

Public Health Bulletin

September 2025



Public Health Reports Digest

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Welcome to the latest Public Health Reports Digest compiled by NHS Fife Library & Knowledge Service which highlights recent publications and journal articles which we hope you find of interest.

This Current Awareness Bulletin (CAB) is part of a national programme of bulletins produced in partnership by NHS boards across Scotland. Every attempt has been made to include and acknowledge the author and publisher within all links. The information contained in these bulletins is for educational purposes only. We have endeavoured to ensure the information is up to date and correct and that creator and publisher information is given where relevant.

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In the Media, Recent Reports, and From the Journals

Items from the media, recently published reports and articles from the journals are listed alphabetically in topic order.

Alcohol	Environment	Obesity & Healthy Eating	Sexual Health
Cancer	Health & Social care	Older People	Smoking
Children & Young People	Health Inequalities	Pharmacy	Suicide & Self Harm
Covid -19	Health Protection	Physical Activity	Woman & Infant Health
Dental Health	Medical Conditions	Population Statistics	
Drugs	Mental Wellbeing	Public Health	

Public Health Bulletin – September 2025

Alcohol

N/A

Cancer

Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy activity

Public Health Scotland, 4th September 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports on systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT) activity across NHS services in Scotland. Treatment activity includes the weekly number of appointments and the monthly and annual number of appointments and patients receiving treatment. The data has been visualised on a dashboard on the PHS website.”

From hospital to community: International lessons on moving care closer to home

Nuffield Trust, 16th September 2025

“The new 10 Year Health Plan for England promises to shift more care from hospitals into the community, but history shows how hard this ambition is to deliver. This new report looks to Denmark and Ireland, two countries pursuing bold reforms to rebalance care, to understand what it really takes and provide a set of lessons for England.”

Dementia-like clumps found in cells before cancer strikes

Science Daily, 22nd September 2025

“Researchers found that pancreatic pre-cancer cells mimic dementia by forming clumps of proteins due to faulty recycling processes. These insights could shed light on why pancreatic cancer develops so aggressively and why it is difficult to treat. By studying overlaps with neurological diseases, scientists hope to identify new strategies for prevention and treatment.”

Covid -19

Viral respiratory diseases (including influenza and COVID-19) in Scotland surveillance report

Public Health Scotland, 4th September 2025

“COVID-19: COVID-19 laboratory-confirmed cases have increased slightly across surveillance systems. Test positivity via laboratory surveillance increased from 9.3% (Week 32) to 10.7% (Week 35) although remains low in comparison to any point during past 2 seasons. There has been a statistically significant increase to 17.1%, from 12% in the previous four-week period, via CARI surveillance.”

What to expect after the COVID-19 vaccine for parents and carers of children aged 6 months to 11 years - winter 2025

Public Health Scotland, 23rd September 2025

“A leaflet explaining what to expect after the COVID-19 vaccine for parents and carers of children aged 6 months to 11 years.”

Children & Young People

Energy drinks to be banned for under-16s in England

BBC News, 2nd September 2025

“The government is planning a new law in England to stop anyone under the age of 16 buying energy drinks such as Red Bull, Monster and Prime from shops, restaurants, cafes, vending machines and online.”

Children to be offered chickenpox vaccine on NHS

BBC News, 29th August 2025

All young children in the UK will be offered a free chickenpox vaccine by the NHS from January next year. It will be given as two doses, at 12 and 18 months of age, combined with the existing MMR jab which protects against measles, mumps and rubella.

How does emotional support affect young people’s mental health?

Health Foundation, August 2025

“This briefing highlights the challenges faced by many young people, parents and caregivers, and identifies policy changes to support stronger relationships between young people and their families. We call for greater attention to young people’s health within policy areas across government, and increased support for those parenting adolescents.”

Pharmacies to offer toddler flu spray vaccination

BBC News, 24th September 2025

“Thousands of pharmacies in England will offer free NHS flu spray doses to toddlers for the first time this year. The vaccination is given via a child's nose and two and three-year-olds could previously access them at their GP surgery.”

Environment

PHS Climate Impact Indicators (CII) Feasibility Report

Public Health Scotland, 16th September 2025

“The Climate Impact Indicators (CII) Feasibility Report aims to inform Public Health Scotland’s work to produce a set of climate health impact indicators and supports PHS’ Climate Change and Sustainability programme. The report explores the feasibility of developing indicators to assess the impacts of climate change on the health of the population in Scotland.”

