

# HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

News from the Socialist Health Association Scotland

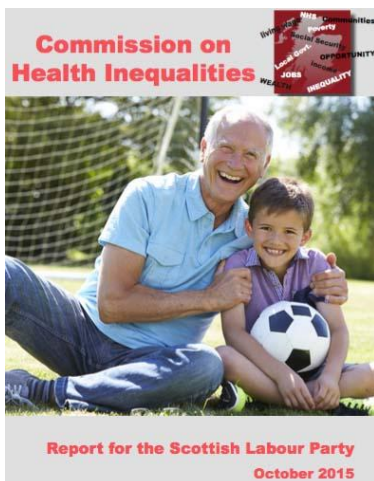


Welcome to the **October 2015** edition of *Healthier Scotland*, the E-Bulletin of the Socialist Health Association Scotland.

SHA Scotland is a campaigning organisation that 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.

## Commission on Health Inequalities



Persistent health inequality in Scotland is a scandal and our foremost national shame. We are experts at describing health inequality, but dismal at fixing it. A new report by the Health Inequality Commission takes the radical path of offering solutions.

Neil Findlay MSP established the Commission when he was shadow health minister. SHA Scotland Chair, Dr David Conway, convened it and contributing authors included SHA Scotland Secretary, Dave Watson.

The practical recommendations in this report cut across nearly all policy areas. This sends a clear message that health inequality cannot simply be tackled by the NHS alone. The Deputy Leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Alex Rowley was at the launch to reflect that cross cutting approach to the issue.

Our [blog](#) summarises the key messages and a full copy of the report can be [downloaded](#) from our website. Contact the Secretary if you would like a hard copy. Here is some of the [media](#) coverage.

### Public Health News

Another example of cross cutting measures comes in 'Vision for 2016' published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). They [recommend](#) lower speed limits and measures to reduce alcohol abuse should be introduced by the next Scottish government.

The Bill to ban smoking in cars carrying children has [passed](#) the first legislative stage in the Scottish Parliament. This Bill aims to protect children from the effects of second-hand smoke.

Alcohol-related deaths in Scotland are on the rise again after a big fall in recent years. The [First Minister](#) blamed the economic recovery and pointed to the importance of measures like minimum alcohol pricing, which is opposed by the drinks industry. A ruling is expected in the Court of Session later this year.

### SHA Scotland at Scottish Labour Party Conference

Tackling inequality will be theme of our fringe meeting with UNISON Scotland at the Scottish Labour Party conference. Neil Findlay MSP will introduce the event followed by contributions from Dr David Conway, CPAG Scotland and The Poverty Alliance.

**12:30pm on Friday 30 October 2015**

Salutation Hotel, Perth

All welcome

# NHS Scotland

## NHS in Scotland 2015



The pressures on NHS Scotland are rarely out of the news recently. The most comprehensive analysis is in the Audit Scotland [report](#) that found that tightening budgets, rising costs, higher demand for services, demanding targets and standards, and increasing staff vacancies mean the health service will need to change quickly to survive. The [report](#) warns: “*The Scottish Government has not made sufficient progress towards achieving its 2020 vision of changing the balance of care to more homely and community-based settings.*”

Scottish Labour described it as “damning”, accusing the SNP of taking “*a sticking plaster approach which kicks problems into the long grass*”.

The Royal College of GPs [predicts](#) an “explosion” of people living with more than one serious long-term, life-threatening condition in the next decade. The college said the number would rise from an estimated 8.2 million in 2015 to 9.1 million in 2025. This would cost the NHS up to £1.2bn a year.

The number of patients held up in Scottish hospitals when they are clinically ready for discharge has been [rising steadily](#) from 1,095 in April to 1,258 in September. As UNISON, local councils and others repeatedly point out this requires action on our crumbling social care system. The [privatisation](#) of the care at home service, as in NHS Highland, is also the wrong approach.

Scotland’s health boards have paid [private firms](#) a record £82.5million to treat patients - up from £75.9million in the previous year. Public spending on private health care has now more than doubled since 1999-2000. Scottish Labour’s Dr Richard Simpson said: “*These figures reveal the hypocrisy of the SNP around our NHS. They will campaign in elections against privatisation of our NHS while handing over increasing amounts of taxpayer cash to private health firms.*”



Increasing capacity is the best way to cut the use of the private sector. The First Minister has unveiled [plans](#) for a £200million investment to expand the Golden Jubilee hospital at Clydebank and create a string of new centres around Scotland specialising in hip, knee and cataract operations.

Junior doctors are under plenty of pressure in NHS Scotland with only one health board meeting the [target](#) for reducing back-to-back shifts. However, they are at least spared the ongoing farce in NHS England over the imposition of a new contract. This campaigning doctor certainly wins placard of the month! Some of his colleagues may be heading to [Scotland](#) rather than Australia.

Holyrood’s Health and Sport Committee has published a [report](#) questioning the practical effects of the annual HEAT targets, which measure individual health boards’ performance in key areas. Labour Convener Duncan McNeil MSP said;

*“The use of targets in the NHS has long been controversial. Whilst there clearly needs to be some measurement of output and delivery, our committee has questioned if meeting that final percentage of performance targets is really the best use of public money.”*

The number of empty nursing posts in NHS Scotland has [risen](#) by 280 in just the last three months. Spending on expensive [agency staff](#) has increased by 68%. The use of agencies is something highlighted by trade unions in their evidence against the Trade Union Bill.



*“It takes regular staff a lot of time and effort to build relationships with people to nurse them effectively. Staffing a ward with agency workers they don’t know would be distressing for them, and possibly dangerous.”*

John, staff nurse in a child and adolescent mental health unit

Let us work for a better future - drop the trade union bill

UNISON

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

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