

Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland Policy Update

28 April 2023

College Activity:

- On Wednesday 29 March, the College in Scotland submitted a response to the first draft of the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Action Plan**. We included a section which highlighted the lack of time stakeholders were given to engage; due to the extremely tight turnaround this response was written based on input from Officers, Policy and Workforce Leads. As a College, we represent 1400 psychiatrists in Scotland with a vast range of expertise and experience. We stated that, in the future, we would like to be given the time to properly engage with our full membership. Particularly as this workforce action plan has the potential to have a significant impact on the way our members work.
- On Thursday 30 March, a meeting was held to consider the **actions from the latest meeting of Scotland's Mental Health Partnership**. These include the production of a collective response to the Scottish Government's Review of National Outcomes and the planning of a conference themed around the meaning of prevention. Following this meeting, a letter was sent to Maree Todd MSP on behalf of the Partnership, to congratulate her on her appointment as the new Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, and seek an early meeting as she takes over the portfolio.
- On Friday 21 April, a **letter was sent to the new Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy** on behalf of the College in Scotland's Addictions Faculty. The letter invites the new Minister to meet with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scottish Addictions Faculty. It also includes questions from members who attended the recent Addictions Faculty Conference.
- On Tuesday 25 April, we received a **response to the Partnership's letter to the new Minister for Social Care, Wellbeing and Sport**.

The Minister has agreed to attend the next meeting on Thursday 22 June.

- On Wednesday 26 April, the College in Scotland **met with the Chief Executive, Director of Influence and Change, and Senior Policy and Research Officer of SAMH**. We spoke about ways in which we can support one another's work and discussed the possibility of delivering a joint mental health campaign at some point over the next year.
- On Thursday 27 April, we sent **letters to the new Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care and Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport**, congratulating them on their recent appointment, highlighting issues facing mental health services in Scotland and inviting them to meet with representatives of the College.

Looking Ahead:

- We are expecting the **next draft of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, and potentially the Delivery Plan and other supporting documents, to be circulated to stakeholders shortly. We will consult with members of the College in Scotland before submitting a response.
- The Scottish Policy and Media Officers are planning to arrange **catch-ups with each of the College in Scotland's Faculty Chairs**, with a view to better understanding current priorities and the support they require.
- The **next meeting of the Devolved Council** is due to take place on Thursday 25 May. The intention is to use this meeting to focus on the Scottish psychiatry workforce report, as well as the ongoing NHS transformation and values based healthcare work.

Headlines:

- **Humza Yousaf was elected as the new leader of the SNP on Monday 27 March**. He was then nominated to become the sixth First Minister of Scotland following a parliamentary vote on Tuesday 28 March and sworn in at the Court of Session the following day. He has outlined what his key priorities will be as First Minister, including combatting the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, recovery and reform of the NHS, and strengthening the wellbeing economy.
- On Wednesday 29 March, **Humza Yousaf announced his new ten-person cabinet**. Michael Matheson has been appointed as the

Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care and Maree Todd has been appointed as the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport.

- BMA Scotland, NHS Scotland Employers and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges have [announced](#) the publication of the findings of a **survey of senior hospital doctors' retirement plans and work commitments**. It found nearly half of senior hospital doctors aged 50 or over in Scotland plan to retire early or reduce their work commitment due to disillusionment, burnout and lack of engagement in their jobs.
- The Scottish Government has [published](#) the **final report of the National Review of Eating Disorder Services Implementation Group**. The report outlines the progress that has been made and shows NHS Boards received nearly £4.5m in emergency funding in 2021-22 to help meet the needs of eating disorder patients.
- The Scottish Government has [published](#) a report on **Adult Neurodevelopmental Pathways**, including actions, outcomes and recommendations for pathfinder sites in Scotland. It provides background and context to practical support and mentorship and details innovative and new ways to improve experiences and outcomes of autistic adults, adults with ADHD and those with co-occurring neurodevelopment conditions before, during and after diagnosis.
- Public Health Scotland has published the latest [quarterly report](#) on **waiting times for people accessing specialist drug and alcohol treatment services between October and December**. Overall, it found 91% of referrals to community-based services met the Scottish Government's target for 90% of people referred to begin treatment within three weeks.
- The Scottish Government has [published](#) an **introductory guide to the Time Space Compassion principles and approach**; a relationship and person-centred approach to improving suicidal crisis. It has been developed for use by people and services who regularly come into contact and support people experiencing suicidal crisis.
- The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee has [written](#) to the First Minister, Humza Yousaf, seeking **clarification on the Scottish Government's position regarding the planned timetable for completing Stage 1 scrutiny of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill**.
- The second **Scottish National Action Plan on human rights (SNAP2)** has been [published](#), setting out 54 practical actions to be delivered by Scottish public bodies, civil organisations and rights holders.

