

8 – 14 September 2023



bulletin



# Adult and Health



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## Covid-19 - General

### [Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry Newsletter](#)

The summer 2023 newsletter for the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has been issued, covering the preliminary hearing for health and social care held on Monday 28 August, the structure for hearings, experiences shared through Let's Be Heard, and confirmation that Long Covid will form part of the Inquiry's investigation into the devolved strategic response to the pandemic in Scotland.



## Alcohol and Drugs

### [Lord Advocate statement on pilot safer drug consumption facility](#)

The Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain KC has issued a statement responding to a request for a focused statement of prosecution policy in relation to a pilot safer drugs consumption facility in Glasgow. The statement confirms that the Lord Advocate would be prepared to publish a prosecution policy that it would not be in the public interest to prosecute drug users for simple possession offences committed within a pilot safer drugs consumption facility. The Scottish Secretary Alistair Jack has also been [reported](#) as confirming that the UK Government will not block plans for a drug consumption room pilot in Scotland.

### [Quarterly report on suspected drug deaths for April to June 2023](#)

The Scottish Government has published Police Scotland management information on suspected drug deaths in Scotland for April to June 2023. The quarterly report aims to provide an indication of current trends in suspected drug deaths, and the reported findings include that there were 600 suspected drug deaths during the first six months of 2023, which was 7% (38) higher than during the same period of 2022.

### [Case study on effective substance use recovery service](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland has published a case study of Venture Scotland's 'Venture On' programme supporting those in recovery from alcohol or drug use into wellbeing and employment. From the exploration of the programme through interviews and feedback forms, five themes identified as effective in supporting people's recovery journeys are: learning to manage feelings, links to the recovery community, trauma-informed staff, co-production, and permissioning.

## Justice

### [Annual report of HM Chief Inspector of prisons](#)

HM Chief Inspector of prisons for Scotland Wendy Sinclair-Gieben has published an annual report for 2022-23 which includes a summary of work undertaken over the year, the National Preventative Mechanism, scrutiny, strategic challenges, Independent Prison Monitoring Advisory Group (IPMAG) and priorities for 2023-24. An issue highlighted by the report is overcrowding in prisons, and the need to develop a policy approach to population management across the justice estate.

## Mental Health

### [Placements for people with mental ill health outwith their NHS health board](#)

The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) has published a report examining placements of people from Scotland with mental ill health or learning disability outwith their NHS health board area. Focusing on 59 of the 162 individuals from Scotland who are in this category, with the majority being cared for in private sector facilities in Scotland or, for a few, in England, the report identifies issues such as lack



of discharge planning, and lack of oversight of costs. Recommendations by the MWC include for the Scottish Government to review the data categories and data gathering on people outwith their NHS health board area and develop standards for planning an out of area placement, and for NHS boards to develop and apply discharge planning standards which focus on recovery and return to local areas.

### [Access to mental health services](#)

A report on adult mental health by Audit Scotland has highlighted that accessing adult mental health services “remains slow and complicated”, with ethnic minority groups, people living in rural areas and those in poverty all facing additional barriers. Amongst other key findings, the report states that funding has increased but a lack of data makes it hard to evaluate the impact of that funding, the mental health workforce are under pressure with high vacancy rates and turnover, and recommendations for the Scottish Government include to publish guidance on measuring and evaluating outcomes from mental health and wellbeing services in primary care, and a costed delivery plan setting out the funding and workforce needed to establish and accommodate primary care mental health and wellbeing services across Scotland by 2026, including how these services will work with other sectors to provide holistic, person-centred support.

## **Other Health and Social Care**

### [Cost of living and the third sector](#)

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) has published a report examining the impact of the cost of living crisis on the third sector. The report, ‘Stretched to the Limit: Scotland’s Third Sector and the cost of living crisis’, presents findings from a survey of ALLIANCE members, a case study and a workshop, which reportedly reflect cost of living issues such as an increased demand for services, reductions in grant funding, and higher bills. The recommendations suggested to address these issues include fair funding and Fair Work for the third sector, tailored support for rural organisations, and adopting a human rights based approach to procurement and grant funding.

## **Workforce**

### [Staff vacancies in care services 2022](#)

A joint report by the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) on ‘Staff vacancies in care services 2022’ shows that nearly half (49%) of all care services in Scotland reported having vacancies at the end of 2022. Other key points include that care homes for older people, housing support services, care at home services, care homes for adults, care homes for children and young people, secure accommodation services and residential special school care accommodation services all had a proportion of services with vacancies significantly above the national average of 49% for all care services. The problems in filling vacancies and reasons given include too few applicants in general (71%), too few applicants with experience (60%), and too few qualified applicants (51%).



### [Resources for careers in housing support](#)

The Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland (CCPS) and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)'s Housing Support Enabling Unit is supporting Scottish Housing Day 2023, and the theme of celebrating housing as a career, by listing resources for people to learn more about careers in housing support.

#### **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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