

7-13 March 2025



bulletin



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Alcohol and Drugs

[Quarterly report on suspected drug deaths in Scotland](#)

The latest quarterly report on suspected drug deaths in Scotland for the period October to December 2024 shows one of the lowest numbers of suspected drug deaths recorded in a single calendar quarter since 2017. There were 232 suspected drug deaths recorded for the quarter, 12 less than the previous quarter and 65 less than the same quarter in the previous year. The report notes that drug deaths have fallen over recent quarters but remain at a high level.

[New residential rehabilitation service opens in Aberdeenshire](#)

The first phase of a new residential rehabilitation service has now opened in Aberdeenshire. Rae House is a 27 bed facility and will be followed by a second phase which will include 53 units of housing and therapeutic community 'Dayhab' in Aberdeen City.



Care Homes/Care at Home

[Latest Hospital at Home quarterly report published](#)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) has published the latest quarterly progress update for the Hospital at Home programme. Hospital at Home provides acute level hospital care in a person's own home or homely setting. This progress report highlights that the programme has a high satisfaction and patient preference across a range of measures and that it reduces pressure on unscheduled acute care in hospitals. It also outlines the impact of the programme, noting that Hospital at Home services prevented over 11,900 people from spending time in a hospital from April to December 2024.

Mental Health

[£1.5 million funding for service supporting people affected by self-harm](#)

Self-Harm Network Scotland (SHNS), a national service supporting those affected by self-harm, will receive £1.5 million in funding over the next two years. The funding is part of the Fairer Funding pilot which is providing more than £60 million to charities across Scotland and will enable the charity to continue its webchat service and peer support programme. SHNS also provides free training for individuals and organisations to increase understating of self-harm and reduce stigma.

Older People

[Research highlights 75% of older people were cold in their homes over winter](#)

Research published by Age Scotland highlights that 75% of older people in Scotland reported being cold some, most or all of the time during winter. The research findings also note that the impact of rising energy bills is a concern for 44% respondents. The charity is urging older people to call its free helpline for advice on how to manage energy costs and to contact their energy provider to make sure they are on the most affordable deal to suit their usage.

[New resource pack launched to raise awareness of women's health in later life](#)

The Health and Social Care Alliance (the Alliance) and the Scottish Government have produced a resource pack to raise awareness of women's health in later life and how to prioritise healthy aging. The resources include a webinar recording focussing on nutrition, exercise, sleep and how to navigate these with a view of healthy aging, and an information leaflet with key information and resources on healthy habits and behaviours to support healthy aging.

Other Health and Social Care

[Monitoring framework for SDS Improvement Plan 2023-27 published](#)

The Scottish Government has published a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework which outlines how it will measure progress of the Self-directed Support



Improvement Plan 2023-27. The main goal of the framework is to collect evidence of the impact of the activities that are set out in the improvement plan and to learn from this.

[Online survey launched to gather views on a new BSL service](#)

The Health and Social Care Alliance (the Alliance) has highlighted work being undertaken by the Scottish Government to gather feedback on a new free national video relay service (VRS) for British Sign Language (BSL) users. Organisations who engage with BSL users and individual BSL users are being asked to provide their views on what they would like to see from a future service through an online survey. There are two surveys available, one for organisations and one for individual BSL users. The online surveys will be open until 31 March 2025.

Workforce

[Staff Vacancies in Care Services 2023 report published](#)

Staff Vacancies in Care Services 2023, a joint report published by the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) providing data on reported vacancies by care services as at 31 December 2023, highlights the extent of current recruitment and retention challenges faced by the sector. The report notes that as at 31 December 2023, 48% of care services reported vacancies and that care at home services, housing support services, care homes for older people and care homes for adults faced the most challenge filling vacancies. The report also outlines work being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and the SSSC to support workforce planners in social services to meet these challenges.

[New rules for providers recruiting international care workers \(England\)](#)

The UK Government has announced that from 9 April, employers who want to recruit new care workers from overseas will have to first prove that they have attempted to recruit a worker that is already in England and who needs new sponsorship. Other changes announced today include updating the minimum salary thresholds so that those working on the Skilled Worker visa, including care workers, are paid a minimum of £12.82 per hour.

[SSSC advice on raising concerns relating to racism and discrimination](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has published an article on dealing with racism and discrimination for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce. The article provides a breakdown of the main types of racial discrimination and what registrants can do if they experience racism connected to their work. The SSSC investigates concerns alleging racist conduct by registrants in line with its Fitness to Practice Rules.

[RCN warns of more migrant care workers facing exploitation by employers](#)

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has warned that delays in launching an investigation into the treatment of migrant care workers risks allowing hundreds of



new people to be exploited. RCN reports that there has been an increase in enquiries from nursing staff who fear they're victims of exploitation within the social care sector, up from 12 in 2020 to 110 in 2024. RCN also suggest that this is likely a fraction of the true number of people facing exploitation, noting that that majority of victims are not members of unions or feel too intimidated to come forward.

[Learning resources for social workers and social care workforce](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has highlighted free learning resources available through its continuous professional learning (CPL) website. The website helps people find free resources to support their continuous professional learning and gives suggested topics and areas for development within career pathways and the core learning elements.

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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