- Education Scotland has [published](#) its report on the **Creative Wellbeing Fund**, which highlighted the innovative ways school pupils got creative to support their wellbeing.
- The Scottish Government has [published](#) a report on the **Growing Up in Scotland study**. One of its key findings suggests that life events in general were found to be the most influential for mental health compared with the other health and wellbeing outcomes.
- The Scottish Government's Health Workforce Directorate has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to highlight the launch of a short, **informal consultation relating to the 2021-22 Programme for Government commitment to increase the number of medical students by 500 over the lifetime of this parliament**.
- Public Health Scotland has [published](#) a **review on the types of interventions used to reduce risk of drug harms**, including death, among adults during transition of care and between services.
- RCN Scotland has [written](#) to Maree Todd to raise serious concerns about the **National Care Service Bill** and request a meeting to discuss these concerns and nursing workforce shortages in social care and community health.
- The Scottish Conservatives have reiterated calls for Humza Yousaf to scrap **National Care Service** proposals after information obtained through a [Freedom of Information request](#) showed the number of civil servants working on the plans had quadrupled from 40 in February 2022 to 166 in February 2023, at a cost of £7m.
- Anas Sarwar has announced his **new Scottish Labour frontbench team**. Jackie Baillie has been appointed as the Shadow Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care and Drugs Policy and Paul Sweeney has been appointed as the Mental Health and Veterans spokesperson.
- The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland has [published](#) a **review of advocacy planning in Scotland**.
- Shirley-Anne Somerville has [confirmed](#) the Scottish Government will launch a **legal challenge against the Section 35 Order on the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Act**. The petition has now been [published](#).
- Maree Todd has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee regarding a **timetable for the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill**. Noting she will be responsible for the bill going forward, the minister reiterated the government's commitment to a National Care Service and said it will be using time in the summer ahead of a Stage 1 debate to find compromise and reach consensus with those who have raised concerns during scrutiny. The

government will therefore instruct the Minister for Parliamentary Business to seek parliament's approval to extend the bill's Stage 1 deadline beyond June 2023.

- Humza Yousaf [announced](#) a **policy prospectus setting out the outcomes his government aims to achieve by 2026**. This focuses on three 'missions': tackling poverty, growing a greener and fairer economy, and improving public services.
- More than 30 charities and public health bodies have [called](#) for better access to recovery services and an increase in the minimum price of alcohol to tackle **alcohol-related deaths in Scotland**.
- The Scottish Government has [announced](#) an additional £15m in funding for the **Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing fund** for adults. The investment will be shared by projects which address mental health issues, social isolation and loneliness.
- The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and over 30 other organisations have [called](#) for an emergency response by the Scottish Government to tackle **rising alcohol deaths**.

Parliamentary Monitoring:

Friday 31 March

- The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee has [published](#) a submission from the Scottish Government on **PE2008: Provide funding for a separate mental health A&E for children**.
- The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee has [published](#) a submission from Humza Yousaf, when still in his capacity as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, on **PE1871: Full review of mental health services**. The submission provides information on a number of workstreams relating to suicide prevention and the establishment of Mental Health Assessment Units.

Thursday 20 April

- Elena Whitham, Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy, has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to highlight that the publication of the **annual National Records of Scotland (NRS) Drug Death National Statistics for 2022** will occur in August 2023 rather than July 2023.

Friday 21 April

- Maree Todd has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee regarding the £15m funding announcement for the third year of the **Adult Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund**.

Tuesday 25 April

- The Finance and Public Administration Committee has [written](#) to Maree Todd to express its increasing concern at the lack of information available on the **financial implications of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill**. The committee repeats its call for a revised Financial Memorandum to be provided no later than Friday 12 May.

FMQs – Thursday 27 April

- **Stephanie Callaghan asked what urgent action the government was taking to reduce deaths and harms from alcohol.**
- The FM said the government was committed to reducing alcohol related harms, noting minimum unit pricing had been shown to have saved lives. He outlined the development of alcohol treatment guidance and funding for drug and alcohol partnerships in communities. On alcohol brief interventions, he said the programme had been successfully implemented across Scotland and current delivery was being reviewed to ensure needs were being met.
- Carol Mochan noted alcohol related deaths were significantly higher in deprived communities. The FM refuted the suggestion the government was letting these communities down, noting Labour opposition to the introduction of minimum pricing.
- Willie Rennie said minimum pricing rates had to be reviewed to reflect rising prices. The FM said the scheme was under review, with this to be completed in late 2023.
- **Jackie Baillie asked what the government was doing to ensure published NHS wait times were accurate.**
- The FM said these were collated and quality assured by Public Health Scotland and were held to the National Statistics code of practice. Jackie Baillie noted senior clinicians and the UK Statistics Authority agreed statistics published on NHS Inform were misleading, using median waiting times and mixing emergency and urgent care. The FM said changes had been made since these concerns were raised, including details about how statistics were gathered and links to full statistics on the website. He emphasised recent reductions in outpatient appointment wait times.