

## Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland Policy Update

24 March 2023

### College Activity:

- On Friday 17 March, the College in Scotland submitted our response to the **Quality Standards for Adult Secondary Mental Health Services consultation**. This was informed by the views of College members which were shared with us through an online survey. College members were then given the opportunity to review our final response before its submission.
- The College in Scotland's Medical Psychotherapy Faculty Executive submitted a response to the **Delivery of Psychological Therapies and Interventions consultation** on Friday 17 March.
- We sent **letters to the three SNP leadership election candidates on behalf of Scotland's Mental Health Partnership**, reminding them of their manifesto pledge to 'increase the direct investment into mental health services by at least 25% and ensure that, by the end of the parliament, 10% of our frontline NHS budget will be invested in mental health.'
- We then **circulated a social media graphic for members of Scotland's Mental Health Partnership** to share on [Twitter](#) to promote the letters that we sent to the three SNP leadership election candidates last week.
- On Wednesday 22 March, the College in Scotland held a **meeting with Paul Sweeney MSP, Scottish Labour's Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Health Inequalities and Sport**. We used this meeting to highlight the growing demand for mental health services in Scotland, the resulting pressure on the mental health workforce and the lack of progress towards parity of esteem between mental and physical health. The meeting also gave us an opportunity to develop our relationship with Scottish Labour and discuss ways in which we can work together to raise awareness of the challenges facing mental health services in Scotland.

- The College in Scotland's **Ethnically Diverse Communities group** met on Wednesday 22 March to discuss their priorities for the coming year.
- And on Thursday 23 March, we hosted a **meeting of Scotland's Mental Health Partnership** which was chaired by our Vice-Chair Jane Morris. This featured presentations from See Me on the findings of their Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Study and Gordon Johnston, Policy Lead for the Partnership, on the next stages for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## Headlines:

- The Scottish Government has [published](#) its **Prison to Rehab Protocol** setting out the process for prison based staff, residential rehabilitation providers and individuals on accessing the Prison to Rehab Pathway.
- The Department of Health and Social Care and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency have issued the [final outcome](#) for the [consultation](#) on original pack dispensing and **supply of medicines containing sodium valproate**.
- Public Health Scotland [published a study](#) on the **impact of minimum unit pricing (MUP) on alcohol health harms** over the first two and a half years of the policy. The [report](#) estimated a 13.4% reduction in deaths and a 4.1% reduction in hospital admissions wholly attributable to alcohol consumption.
- A poll commissioned by the Woodland Trust to investigate **climate anxiety** has [found](#) seven out of ten young people surveyed said they were worried about the environment and 86% felt being around nature had a positive effect on their mental health.
- The Scottish Government has [announced](#) the **reappointment of Alison White as a board member of the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland**. The reappointment will last for four years and will run from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2027.
- **Paul Johnson has joined Public Health Scotland** as its [new chief executive](#).
- The Scottish Government has published a [revised version](#) of the **Scottish Code of Practice for the international recruitment of health and social care personnel**.
- Reform Scotland has published a [report](#) setting out **four immediate priorities for the next First Minister**. Among these, the think tank calls for scrapping the National Care Services, establishing a new social insurance fund for social care and reforming education bodies.

## Parliamentary Monitoring:

### Monday

- The **Cross-Party Group on Autism** held a [meeting](#).
- The Finance and Public Administration Committee published a [report](#) recommending that the **Budget (Scotland) Act 2022** Amendment (No.2) Regulations 2023 [draft] be approved.
- The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee published a [submission](#) relating to **PE1999: Fully implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.

### Wednesday

- The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee published a [report](#) on its consideration of the **Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 Amendment Regulations 2023**.

