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bulletin



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Alcohol and Drugs

[Statistics on drug use deaths for 2024](#)

The National records of Scotland has published annual statistics on drug-related deaths in Scotland for 2024. Amongst other reported findings, in 2024, there were 1,017 drug misuse deaths registered in Scotland, which is a decrease of 13% (155 deaths) compared with 2023. Drug misuse deaths have reportedly increased over the last two decades to their peak in 2020, and generally decreased since then, with the exception of a 12% increase in 2023. The latest figure is the lowest number registered in any year since 2017.



Alzheimer's/Dementia

[Lived experience survey of people affected by dementia](#) (England, Wales and NI)

The Alzheimer's Society has published a survey of the experiences of people affected by dementia across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The survey of 3,487 people consists of people with a formal diagnosis of dementia or living with symptoms of dementia, unpaid carers and people who know someone close to them with dementia. Key findings reportedly show that 42% of people with dementia felt ashamed or stigmatised to be living with symptoms, 46% don't know who to contact for social care support, rising to 56% for unpaid carers and 62% for ethnically diverse respondents, and 70% of unpaid carers report that their mental or physical health has been negatively affected, spending less time on activities they enjoy or feeling more isolated socially.

Care Homes/Care at Home

[Nursing workforce report](#)

Scottish Care has published a nursing workforce report on the experiences of organisations employing nurses in care home services. The survey reportedly highlights issues such as recruitment and retention challenges, stress levels and systemic barriers such as "pay disparity with the NHS, lack of tailored professional development, and restrictive immigration policies."

Covid-19

[Timetable for Scottish Covid Inquiry hearings in September and October](#)

The Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry has confirmed a provisional timetable for hearings in September and October, examining the use of lockdowns and other non-pharmaceutical measures, such as social distancing, travel restrictions and self-isolation, as tools available to governments to prevent and control infection in a public health emergency. Held in a round table format with national and international experts, the hearings will not assess the approach taken by the Scottish Government during the pandemic. Instead the hearings will help inform the Inquiry's ongoing investigations into decision-making and the implementation of policies by political leaders and senior officials in Scotland.

[Report to be published by UK Covid-19 Inquiry on core UK decision-making](#)

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry will publish its second report and recommendations in November 2025, which concludes its investigation into 'Core UK decision-making and political governance (Module 2)' during the pandemic. Following the publication of the report, the Chair of the Inquiry will present her recommendations in a video statement on the Inquiry's YouTube channel soon after.



Equalities

[Anti-racism Learning Resource for Social Workers](#)

An Anti-racism Learning Resource for Social Workers, developed on behalf of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) by the Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW) in collaboration with the Social Work Anti-Racism Advisory Group, the resource will allow social workers to learn and reflect on how to embed anti-racism into social work practice. The four modules include process of change, racism and allyship in the work environment, team culture and effective challenge, and leading and embedding anti-racism.

Justice

[Consultation on new protections to add 'sex' to the Hate Crime Act](#)

The Scottish Government are consulting on proposals to add new protections for women and girls as well as men and boys where behaviour is undertaken displaying prejudice in relation to the characteristic of sex, and add 'sex' as a characteristic to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021. The proposals aim to ensure that women and girls have the same protections in relation to hate crime as the people with the other characteristics covered by the 2021 Act, and implements recommendations from the Working Group on Misogyny and the Criminal Law in a gender-neutral way so that women and girls receive new protections as well as men and boys. The consultation runs until 10 October 2025.

Learning Disabilities

[Data on delivery of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities](#)

The Scottish Government has published data on implementation and delivery of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities, including the number of eligible people identified for an annual health check, along with the number of health checks offered and completed.

Mental Health

[Improvement tools to enhance the delivery of psychology services and treatments](#)

'Psychological therapies and interventions - national implementation guide 2: delivery improvement tools' has been published by the Scottish Government to encourage the use of improvement tools and approaches to enhance the delivery of psychology services and treatments in Health and Social Care in Scotland.

[Information on Mental Health Officers](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has published the Mental Health Officers (Scotland) Report 2024, with information on the number of practising MHOs in post at 2nd December 2024, excluding long-term absentees, MHO trainees, leavers, vacancies and staffing shortfalls, and key characteristics of the MHO workforce (e.g.



age) and the type of teams they work in. The key points include that there were 765 active MHO posts in 2024, which is 36 more than the 729 in 2023, the overall hours estimated to be spent on MHO duties each week in 2024 was 13,880, and active exclusive MHO posts rose by 27 (9%), cover posts by 6 (10.3%), and non-exclusive posts by 3 (0.8%).

Other Health and Social Care

[Co-design reports on the National Care Service](#)

The Scottish Government has published a series of co-design reports shaping the future National Care Service (NCS), covering [independent advocacy](#), [access and eligibility criteria](#), [ethical procurement](#), and the [Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health](#), with all also available in easy read versions. The reports reflect input from service users, carers, staff, and organisations, aiming to ensure consistent, high-quality care across Scotland and putting lived experience at the heart of decisions about how the NCS will work.

[Revised Good Complaints Handling training launched by SPSO](#)

Revised Good Complaints Handling training has been launched by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The self-guided course, which follows publication of the SPSO's Statement of Complaints Handling Principles, is aimed at staff handling complaints at stage 1 of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure but is designed to be useful for anyone involved in complaints handling.

Other

[Election of Green Party leadership](#)

The Scottish Greens have elected as co-leaders Ross Greer and Gillian Mackay. The [Green Party has also elected](#) Zack Polanski in England.

[Appointment of convenor of SSSC Board](#)

The Scottish Government's Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise Natalie Don-Innes MSP, has announced the appointment of Peter Murray as a Convenor of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This appointment will be for 3 years and will run from 1 September 2025 and ending on 31 August 2028 .

Workforce

[Recruitment open for cohort seven of the Care Experience Improvement Model Leaders programme \(CEIM Leaders\)](#)

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has confirmed that recruitment is now open for cohort seven of the Care Experience Improvement Model Leaders programme (CEIM Leaders), delivered by the SSSC in partnership with Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.



CEIM Leaders is a coaching skills development programme designed to give staff the knowledge and skills to coach and lead teams to implement CEIM, and provides a framework that supports health and social care teams to improve services based directly on the experiences of individuals who use them.

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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