reduce delayed discharges, stating that patients who no longer need to be in hospital should be reassessed as soon as possible. Each Health Board area is expected to identify patients who are clinically safe to be discharged without further delay and can safely move home or to another setting. Health Secretary Humza Yousaf said, "we believe this will also help to alleviate pressure on our NHS by freeing up beds and improving the flow of patients through hospitals".

[New guidance published on providing equipment and adaptations](#)

The Scottish Government has published guidance on the responsibilities of NHS Scotland, Local Authorities, Integration Authorities, and their Housing and Education partners for the provision of equipment and adaptations. One of the overall aims of the guidance is to enable choice and control for service users and unpaid carers as partners in the process of assessment and support planning. The guidance identifies key actions for each section of the guidance, and it is expected that these will be reviewed by all partnerships with the use of the new self-assessment Equipment & Adaptations Baseline Assessment Tool.

[New research on learning disabilities in Scotland announced](#)

The Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI) has announced a new programme of work which will look at how to improve data on people with learning disabilities and employment outcomes. This work follows on from previous research undertaken by



the FAI around the barriers and opportunities for people with a learning disability in Scotland's economy and wider society.

[New report on health and health inequalities in Scotland since devolution published](#)

The Health Foundation has published a report on the state of health and health inequalities in Scotland since devolution. It states that in 2019, "there was a 24-year gap in the time spent in good health between people living in the most and least socioeconomically deprived 10% of local areas in Scotland". The report also highlights three areas of concern that should be prioritised: the prevalence of drug related deaths in Scotland, health and experiences of infants and children in their early years, and the health and socioeconomic outcomes of young and middle-aged men.

[The impact of health inequalities on the NHS in Scotland](#)

Our Scottish Future (OSF) has published a report around the impact of health inequalities on the NHS in Scotland. It notes that the poorest people in Scotland are 72% more likely to end up in hospital emergency beds than the richest, and that they spend 22% longer in hospital. The report also notes that health inequality has a direct cost of £342 million each year, and that when combined with indirect costs health inequality in Scotland costs over £9.7 billion each year.

[RPS and BMA publish joint statement calling for improvements to pharmacotherapy](#)

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and the BMA's Scottish GP Committee have released a joint statement calling for further investment in workforce, skill mix, training and development, and infrastructure. The joint statement also urges the Scottish Government to reconsider its decision to reduce funding for training pharmacy technicians.

[CQC announces changes to inspections in response to NHS winter pressures \(England\)](#)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has announced that it will adjust its regulatory activity for the rest of the winter to help increase capacity in adult social care and the NHS. The CQC will only inspect GP services where there is a risk of harm to people using the services, meaning that some previously planned inspections will not go ahead.

[The ALLIANCE to host event on amendments to the National Care Service Bill](#)

The ALLIANCE is hosting a meeting for its members to discuss potential amendments to the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. The meeting will be held online via Zoom on 2 February 2023.

**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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