Heatwaves: how air pollution is worsening effects on health

BMJ, 9th September 2025

“The year has seen record temperatures in many countries. Heat combined with air pollution is a health emergency that requires new approaches from doctors.”

Dental Health

N/A

Drugs

Drug-related deaths in Scotland reported for 2024

Public Health Scotland, 2nd September 2025

“The annual report for drug related deaths from the National Records of Scotland, published today, shows that there were 1017 drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2024; a decrease of 13% (155 deaths) compared to 2023.”

Consensus approach on prevention of substance use harm among children and young people

Public Health Scotland, 9th September 2025

“Public Health Scotland set out to establish consensus and describe the key themes that contribute to a national approach to substance use harm prevention among children and young people in Scotland.”

Cannabis use may quadruple diabetes risk

Science Daily, 14th September 2025

“A massive study of over 4 million adults has revealed that cannabis use may nearly quadruple the risk of developing diabetes. Despite some earlier suggestions that cannabis might have metabolic benefits, this large analysis found significantly higher diabetes rates among users, even after adjusting for other health factors.”

Interventions to reduce harms from cocaine

Public Health Scotland, 16th September 2025

“This scoping review gives an overview of the highly-synthesised evidence on how to reduce harms associated with cocaine use.”

Health & Social Care

Mind the gap: public perceptions of the NHS and social care

Health Foundation, September 2025

“Public views of the NHS remain negative overall, but there are some signs that perceptions are slowly improving. People’s experiences of their local NHS services are notably more positive than views of how the health service is performing overall – but these positive experiences and recent performance improvements are not seen as proof of wider progress.”

The GP workforce paradox: more trained GPs, fewer in NHS general practice

The Health Foundation, 18th September 2025

“Successive governments have pledged to expand the number of GPs in England. On paper, they have succeeded: the number of doctors licensed to practise as a GP has steadily increased over the past decade. However, new research published in the BMJ reveals a troubling disconnect – more GPs are being trained, but proportionally fewer are working in NHS general practice.”

Health Inequalities

Hunger in the UK 2025

Trussell, 10th September 2025

“This research sets out compelling evidence that despite falling inflation, there has been no progress on hunger in the UK. There are concerning signs that the levels of hardship people are facing are deepening, and severe hardship is becoming entrenched in communities across the UK.”

Health Protection

Scotland's flu vaccine programme protects those most at risk from severe illness

Public Health Scotland, 17th September 2025

"This year's winter vaccine programme has started, with a clear message to all those who are being invited: 'If you're offered the flu vaccine, you've got a reason to get it.'"

Medical Conditions

Ending HIV transmission in Scotland by 2030 - HIV transmission elimination delivery plan 2023-26: progress report to March 2025

Public Health Scotland, 26th August 2025

"This publication provides an update on the HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan (2023-26). The update is on behalf of the Scottish Health Protection Network Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus HIV Transmission Elimination Delivery Plan Implementation Group."

Scottish Renal Registry Annual report 2025

Public Health Scotland, 9th September 2025

"This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents the Scottish Renal Registry (SRR) 2025 annual national report. The SRR aims to improve the care of patients with kidney failure who are treated with kidney replacement therapy (KRT) or conservative care."

Huntington's disease successfully treated for first time

BBC News, 24th September 2025

"An emotional research team became tearful as they described how data shows the disease was slowed by 75% in patients."

Mental Wellbeing

How does emotional support affect young people's mental health?

Health Foundation, August 2025

"This briefing highlights the challenges faced by many young people, parents and caregivers, and identifies policy changes to support stronger relationships between young people and their families. We call for greater attention to young people's health within policy areas across government, and increased support for those parenting adolescents."

Can meditation apps really reduce stress, anxiety, and insomnia?

Science Daily, 22nd September 2025

"Meditation apps are revolutionizing mental health, providing easy access to mindfulness practices and new opportunities for scientific research. With the help of wearables and AI, these tools can now deliver personalized training tailored to individual needs."

Obesity & Healthy Eating

Ageing, Nutrition, and Infection: The Forgotten Triad

Dominic Adam Worku. *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* 2025 86:9, 1-25

<https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2024.0873>

"In this short review, we will highlight the vicious cycle of infection and malnutrition, which is prevalent in the elderly. In doing so we will highlight the relevant contributions of both macronutrient and micronutrient deficiency to immune system dysfunction highlighting the need to research and modify nutrition in the elderly to improve health-related outcomes and protect healthcare systems from anticipated rises in the ageing population."

