Alcohol and Drugs

Statistics and analysis of drug related deaths published

The National Drug Related Deaths Database (NDRDD) for Scotland has published an analysis of deaths which occurred in 2012. It has found that drug-related deaths in those aged 45 and over were higher in 2012 (26%) than in 2011 (14%), with the 25-44 years age group accounting for around two-thirds (67%) of deaths as in previous years.

Alzheimer's/Dementia

Employers and employees hit by dementia care, survey finds

Research highlighting that both employers and employees are being hit by a growing impact of caring for people with dementia has been published by business forum Employers for Carers. The forum's survey of businesses found that 90% believe dementia is an increasingly big issue for their organisation, adding pressure on employees, causing physical and mental health problems and leading to declined productivity and a loss of valuable staff members. In an accompanying survey of carers juggling work and looking after a loved one with dementia, just over half said their work was negatively affected due to their caring responsibilities, with only 7% saying that caring had no impact on their capacity to work.
Care Homes/Care at Home

Care Inspectorate launches resource to encourage physical activity in care homes

The Care Inspectorate has launched a new multi-media resource pack to help care home residents keep active. In partnership with the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health at Loughborough University, the scrutiny body has launched a multi-media resource pack to support those who work in the care sector to encourage physical activity as part of residents’ daily lives. Based on the World Health Organization model of ‘Health Promoting Settings’, the resource provides principles and a self-improvement framework for care homes. It is designed to stimulate simple solutions and practical approaches to enable all residents to choose to be active every day.

Glasgow Council and care staff reach agreement

Glasgow City Council and UNISON's Glasgow branch have reached an agreement after several days of strikes in January and February over changes to job roles for staff in council homes for older people, the Evening Times reports.

No evidence of benefits from preventative home visits, study finds

There is no evidence to demonstrate that older people who receive preventative home visits live longer or lead more independent lives, analysis of research conducted over the past 20 years has found. The Oxford University research review defined home visits as interventions by health or social care professionals to boost the independence of older people but did not cover home care services to “treat or rehabilitate people with medical problems”. The review recommended that any future trials needed to provide more detailed information, such as why older people needed home visits, how many home visits they actually received, and the characteristics of older recipients of home visits and the professionals delivering the service.

Criminal Justice

Council of Europe’s anti-torture watchdog reports on Scottish prisons

Prison officers in HMP Barlinnie have been warned not to use excessive force against inmates after an inspection by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the Herald reports. The Council, which visited several Scottish prisons, said relations between prisoners and staff were “generally positive”, but they had received allegations about Barlinnie, complaints of verbal abuse by female prison officers at Cornton Vale, and a number of inmates at Kilmarnock Prison said they did not feel safe.
**Homelessness**

*Homelessness declining, Scottish Government figures show*

A decrease in homelessness applications and the number of households living in temporary accommodation has been reported in Scottish Government statistics. The number of homelessness applications between October and December 2013 was 10% lower than the number of applications received in the same quarter of 2012. Households in temporary accommodation decreased by 3% during 2013, reaching their lowest level for five years, with a 20% fall in households with children in temporary accommodation.

**Infection Prevention and Control**

*NICE approves transplant procedure to treat patients with recurring C. diff (England)*

Guidance for a 'transplant' procedure to treat people with recurring Clostridium difficile (C. diff) infections has been published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The guidance says that faecal microbiota transplant is safe and effective enough for doctors to use it with normal safeguards in place, but should only be considered for people who experience persistent C. diff infections and in whom antibiotics have failed.

**Mental Health**

*MWC publishes investigation into woman who took her life after benefits assessment*

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (MWC) has published an investigation report into the case of Ms DE, who took her own life after receiving a work capability assessment from the Department for Work and Pensions. The report recommends that the Scottish Government, in conjunction with user, carer and professional groups, commission a study examining the impact of the Work Capability Assessment process on people with a mental illness, learning disability or related condition, and put in place the support necessary to address this impact.

*MWC publishes new investigation report*

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (MWC) has published an investigation report into the care and treatment of Ms FG, who did not receive an assessment by psychiatric services prior to being involved in a serious incident, despite her parents contacting NHS 24 and a local GP. In the report, the MWC recommends that all mental health services in Scotland have a single point of access for emergency referrals.
Older People

**Research summaries by experts in older people’s services published by Age UK**

Age UK has published a report consisting of jargon-free summaries of research written by experts in areas of older people’s services. "Improving later life. Services for older people – what works" includes a chapter on integrating health and care and what works in partnership working.

**Investigation into lives of older people living with frailty published by Age UK**

Research into the lives of older people living with frailty has been published by Age UK. The research methods consisted of five filmed interviews, three ‘discovery visits’ to older people’s day-centres and five follow-up depth interviews with participants who had consented to re-contact during the discovery visits. The report concludes with a chapter outlining policy implications of the research, with three ‘core objectives’ for supporting people living with frailty: maximising capacity and capability, personalising care goals, and managing risk.

**Other Health and Social Care**

**Residential Care for Older People Task Force report published**

A report from the Task Force on Residential Care for Older People has been published by the Scottish Government. It contains 34 recommendations for the delivery of care and support in residential settings over the next 20 years, five of which mention the **Care Inspectorate**:

- The Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate, COSLA, CCPS and Scottish Care should ensure that people are able to access the right type of tenure. This may mean an opportunity to enter into a tenancy or ownership arrangement or a more flexible residency agreement.
- The Care Inspectorate and Scottish Government should ensure that registered care home services can add to their functions (e.g. day care/respite; laundry; meals; activities) to provide an outreach service to non-residents in the local community.
- The Care Inspectorate should devise new protocols and toolkit materials to support the involvement of volunteers and unpaid carers in care home environments.
- Providers should enter into dialogue with the Care Inspectorate and Health Improvement Scotland about the innovations they want to take forward within their care homes or housing with support service.
- The Care Inspectorate should undertake further work to establish if there are additional risks to continuity of care as a result of the separation of property.
owning companies from operating companies in relation to care home provision.