### Thursday

- The [government motion](#) on the **transition to a wellbeing economy** passed unamended (For 64, Against 54), despite attempts from both the [Conservatives](#) (For 30, Against 88) and [Labour](#) (For 24, Against 94).
- At **FMQs**, Douglas Ross accused the SNP of lying to journalists and the public by saying reports of 30,000 members leaving the party were untrue, noting Peter Murrell and Murray Foote's resignations over the issue. The FM said the SNP was the only mass membership party in Scotland with significantly higher numbers than any opposition party and called on Douglas Ross to publish Scottish Conservative membership numbers. Douglas Ross described the SNP as "crumbling" to which the FM highlighted the party's electoral success and said his decision to focus on party political issues rather than questions of government demonstrated his priorities. Douglas Ross said the FM's legacy was a failure to close the attainment gap, mishandling of ferries contracts, unprecedented drug deaths and high NHS waiting times. The FM pointed to the abolition of prescription charges, minimum unit pricing, the Scottish Child Payment, the Promise and increased university admissions from underprivileged communities, saying she was proud of her record in government.

- Anas Sarwar said Scottish institutions were weaker than when the FM took office, noting NHS wait times and medical staff vacancies and asking what the priority for her successor would be. The FM disagreed, highlighting the creation of Revenue Scotland, Social Security Scotland and the Scottish National Investment Bank as positive developments. She said her government had defended the founding principles of the NHS and worked to mitigate the impact of austerity policies. Anas Sarwar said the SNP had no plan for the future of Scotland and called on the new FM to trigger an election. The FM said the SNP's electoral success showed it had the confidence of the public.
- Alex Cole-Hamilton and the FM recognised the third anniversary of lockdown beginning and paid tribute to those who had died in the pandemic. He noted mental health treatment targets had never been met since their introduction, highlighting cuts to the mental health budget. The FM welcomed a reduction in stigma around mental health and said the mental health budget had doubled in cash terms under the SNP. She said the number of children being treated by CAMHS was higher than ever and wait times had decreased, particularly the longest waits.
- Responding to Fiona Hyslop, the FM welcomed the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Synthesis Report, saying the evidence for urgent climate action was indisputable. She called for cross-party support for action and noted the government's work on loss and damage funding in the global south. Fiona Hyslop said work must be accelerated across all levels of government, which the FM agreed with. She noted Scotland's reduction targets were in line with a 1.5 pathway and called on other countries to set similar targets. Liam Kerr called on the government to reconsider its ban on new nuclear energy production. Nicola Sturgeon said nuclear energy was expensive and produced dangerous waste, highlighting Scotland's wind and green hydrogen potential. Colin Smyth criticised reduced bus and rail journey numbers while the FM said policies like free bus travel for young people were cutting car miles and reducing transport emissions. The FM agreed with Mark Ruskell that a just transition was vital but had to be swift.
- When asked by Stephen Kerr, the FM said the poverty related attainment gap was at a record low, noting the gap in primary literacy and numeracy figures decreased significantly last year, and the rate of positive destinations for school leavers was higher than ever. Stephen Kerr said education in Scotland was poorer than ever, noting reductions in STEM teacher numbers and Scotland's lowered place in international league tables. The FM said overall teacher numbers had increased by 8% during her time in office, with more

teachers per pupil in Scotland than England. Paul McLennan said the Scottish Government could do more to tackle the attainment gap with increased tax powers.

- Jackie Baillie asked what was being done to tackle delayed discharge, which she said had cost the NHS over £1bn since the FM took office. The FM noted £8m in additional funding to support 300 interim care home beds, which had enabled more than 400 discharges, highlighting 96% of people leaving hospital were delayed without discharge. Jackie Baillie highlighted increased waits for cancer treatments and A and E services, while the FM said cancer treatment numbers were increasing.

## Friday

- SPICe has published an [explainer](#) on the **process for appointing the next First Minister**. The blog outlines timings around the nomination, selection and appointment of a new First Minister, and what happens after the Scottish Parliament has selected its nominee.
- The Education, Children and Young People Committee has [written](#) to ARC Scotland to provide information on the **Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill**, following their attendance at a committee meeting on Wednesday 22 February.
- The Education, Children and Young People Committee has [written](#) to COSLA to request information on the financial memorandum of the **Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill**.