How dehydration secretly fuels anxiety and health problems

Science Daily, 23rd September 2025

“Not drinking enough water could intensify stress responses. Researchers found that under-hydrated individuals had cortisol levels more than 50% higher during stressful situations. Poor hydration didn’t make participants feel thirstier, but it did trigger biological signs of strain. Keeping a water bottle handy could help manage stress and safeguard health.”

Older People

Health care for older adults

The Health Foundation, August 2025

“The Commonwealth Fund’s 2024 International Health Policy surveyed nearly 17,000 people aged 65 and older across 10 countries about their health and care. More than 1,500 people in the UK responded (and the sample was representative of the UK population).”

Injectable Alzheimer’s drug lecanemab approved in US for use at home

BMJ, 8th September 2025

“Lecanemab (Leqembi), the first drug to show an ability to slow cognitive decline in Alzheimer’s disease, will be available for home use in the US from 6 October, following the approval of a weekly subcutaneous injectable version by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).”

Supporting Disabled Older Workers

Centre for Aging Better, 15th September 2025

“Explore the findings of our co-produced research, platforming experiences of work for Disabled older people and setting out opportunities for change.”

Ageing, Nutrition, and Infection: The Forgotten Triad

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Pharmacy

Prescribing practice and dispensing pharmacy open data Data for April to June 2025

Public Health Scotland, 9th September 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) contains data on prescribing activity in the community in an open data format. Please note that the issue with Prescriber Type 'Community Pharmacist' returning 0 items has now been resolved. Data has been revised accordingly from May 2023 onwards.”

Community pharmacy contractor activity Data for April to June 2025

Public Health Scotland, 9th September 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides Community Pharmacy activity and direct pharmaceutical care services data. The data is in two formats - Open Data and an interactive dashboard.”

Community pharmacy explained

King's Fund, 11th September 2025

“This explainer looks at the community pharmacy sector in England, explaining how pharmacies are contracted and funded, the types of services they provide and future trends in the sector.”

Physical Activity

N/A

Population Statistics

Chronic pain waiting times Quarter ending 30 June 2025

Public Health Scotland, 9th September 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports on the number of referrals to a pain management service, the length of time patients waited to be seen at a first outpatient appointment, the number of patients waiting at the end of the quarter and the length of their wait.”

Public Health

Innovating for a healthier Scotland

Public Health Scotland, 22nd September 2025

“To mark the start of National Innovation Week, Public Health Scotland (PHS) is proud to launch our new Innovation Framework – a roadmap to embed innovation at the heart of how we work, collaborate, and improve health outcomes for the Scottish population.”

PHS research strategy: year one action plan 2025-26

Public Health Scotland, 23rd Scotland 2025

Sexual Health

N/A

Smoking

N/A

Suicide & Self Harm

N/A

Women's & Infant Health

National maternity and perinatal audit: State of the Nation

NMPA, September 2025

Principles for supporting women's choices in maternity care

Nursing and Midwifery Council, September 2025

“The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and its partners are encouraging maternity leaders across the UK to embed new principles designed to support safer, more person-centred care for women and babies.”

Breaking the cycle: Addressing systemic failures in PCOS diagnosis and management

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) 8th September 2025

“Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) affects an estimated one in eight women and those assigned female at birth, making it one of the most common hormonal conditions. Yet it remains poorly understood, underdiagnosed, and inconsistently managed across the health system.”

iHV publishes evaluation report of the iHV PIMH Champions Programme

Institute of Health Visiting, 9th September 2025

“The iHV is delighted to share the very positive findings of a mixed-methods evaluation of their flagship Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Champions Training Programme. Results suggest that the Programme is a credible, effective, and scalable approach to workforce development and system transformation.”

Paracetamol and pregnancy – reminder that taking paracetamol during pregnancy remains safe

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, 23rd September 2025

“There is no evidence that taking paracetamol during pregnancy causes autism in children • pregnant women should be advised to continue to follow existing NHS guidance and speak to their healthcare professional if they have questions about any medication during pregnancy.”

How to avoid period leaks - the pros and cons of cups, pants and tampons

BBC News, 24th September 2025

“Alongside these traditional options, there's now a wider range of products available, including reusable options such as menstrual cups, period pants and washable pads”

