

HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

News from the Socialist Health Association Scotland



Welcome to the **June 2014** 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. The latest edition of our policy journal is also available [online](#) with a focus on constitutional change.

Health Inequalities

Tackling inequality in health and disease and in life and death is, arguably, the greatest challenge we face as a society. There is still time to submit views to the [Commission](#) established by Neil Findlay MSP to find some solutions. Scottish Labour's new [manifesto](#) puts health inequality at the centre of party policy.

A series of reports published in recent weeks on poverty and inequality in Scotland is summarised at UNISON's [Public Works](#) blog. They include some recommendations for action as well.

Giving [evidence](#) to the Health Committee the public health minister acknowledged that health inequality remained a "blight on our society", but said it was "not a problem to be solved by just the NHS" as its genesis was from social inequality. For example, one in four baby boys in [Glasgow](#) won't live to 65.

ScotSID report shows [Suicide](#) is now three times more common in deprived areas.

Public Health

In Scotland, more than a quarter of a million people have diabetes, costing the NHS more than £1bn a year. While numbers haven't come down, obesity has slightly and there are some signs that the Scottish research strategy is having a [positive](#) impact.

Council leaders [point](#) to poor food labelling, with high salt and sugar content in foods marketed as 'healthy'. However, Glasgow Games chiefs appoint drink firms as [sponsors](#) while 300 Glaswegians die every year from alcohol related illnesses. And [children](#) in Scotland are among the least active in the world.

MSP's approve [deregulation](#) of food safety with visual only inspection of pigs. Thousands of tumours and abscesses to be minced into sausages and pies.

Scottish Social Attitudes [survey](#) revealed an increase in people who thought it was easier to enjoy a social event if they had a drink, up from 35% in 2004 to 39% in 2013. Although more recognise the public health problems and support [action](#) like minimum pricing. Alcohol is 60% [cheaper](#) in real terms.

Mental Health

The treatment of patients with [dementia](#) has come into focus with a damning MWC [report](#) and a call for the illness to be given greater priority in treatment and research. Patients with mental health conditions are dying too young and care is not on parity with physical illness, says a BMA [report](#).

NHS Scotland

How Scotland [rejected](#) marketisation, a history lesson from Dave Watson. When we see what's happening to the NHS in England, we should remember to say, thanks very much comrades!

Stopping Pfizer taking over AstraZeneca isn't enough. Scott Nicholson on why we need a [publicly owned](#) pharmaceutical option. Are patient groups being [used](#) by big pharma as marketing ploys?

Pressures on A&E departments have been well documented in recent months. Even the head of NHS Scotland now admits [concerns](#) over moving patients. A particular problem in [Highland](#) with ambulances stretched to cover a shortage of out of hours GPs. [Hairmyres](#) also turning patients away and [Aberdeen](#) doctors warn of unsafe care.

Hospital [doctor hours](#) to be cut with seven night rotas banned after doctor died on journey home from work. After cutting medical trainee posts, numbers are set to be [increased](#) to cope with demand. Meanwhile, health boards [spend](#) up to £9m a year on plugging staffing gaps with agency nurses, while more than 1500 permanent posts are lying vacant.

Experts point to the dangers of boarding patients in unsuitable wards due to the pressure on beds. Dr Richard Simpson MSP [highlights](#) poor data collection. One [example](#) of many in Glasgow.

MSP's on Public Audit Committee [say](#) patients not being treated quickly enough after Audit Scotland [investigation](#). Waiting list guarantees not met. Chronic pain [patients](#) waiting two years. The OECD [report](#) Scotland is losing more beds than other countries.

The cost of clinical [negligence](#) cases in NHS Scotland has doubled in six years to £36m.

Financial [problems](#) at the State Hospital, Carstairs are leading to potential ward closures.

The public are getting more cynical about health polices they believe are politically motivated, according to a [new poll](#) for the BMA. However, an official [survey](#) of almost 1,500 people found that 61% were either very or quite satisfied with NHS Scotland, compared with 40% in 2005.

All opposition MSPs combined to support vote of [no confidence](#) in the Health Secretary after he directed a change of policy in his own constituency.

Social Care

Health and care integration is right in [principle](#) but it will take more than new structures to deliver quality care. One of those challenges is the national disgrace of social care in many homecare and residential settings as explained in UNISON Scotland's, [Time to Care](#) report. This was also the subject of SHA Scotland's succesful [motion](#) to the 2014 Scottish Labour Party conference.

The Self-Directed Support Bill comes [into force](#). The rhetoric of choice and control through personalisation is often used as cover for a deteriorating service and isolation for service users.

Healthier Scotland is a Socialist Health Scotland publication

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