

Welcome to the **Oct 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. We also have a new web site with access to all our publications.

We pay [tribute](http://shascotland.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/ali-sayed.html) to our Vice-Chair Ali Syed who sadly passed away recently. There is a commemoration of his life and work this Saturday (11 October) at Bearsden Town Hall, starting at 3pm.

**Health Inequalities**

A nice Spirit Level [calculator](http://thespiritleveldocumentary.com/uploads/websites/74/unequal/?code=enne) to find out how far away you are from the world’s richest 1%. It will be far!

Significantly high numbers of people with [learning disabilities](http://www.homecare.co.uk/news/article.cfm/id/1564833/disbaled-people-living-in-depiived-areas-scotland) live in most deprived areas of Scotland.

People in [Glasgow](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/glaswegians-have-greatest-heart-disease-death-risk-in-uk.24963184) have greatest heart disease risk in the UK.

**Public Health**

Debate over [e-cigarettes](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/05/e-cigarettes-could-save-50000-lives-in-uk) goes on. Developing a habit or a step towards reducing addition?

Introducing minimum pricing for alcohol 50 times more [effective](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29433130) than current UK government policy.

Sex education in [schools](http://www.scotsman.com/news/education/calls-for-statutory-sex-education-in-scots-schools-1-3556450) should be a statutory requirement given ambiguous guidance and poor outcomes.

The biggest public health gains were made when public health was in local government. Revitalise Blog post makes the [case](http://www.revitalisescottishlabour.org/2014/09/15/improving-local-democracy-local-government-and-local-health/) for change and local democracy.

Deaths from heart disease and stroke in Scotland are continuing a [downward trend](http://www.scotsman.com/news/health/scotland-sees-fall-in-deaths-from-heart-disease-1-3539214). All causes down 6.5%.

NHS Glasgow trials [sending](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/nhs-to-send-obese-patients-to-weight-watchers-in-trial.25212206) obese patients to Weight Watchers.

UNISON cleaning staff [survey](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/worthit/cleanerssurvey.pdf) shows that hospitals are not immune from cuts in equipment and staff.

**Mental Health**

Scotland’s mental health strategy appears to have a [few gaps](http://www.cspp.org.uk/debate-blog/scotlands-mental-health-strategy-mind-the-gap.html?utm_source=e-News+bulletin+September+2014&utm_campaign=E-news+August+2014&utm_medium=email) between words and actions. Not any better down south. [CMO says](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/09/people-mental-health-problems-need-more-support-work-dame-sally-davies) spent £100bn, yet 75% of those in need received no treatment.

As WHO [report](http://theconversation.com/who-suicide-report-shows-we-must-stop-seeing-depression-as-a-disorder-of-developed-world-30846?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+5+September+2014+-+1897&utm_content=Latest+from+The+Conversation+for+5+) shows, we must stop seeing poor mental health as only an issue for the developed world.

The [suicide rate](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/suicide-rate-down-19-in-decade.1408031310) in Scotland is down 19% in a decade, but still relatively high. ‘Choose Life’ strategy.

***Healthier Scotland* is a Socialist Health Scotland publication**

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**NHS Scotland**

The funding of NHS Scotland became a late battleground in the independence referendum. IFS provided some analysis that we covered in our [blog](http://shascotland.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/financial-impact-of-independence-on-nhs.html). There has been some rebuttal and counter rebuttal since, as summarised [here](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/11137352/Salmond-accused-of-creating-700-million-NHS-shortfall.html). A leaked [report](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/warning-450m-in-nhs-cutbacks-will-be-needed-over-next-two-years.25336039) highlighted funding problems to come. NHS [Glasgow](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/beds-axe-plan-as-health-board-seeks-savings.25376352) looking to find £30m savings. BMA calls for a [debate](http://www.scotsman.com/news/health/scottish-independence-bma-calls-for-nhs-debate-1-3547290) to stop the service falling down.

Latest NHS statistics show workforce numbers recovering but other targets missed. Summary in [blog](http://shascotland.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/mixed-messages-in-latest-nhs-statistics.html)

### 21 out of 24 A&E departments are regularly unsafe. The Scottish Government has allocated some money to plug the immediate gaps, but the Chair of the College of Emergency Medicine [says](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/senior-medic-in-warning-over-dangerous-ae-departments.25509622) there are still unresolved issues. Other countries do [better](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/nhs-struggling-to-hire-ae-doctors.25479513). One locum flown in from [India](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-29392449) for the weekend!

### **Nine of Scotland's health boards have failed to meet a key** [cancer treatment](http://news.stv.tv/scotland/294011-nhs-boards-across-scotland-fails-cancer-treatment-time-targets/) **time despite a support team set up to improve results.**

A total of £53m was [splashed out](http://www.sundaypost.com/news-views/scotland/outrage-over-400m-bill-for-nhs-stand-ins-1.611829) on agency doctors and consultants in 2013/14 – up from £28m in 2011/12. The overall hospital agency bill, including nurses and admin staff, over the last seven years was £415m.

### In the past decade the number of people who were discharged after treatment increased by almost 23%, with available beds in Scottish [hospitals](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/hospital-patient-numbers-rise-23.1412077292) falling by just over 7% during this period.

### Perth Royal [criticised](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/hospital-is-criticised-in-report-over-care-of-elderly.25396603) by inspectors over care for the elderly. Not the first hospital to be told could do better in care for older people.

NHS Scotland’s own version of municipal socialism. The Aroma brand of [coffee shops](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-29489181) has proved a surprise hit. The concept began in Scotland in 2009 and there are now 17 Aroma cafes in 12 Scottish hospitals. So far they have generated £1.45m for NHS funds.

Serco selected as preferred bidder at [Dumfries Hospital](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-29020264). Just in case anyone still thinks we don’t have PFI in Scotland anymore! Spending on [private health care](http://www.scotsman.com/news/health/nhs-scotland-s-private-health-spending-spike-1-3512005) increased sharply too.

Long standing [parking](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/health/controlled-parking-for-hospital-site.25529904) problems at the Southern General Hospital don’t look like getting any better at the new hospital.

**Social Care**

A UNISON survey of staff involved in the forthcoming health and care integration highlights support for the principle, but big concerns over the implementation. Neil Findlay MSP has highlighted the report with a parliamentary motion. Our [blog](http://www.shascotland.org/blog) picks out the key points and some commentary on the latest SSSC workforce data that surprisingly shows a cut in care staff for the third year running.

Bed blocking is at its [highest rate](http://www.heraldscotland.com/comment/herald-view/bed-blocking-still-taking-toll-on-nhs.25149594) in four years, with the number of patients waiting more than six weeks to be discharged having tripled over the past year.