

## Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland Policy Update

6 December 2023

### Contact:

The following update, where possible, includes links to the college activity and policy headlines which are referenced.

If you would like any further information, or a copy of any of the consultation responses, policy briefings or letters referenced in this update, then please contact Matthew James at [matthew.james@rcpsych.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.james@rcpsych.ac.uk).

### College Activity:

- On 13 October, the RCPsych in Scotland published a **statement to highlight members' concerns regarding the ongoing implementation of ICD-11 diagnostic coding across Scotland**. The statement calls for no obligation to be put on members to transfer to ICD-11 until training is made more widely accessible and the necessary systems are in place to allow implementation to be useful.
- On 23 October, the RCPsych in Scotland submitted a **response to the Commissioner for Older People consultation**. This was informed by the views of the Scottish Old Age Faculty, who were supportive of the proposal.
- On 24 October, the Scottish Government published its **Winter Preparedness Plan for 2023/2024**. The RCPsych in Scotland took part in the consultation process during the development of this plan, which commits to further support for forensic mental health services and the delivery of another mental health bed occupancy survey.
- On 31 October, the RCPsych in Scotland published our new **State of the Nation Report: The Psychiatric Workforce in Scotland**.

- The team in Scotland wrote to various stakeholders across Scotland to share the report, which has been well received.
  - The Chair of the Scottish Government's Psychiatry Working Group has responded to confirm that they intend to work with us to take forward as many of the recommendations as possible.
- On 7 November, the Scottish Government published the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan**, as well as a [Workforce Action Plan](#), [Outcomes Framework](#) and [Evidence Summary](#).
  - The publication of these new plans was announced during a [Ministerial Statement on Mental Health](#).
  - In advance of this statement, the RCPsych in Scotland shared policy briefings with MSPs which summarised the findings of [our new workforce report](#), our recent YouGov poll, and our campaign for the Scottish Government to meet its 10% mental health spending target.
  - This led to extensive parliamentary coverage during the debate which followed the announcement. The work of the RCPsych in Scotland was referenced by four different MSPs,, representing three of Scotland's political parties, including the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, who committed to work together with the College on the recommendations of our new workforce report.
- On 16 November, the RCPsych in Scotland held its **Devolved Council meeting**. This featured a presentation on RCPsych data support and analysis for Scotland, an update on the results of a recent Psychiatric Trainees' Committee (PTC) survey on trainees' views, an update on alcohol policy from Peter Rice and a discussion of the College in Scotland's response to the recent [HMICS Thematic Review of Policing Mental Health in Scotland](#).
- On 17 November, the RCPsych in Scotland shared a survey with members of our Child and Adolescent Faculty to gather their **experiences of clozapine use**. This is based on a recommendation from a [recent Mental Welfare Commission report](#).
- On 21 November, the RCPsych in Scotland submitted a **response to the Scottish Government's Minimum Unit Pricing consultation**. The Scottish Addictions Faculty endorsed [SHAAP's position on this matter](#), which recommended the continuation of minimum unit pricing, uprating the price per unit to at least 65p. We have also echoed SHAAP's call to introduce an automatic uprating mechanism. This would mean that MUP maintains its effect and its relative level of affordability going forward.

- On 28 November, the Scottish Government published **Scotland's Self-Harm Strategy and Action Plan (2023-27)**. The RCPsych in Scotland Liaison Faculty was involved in the consultation process for this strategy.

## Looking Ahead:

- On 7 December, representatives of the Scottish Intellectual Disability Faculty will be **meeting with the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport**.
- On 11 December, representatives of the Scottish Addictions Faculty will be **meeting with the Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy**.
- On 22 January, representatives of the Child and Adolescent Faculty will be **meeting with Miles Briggs MSP**.
- The RCPsych in Scotland will be responding to **the Scottish Government's consultation on a National Specification for the Care and Treatment of Eating Disorders in Scotland**. Responses are due by 26 January.
- The RCPsych in Scotland is expecting a consultation paper to be published seeking views on the **Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill** before the end of 2023.
- The **Scottish Budget** will be announced on 19 December. Ahead of this announcement, the RCPsych in Scotland will be pushing for the Scottish Government to fulfil its commitments relating to mental health spending.

## Headlines:

### COVID Inquiry

- The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry has published [guidance](#) for witnesses and others attending its upcoming health and social care impact hearings. The information [relates](#) to what those who are called to give oral evidence can expect, as well as information about the hearing and viewing venues for the impact hearings.
- In the first hearing of the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry, The Royal College of Nursing [said](#) nurses were affected by almost every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic and said the Scottish Government's strategic decisions during the pandemic had a physical, mental and emotional impact.

## Waiting Lists

- At the SNP conference, the First Minister [announced](#) an extra £300m to help cut NHS waiting lists by 100,000 patients by 2026.
- The First Minister then [wrote](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to provide further detail on this announcement.

## Council Tax Freeze

- The First Minister has [confirmed](#) plans for a council tax freeze will be fully funded by the Scottish Government after local authorities said they hadn't been consulted about the policy.

## Mental Health Detentions

- The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) has [released](#) a [report](#) detailing the rising number of detentions for mental ill health in Scotland and the falling of safeguards. The report shows there were 6,713 detentions in 2022-23, up from 4,530 in 2013-14.

## Air Pollution

- The Scottish Government has [published](#) a report reviewing the existing evidence on health impacts associated with low-level air pollution in countries with levels of ambient concentrations comparable to Scotland. The evidence identified in the review primarily focused on mental health and wellbeing, cognition, and dementia; however, the existing literature has extensively documented other health effects including CVD, respiratory and cancers for many years.

