

22-28 March 2024



bulletin



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Covid-19 - General

[UK Covid-19 Inquiry timetable for public hearings](#)

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has set out a timetable for public hearings for Modules 3,4,5,6 and 7 of its investigation into the handling of the pandemic. The Chair of the inquiry has pledged to publish regular reports during the inquiry and is aiming to conclude public hearings by summer 2026.

Alcohol and Drugs

[Joint letter from 80 organisations urges Committee to retain minimum unit pricing](#)

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) has published a joint letter, signed by over 80 organisations, urging the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to retain and increase the minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol to 65p. The letter states that since its introduction in 2018, MUP for alcohol has saved and improved hundreds of lives in Scotland. It also notes evaluation by Public Health Scotland (PHS) which estimates that MUP reduced deaths caused solely by alcohol by 13.4%. The ALLIANCE also notes that the benefits of the policy have been seen in more deprived areas indicating that it has helped to reduce health inequalities.



Care Homes/Care at Home

[PHS figures on people waiting for a social care assessment and care at home](#)

Public Health Scotland (PHS) has released the latest statistical report on the total number of people waiting for an assessment for social care services, the number of people waiting for a package of care at home and the number of hours of care that are being waited for. As of 4 March 2024, over 6,800 people are estimated to be waiting on a social care assessment to enable them to live independently at home or in the community. [Age Scotland has warned](#) that the majority of those affected by the waiting list are older people in need of personal care, meal preparation and cleaning to allow them to live safely at home.

Disabilities

[Call for views on Disability Commissioner Bill](#)

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee has launched a consultation on the Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill. The Bill, which was introduced by MSP Jeremy Balfour, would establish a Commissioner to promote and safeguard the rights of disabled people in Scotland. The Committee is inviting views on the proposal to establish a Commissioner, the powers that the Commissioner would have and the involvement that disabled people should have in the Commissioner's work. The consultation will close on 17 May 2024.

End of Life/Palliative Care

[Member's Bill on assisted dying for terminally ill adults introduced to parliament](#)

MSP Liam McArthur has introduced the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament. The Bill would allow terminally ill adults in Scotland, who are eligible, to lawfully request, and be provided with, assistance by health professionals to end their own life. The Bill sets out specific eligibility criteria for adults to be eligible to be provided with assistance to end their life, including having a terminal illness and having sufficient capacity to make and understand the decision.

Mental Health

[Charity investigates costs of placing people with a learning disability in a mental health unit \(England\)](#)

A joint investigation by Mencap and ITV News has revealed that around £534 million a year is spent on inpatient beds for just over 2000 people with a learning disability and/or autistic people in England. Mencap suggests that most people with a learning disability and/or autism end up in a mental health unit due to lack of investment in the right community support with a focus on early intervention and preventing crises, and is calling for urgent investment in community support.



Older People

[Age Scotland urges minister to include rights to adaptations in new Housing Bill](#)

Age Scotland has published a blog on the new Housing Bill for Scotland, highlighting areas of concern for older people. The charity has welcomed a number of provisions set out in the Bill, including the new homelessness prevention duty, however it is calling on the Housing Minister to take forward reform of national housing adaptation strategies. Age Scotland has asked for the Bill to include clarity around what adaptations tenants are allowed to make under Category 1 and Category 2 changes.

Other Health and Social Care

[British Social Attitudes survey shows public dissatisfaction with social care services](#)

Learning Disability Today (LDT) has highlighted findings from the British Social Attitudes survey which suggests that only 13% of the general public are satisfied with social services in the UK and that 57% are either 'quite dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. The survey was conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and published by the Nuffield Trust and the King's Fund.

[Frontline workers to benefit from one-off payments of up to £3000 \(England\)](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care has announced additional funding for over 27,000 healthcare workers in England to receive one-off payments up to £3,000. Workers at non-NHS organisations including community nurses, physiotherapists and cleaners will also benefit from the funding, with eligible organisations set to receive funding for the payments as quickly as possible.

[Iriss to host webinar exploring hidden issues in rural communities](#)

The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (Iriss) is hosting an online conference to explore the hidden issues and injustices in rural communities and the role of rural social workers. The event will take place Thursday 9 May and is free to attend.

[NES Annual Virtual Conference 2024](#)

The NES (NHS Education for Scotland) annual conference will take place on 25 and 26 April this year. The event will be hosted online and is open to all professional disciplines across health and social care with an interest in education and training, workforce development and digital solutions.



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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