



Adult and Health

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Alcohol and Drugs

[Learning directory for drug and alcohol workforce](#)

The Scottish Government has published a learning directory of opportunities for the drug and alcohol workforce, based on the Drugs and Alcohol Workforce Knowledge and Skills Framework. Learning opportunities are provided for five themes: delivering family-inclusive practice, tackling stigma, providing harm-reduction advice, taking a human rights-based approach and practising trauma-informed care.



Alzheimer's/Dementia

[Clinical trial underway to assess using blood tests to diagnose dementia](#)

The Alzheimer's Society reports that a nationwide clinical trial is underway to assess how blood tests could be used to detect dementia at various stages. The Blood Biomarker Challenge team will assess multiple new and existing blood tests, looking at a range of dementia types including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia, and dementia with Lewy bodies, and also look at whether the blood tests can help detect these diseases at various stages and if the results need to be interpreted differently in people from different ethnic backgrounds or with other health conditions, such as kidney disease.

Covid-19

[Scottish Covid Inquiry publishes timetable for justice system impact hearings](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has published the timetable for justice system impact hearings (18-21 February 2025), and is now accepting requests to attend for the first week of its justice system impact hearings. Evidence will be heard from amongst other, bodies such as the Scottish Legal Aid Board, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS), Public and Commercial Services Union and Victim Support Scotland.

Disabilities

[Funding for organisations supporting people with learning disabilities](#)

A replacement for the Inspiring Inclusion Learning Disability Fund, the 'Learning Disability Support Fund', will make funding available for third sector organisations supporting people with learning disabilities. The grants available will be used to provide people with education and information on matters such as accessing health services and developing safe relationships.

[People with learning disabilities and complex needs living long-term in hospitals](#)

The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) has published a report on the circumstances of people with learning disability and complex needs who have been in hospital for 10 years or more, which finds that people are staying in hospital for too long; on average 18 years and two months. 'Hospital is not home' considers the circumstances of 55 people who were identified as having been in a learning disability or mental health hospital for over 10 years, and reportedly finds some evidence of commitment to inclusive and active discharge planning from hospital, but also reluctance and concern regarding the availability and capacity of community care resources to safeguard the person and meet their needs, and inconsistent interpretation across Scotland as to who should or should not be on the Dynamic Support Register.



[Report on progress from institutionalisation to independent living](#)

Published by the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC), the report, 'Tick Tock: A Human Rights Assessment of Progress from Institutionalisation to Independent Living in Scotland', finds that people with learning disabilities and autistic people are still being held in institutions in breach of their human rights, and identifies significant gaps in human rights standards and progress made under the Scottish Government's Coming Home Implementation Plan. The report also recommends that the Scottish Government should develop a new approach to leading change to uphold the human rights of people who have learning disabilities and autism, using the framework developed by the SHRC in the report to guide a human rights based approach to change, which will help Scotland comply with its human rights obligations.

Justice

[Addressing deaths in prison custody](#)

The Scottish Government has announced action to address systemic failures in relation to deaths in prison custody. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs Angela Constance gave a [statement on the Scottish Government response to Fatal Accident Inquiries \(FAIs\) into the Deaths of Katie Allan and William Brown](#), announcing six specific actions to contribute to the system wide reform, and a new, independent National Oversight Mechanism which will strengthen accountability in relation to the implementation of FAI recommendations. The six actions include a review of the Scottish Prison Service policies on ligatures and suicide prevention, independent chairing of the Death in Prison Learning and Audit Reviews, Legal Aid for families participating in FAIs, review of the FAI system to report by the end of 2025, and pursuit of the lifting of Crown Immunity with the UK Government.

[National throughcare service for people leaving short-term prison sentences](#)

The Scottish Government has announcing funding for a national throughcare service for people leaving prison following a short-term sentence from six to twelve months and men released from remand. The service will replace the two existing services 'Shine' and 'New Routes' for men and women serving sentences of four years or less, and aims to help people leaving prison reintegrate with their community and rebuild relationships, through mentoring, one-to-one support and guidance on accessing health care, housing and benefits.

Other Health and Social Care

[Contact centre open late for all services during annual returns](#)

Each year, we ask services to complete an annual return. This gives us important information that helps us plan, inform and carry out our inspections and improvement work. This year's annual returns will be available to service providers for completion until 2 March 2025. We have extended our contact centre opening hours for all services between 16:00-19:00 on the below days to help services with queries about annual returns. There will be limited staff available, so we ask for your patience while



we answer your calls. Our contact centre will still be open Monday to Friday 09:00-16:00. You can call us on 0345 600 9527.

- Thursday 30 January
- Thursday 6 February
- Thursday 13 February
- Thursday 20 February
- Thursday 27 February

[Update on the National Care Service](#)

The Scottish Government's Minister for Social Care, Maree Todd, has given an update on the National Care Service (NCS) in a statement to the Scottish Parliament. confirming that Part 1 of the Bill will be removed and the Scottish Government will proceed with Part 2 and Part 3 only, the Minister repeatedly gave reassurances to stakeholders that she remained committed to the ambitions behind a National Care Service. The Minister outlined which specific provisions will remain, noting that core elements of Anne's Law were in place through the Health and Social Care Standards and the Government is committed to enshrining the policy in primary legislation. Other elements of the Bill that will be taken forward include an integrated, digital approach to information sharing and the introduction of a right to breaks for unpaid carers.

The Scottish Government has also published a [factsheet](#) detailing how it plans to move forward with the National Care Service (NCS) in 2025 and beyond and plans to review current health and social care standards, and the Scottish Parliament's Information Centre (SPICe) has published [a blog](#) on developments to the NCS from September 2024 to January 2025.

Other

[Financial pressures on councils](#)

Audit Scotland has published a financial bulletin for 2023/24 on local government in Scotland, which reports on funding and budgets, financial performance, and financial position and outlook, which reportedly highlights that councils are facing "severe financial pressures" and recommending consultation with communities, clearly communicating the impact on local services and working together to shape and deliver urgently needed transformation. Amongst other key messages, the bulletin reportedly shows that "despite an increase in overall revenue and capital funding for councils in 2024/25, and the Scottish Government's budget proposals in December 2024 indicating a further real terms uplift in funding for 2025/26, the financial outlook for Scotland's councils remains challenging."

**Disclaimer**

This weekly bulletin is produced as an update on key developments concerning adults and health related issues.

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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