## Perinatal Mental Health

- The Royal College of Midwives has [called](#) for young mothers to receive greater perinatal mental health support after a report by the Maternal Mental Health Alliance and Children's and Young people's Mental Health Coalition found rising trends in postnatal depression among teenage mothers.
- The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee has [written](#) to Maree Todd MSP requesting a number of updates in relation to its short

inquiry into perinatal mental health which concluded at the beginning of 2022.

### **UNCRC Incorporation**

- The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee has published submissions from [Social Work Scotland](#) and [Dr Andrew Tickell](#) from Glasgow Caledonian University regarding Reconsideration of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.
- Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP has [written](#) to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee summarising the committee's recommendations and conclusions regarding the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill reconsideration.

### **Winter Mortality**

- National Records of Scotland has [published](#) winter mortality in Scotland statistics for winter 2022-23. The findings show 24,427 deaths were registered in Scotland between December 2022 and March 2023, representing the highest number of winter deaths in over thirty years.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

- The Scottish Government has [published](#) the National Mission on Drugs annual report for 2022-23. The report measures the progress made between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 by national government, local government and third sector partners towards reducing drug deaths and improving the lives of those impacted by drugs in Scotland.
- Public Health Scotland (PHS) has [published](#) a policy briefing on alcohol. The briefing sets out the range of evidence-based actions that could be taken to prevent and reduce harm from alcohol, building on the progress made through minimum unit pricing.
- Audrey Nicoll MSP, acting on behalf of the cross-committee on drug deaths, has [written](#) to Elena Whitham with some further questions following on from the cross-committee meeting on tackling drug deaths and drug harm on Thursday 2 November. Noting the next meeting of the cross-committee on tackling drug deaths and drug harm is expected to be in about six months' time, a response is requested by the end of January.

- The Scottish Government has [announced](#) that the Routes youth programme, which provides support for young people affected by substance use in their family, is being expanded to six new areas of Scotland.

### **Funding for Mental Health Services**

- The Auditor General for Scotland has [written](#) to the Public Audit Committee regarding the impact of the 2022 Emergency Budget Review on adult mental health spending.

### **National Care Service**

- Maree Todd MSP has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to provide follow-up information from her evidence to the committee on Tuesday 3 October regarding the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. The letter covers information on the summer regional co-design events, NCS spend to date, the NCS charter, and palliative care.
- The Fraser of Allander Institute has [published](#) a [report](#) on the potential for innovation clusters in Scotland's social care sector and the role of public sector investment in supporting such development. Focusing on the possible role of the National Care Service (NCS) in stimulating innovation in social care delivery, the report found there is a clear need for better data usage in the NCS.
- The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee has [written](#) to Maree Todd regarding the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill. Noting the committee agreed to postpone the Stage 1 deadline for consideration of the bill to 31 January 2024 with the intention of scheduling a Stage 1 debate on the bill in December 2023, the committee raises concerns that there is insufficient information around amendments required for the bill due to the proposed shift to a model of shared accountability.

### **Trans and Non-Binary Healthcare Needs**

- The Scottish Government has published its [Non-Binary Equality Action Plan](#) and associated [equality impact assessment](#). The five-year plan includes actions to support specific research on the experiences of non-binary people in Scotland, fund training for fertility preservation providers on trans and non-binary healthcare

needs, and meaningfully include non-binary people in decision-making by making processes accessible.

### **Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) Bill**

- Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP has [expressed](#) disappointment after her Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) Bill was [voted down](#) during a Stage 1 Debate at the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 23 November. The legislation would have required councils to put plans in place for every disabled young person as they become an adult, but the bill was voted down by 90 votes to 19. Voting against the plans, the Scottish Government said it was still committed to improving transitions for disabled young people and confirmed it would publish its National Transition to Adulthood strategy by the end of next year.

### **Workforce**

- Shona Robison MSP has [confirmed](#) Scotland's public sector workforce will have to shrink due to tight budgets and inflation-driven pay deals. Speaking on the BBC's Sunday Show, the Finance Secretary said the Chancellor's Autumn Statement had put more pressure on her spending plans.
- The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has [warned](#) of a growing mental health crisis amongst nursing staff, with a 98% increase in nursing staff telling the RCN's advice line during an initial call that they're having suicidal thoughts.

### **Intellectual Disability**

- Maree Todd MSP has [written](#) to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to provide an update on the Coming Home Implementation programme, led jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA, which aimed to reduce delayed discharges and inappropriate out-of-area placements for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs by March 2024.

## **Parliamentary Monitoring:**

**FMQs – Thursday 26 October**

- Jackie Baillie asked what steps were being taken to eradicate long waiting times for NHS treatment.
  - The First Minister noted the impact of the pandemic on the health service and highlighted reductions to waiting times had been made. He said in each of the next three years the government would provide an extra £100 to accelerate treatment for patients and reduce inpatient waiting lists.

### **FMQs – Thursday 23 November**

- Paul Sweeney MSP called for further support for the delivery of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
  - The First Minister said the Scottish Government would work to see what more it could do to fund mental health support.
- Kenneth Gibson MSP sought a response to the Autumn Statement. He argued Scotland's public services would be harmed by the budget.
  - The First Minister agreed the UK Government had failed to provide necessary funding for devolved government, public services and infrastructure. He said Scotland's budget would be developed in line with principles of equality, community and opportunity.