An implementation strategy will now be developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Task Force has said the strategy "must" be linked to the review of the National Care Standards to ensure that the reforms recommended are supported in the new standards. The summary report and list of recommendations can be viewed here.

Mentions of Care Inspectorate during committee session

There were a number of mentions of the Care Inspectorate during this week’s Health and Sport Committee discussion on access to services, as part of its inquiry into health inequalities. Areas covered include the complaints system, involvement, inspection, integration and the National Care Standards. Future sessions will consider health inequalities in the early years.

Care Inspectorate welcomes appointment of three new board members

The Care Inspectorate has welcomed the appointment of three new members to its board. The Scottish Ministers have appointed Dr Linda Pollock, Anne Houston and Christine Dunlop to serve on the board for four years. Christine Dunlop is a Registered Mental Nurse and has worked in various hospital based mental health and learning disability services. Anne Houston is retiring as Chief Executive of Children 1st at the end of June and has over 24 years of experience in social care organisations. Linda Pollock has experience in several clinical, research, teaching and management roles, and is a former NHS Executive Nurse Director and Mental Welfare Commissioner.

Life expectancy in Scotland at ‘highest ever level’

Life expectancy at birth in Scotland has reached its highest ever level and the number of people in Scotland living for more than a century continues to grow, the National Records of Scotland (NRS) has reported. Based on statistics covering 2010-2012, life expectancy is now 76.5 for males and 80.7 for females in Scotland. The NRS figures show that in 2012 there were 800 people who are a century old or more living in Scotland, a rise of 280 compared with 2002.

CCPS welcomes care and support procurement reform amendments

Amendments to the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill agreed by the Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee have been welcomed by the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS). The amendments, moved by Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, are intended to offer authorities greater discretion as to whether they put care contracts out to tender. If
the Bill is passed, the CCPS reports that competitive tendering will no longer be a requirement for care and support provision.

Aberdeen Council chief to join Health and Social Care Board Northern Ireland

Aberdeen City Council Chief Executive Valerie Watts is to become Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland, the BBC reports. Ms Watts said she had enjoyed her three years in Aberdeen and would remain in post for the next three months.

Increase in outpatient and inpatient activity, Government figures show

Increases in both inpatient and outpatient activity in the last quarter of 2013 compared with the same quarter of 2012 have been shown in ISD Scotland figures. This includes an increase of 1.4% in acute inpatient and day case discharges, and another increase of 1.4% in the total number of outpatient attendances. There was also an increase of 1.1% in the number of available staffed beds in acute specialties. However, a decrease of 9.5% over the last three years has been recorded in the rate of emergency bed days per 1,000 patients aged 75 and over.

Older people’s health and wellbeing profiles published

New data on the health and wellbeing of Scotland’s older people (aged 65+) has been published by ISD Scotland. Traumatic hip fracture discharge rates were found to be lowest in NHS Fife and highest in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde over 2010-12. The discharge rate for patients hospitalised with alcohol conditions was highest in NHS Orkney, followed by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. The lowest rate was recorded in NHS Forth Valley, while NHS Dumfries and Galloway had the second-lowest rate.

Zero hours care workers should have right to switch after one year, think tank says

Workers who have been on zero hours contracts for a year or more should be given a legal right to switch to a fixed hours contract if they’ve worked regular shifts during that time, the Resolution Foundation has recommended. The think tank’s report rejects an outright ban on zero hours contracts, finding that many employers and some workers appreciate their flexibility. However, the report’s authors argue that there are clear signs of abuse and poor practice and make specific recommendations for social care. The report also argues that employers should be banned from including exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts, which prevent staff from working elsewhere.

Government consults on ‘fitness test’ for health and social care directors (England)
The UK Department of Health is consulting on a new legal duty which will mean that health and social care organisations registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will have to ensure that directors (or equivalent) meet a ‘fit and proper person’ test. This will allow the CQC to require the removal of directors from posts if they are not up to the job, the UK Government has said.

**Other**

*Councils must look at new options to reduce costs, Audit Scotland says*

Councils need to keep an open mind in deciding how to best deliver services, Audit Scotland has recommended. In its annual overview report, the Accounts Commission has said that councils need to look at other options to reduce costs in the longer term. Savings have been made in recent years largely by reductions in staff. The commission has said that choices on how to address funding gaps will become increasingly difficult, with rising demand for services alongside managing major reforms in welfare and health and social care.

*Social work ‘drifting apart’ across UK regions, BASW Chief Executive says*

Community Care has published a comment piece by Bridget Robb, Chief Executive of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), warning that diverging policies mean that social workers can no longer assume an ability to work across the UK. She has written that there is concern that the demise of any remaining notion of “UK social work” means the loss of benefits such as the ability to deploy specialist social work skills throughout the UK, for a student to have their training recognised wherever they wish to work, and for the “free exchange of ideas and experiences”.

*Responses to Scottish Parliament legislation inquiry published*

Responses to the inquiry into the procedures for considering legislation held by the Scottish Parliament’s Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee have been published. The inquiry was set up following concerns over the transparency of the amendments stages of bills and the timescale allowed for each stage of a bill’s passage, particularly at stage 3 when late amendments can be made in the chamber.
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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