

HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

News from the Socialist Health Association Scotland



Welcome to the **January 2016** edition of *Healthier Scotland*, the E-Bulletin of the Socialist Health Association Scotland.

SHA Scotland is a campaigning organisation which promotes health and well-being and the eradication of inequalities through the application of socialist principles to society and government. We believe that these objectives can best be achieved through collective rather than individual action. We campaign for an integrated healthcare system which reduces inequalities in health and is accountable to the communities it serves. For the latest Scottish health news follow @shascotland on Twitter. We also have a [web site](#) with access to all our publications.

Quality Care Commission

Our feature for this edition is the [report](#) of the Quality Care Commission. Dave Watson summarises the report in our [blog](#). Like the health inequalities commission it does more than simply analyse the scale of the problem, important though that it is if we are to grasp the importance of social care. The Commission goes much further in describing what a quality care might look like and how it should be delivered. It also doesn't duck the need for a new social contract and the necessary conversation about funding.

Public Health

New alcohol limit [guidance](#) puts male limit in line with women as chief medical officers warn that any amount of alcohol consumption increases cancer risk. At least they waited until after the holiday season! Meanwhile, Paramedics were [called out](#) to more than 12,000 booze-fuelled incidents across Scotland in just six months. Do Scots really [drink more](#) than the English? Actually it's a bit more nuanced than the headlines.

European court has said the Scottish government's case for a minimum unit price for alcohol is contrary to EU law if other tax options exist. Views differ on the [implications](#) and it will be for national courts to decide if better options exist. Yet again, the drinks industry undermines sensible public health measures.

A new [study](#) shows that slashing the sugar content of sweet drinks by 40 per cent over the next five years could prevent a million cases of obesity and help stop [dementia](#) rates soaring. The industry kicks back [supported](#) by those who should be there to protect the public.

[Illicit tobacco](#) is one of those subjects (like e-cigarettes) where the quantity of the media coverage is not always matched by the quality. Shelia Duffy from ASH sets out the facts. Scotland is to [ban smoking](#) in cars that are carrying children. The new legislation will mean fines of up to £100 for anyone who smokes in a car which has a passenger under the age of 18.

EHRC [report](#) shows older people in Scotland are facing greater inequality and isolation are working longer and taking on more unpaid care.

Mental Health

Hundreds of patients are being sent outside their health board areas to receive mental health treatment every year, according to new [figures](#).

Impact of austerity. 71 per cent of teachers [reported](#) an increase in the number of children displaying signs of mental health problems including anxiety, stress and low mood.

NHS Scotland

Labour leader Kezia Dugdale has [urged](#) the Scottish Government to back proposals to change the organ donation system in Scotland. Could increase donation rates by 30%.

Almost 3,000 operations were [postponed](#) by Scottish hospitals in the six months to October. The BMA highlights the [funding gap](#) faced by the NHS set against rising demand and the impact of increasing consultant, specialty doctor and GP vacancies.

New study shows that hospitals with higher [staffing](#) levels had the best patient survival rates.

Ministers [announced](#) £200m funding for new treatment centres based on the Golden Jubilee model. This has been broadly welcomed, but despite the price tag there is little detail. Surgeons and others have also [queried](#) how they will be staffed.

Nearly 17,000 patients in Scotland failed to [show up](#) for an NHS hospital appointment on at least five occasions last year. Calls for some form of penalty or incentive.

A new five-year plan for a "joined-up" approach to palliative care has been [unveiled](#) by the Scottish government. £3.5m plan aims to ensure access to good quality care across all health departments.

Fears have been raised that Scottish GPs are facing a major [recruitment](#) crisis, with new figures showing a third of family doctors are likely to retire in the next decade. New [study](#) shows that GPs in the most deprived areas of the country receive £10 less than the average practice for each patient.

Cancer patients are waiting too long for [treatment](#) in Scotland, sparking calls for government action. Data reveals 90% patients are treated in line with the target, compared to 95% two years ago. A new [study shows](#) most cases of cancer result from avoidable factors such as toxic chemicals and radiation.

NHS workers in Scotland are slightly [less positive](#) about their jobs than they were last year, according to the annual health service [staff survey](#). Staffing levels and lack of consultation are main concerns.

Audit Scotland [report](#) highlights big challenges for health and care integration. Funding, governance and [workforce](#) issues not resolved.

Doctors organisations are calling for a more honest [debate](#) with the public about the tough choices facing the NHS - including whether they would be willing to spend more money on healthcare. Thankfully, the junior doctors dispute doesn't apply in Scotland – but solidarity!



Healthier Scotland is a Socialist Health Scotland publication

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