

# HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

News from the Socialist Health Association Scotland



April 2012

Welcome to **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.

## Policy Review

We launched the first edition of [Healthier Scotland – The Journal](#) at our fringe meeting with UNISON Scotland at the Scottish Labour Party conference. Lots of positive ideas in the journal to feed into the policy review. We are planning the second edition in the autumn so if you would like to contribute please get in touch.

The [fringe meeting](#) was also well supported with some excellent contributions from speakers and the floor, as well as some new members!

We will be reviewing the ideas so far at the next scheduled SHA Scotland meeting to be held on Thursday 10 May at Glasgow City Chambers starting at 7pm.

There will be a public [SHA meeting](#) in Edinburgh on 9 June on the subject 'Health Inequality - Mental and Physical'. 4pm at Edinburgh [Quaker Meeting House](#) 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL. The keynote speaker is Dr Lynne Friedli, supported by Dr Gerry McCartney.

## Alcohol Policy

SHA Scotland's contemporary [motion](#) to the Scottish Labour Party conference gave critical support to a minimum price for alcohol and we are pleased that the Bill is making positive progress in [Parliament](#). The idea has even begun to garner support from the UK Government.

But minimum pricing is only part of the solution. Further measures are in a new [consultation](#) from Scottish Labour MSP's Richard Simpson and Graham Pearson on their proposed *Alcohol (Public Health & Criminal Justice) (Scotland) Bill*. We would encourage members to respond to this paper.

## Health Inequalities

Some recommended reading on health inequalities from a Scottish perspective:

***The Future of Public Health*** by Phil Hanlon (Glasgow University) & others. It shows how public health must respond to a changing environment.

***The Patient Paradox – Why sexed up medicine is bad for your health*** by Glasgow GP Margaret McCartney. She argues that too much testing of well people and not enough care for the sick worsens health inequalities.

Every £1 spent on support for children in the early years of life will save £9 later according to the Early Years [Task Force](#) appointed by the Scottish Government.

## NHS Scotland

Latest shambles at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary with a patient having to be stitched up by torchlight. Dave Watson's article in the [Daily Record](#) on why it's time to pull the plug on PFI.

Prescriptions dispensed have increased by just 3% since [charging removed](#). Probably reflects those who were previously put off by the price of prescription charges.

Elderly cancer patients are being "under-treated" because assumptions are being made about their ability to cope, [Macmillan Cancer](#) Support has warned. Plus another [survey](#) indicates that one nurse cares for around nine patients on older people's wards compared to general wards, where each nurse cares for around 6.7 patients.

ONE in three Scottish teenagers is binge drinking by the age of 13. [Report](#) shows among six countries with comparable drinking cultures, Scots youngsters came out second in the scale of their alcohol consumption.

A 1% increase in sport and physical activity generate savings to NHS Scotland of £3.5m each year alone. [Good example](#) of the value of preventative spending.

SCOTS from wealthy areas are more likely to receive NHS treatment for heart disease than those from deprived areas, according to [Audit Scotland](#).

47% young people with mental health problems keep it a secret. 'What's on your mind' campaign [launched](#) including resources for schools and youth clubs.

[Infections](#) in Scotland's hospitals have fallen by one-third since 2006.

## Social Care

Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Bill has been [published](#). The legislation seeks to lay the foundations for self-directed support to become a mainstream choice for people receiving care. However, new UNISON Scotland [publication](#) highlights how personalisation is being used to cut social care services.

The Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) [Bill](#), aims to ensure that the legislative framework which supports the provision of 'passport benefits' will not be adversely affected by the UK Government's assault on welfare benefits.

These and other social care issues are covered in UNISON Scotland's social care [manifesto](#) for the local council elections.

[Make a Difference!](#) UNISON Scotland guide to raise awareness of the discrimination faced by Gypsy Travellers and to offer advice to its members in health and social care on effectively engaging with these communities.

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

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