

Public Health Bulletin

January 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.

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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 – January 2025

Alcohol

N/A

Cancer

Glass of milk a day cuts bowel cancer risk – study

BBC News, 8th January 2025

“A large UK study has found further evidence that people with more calcium in their diet - equivalent to a glass of milk a day - can help reduce their risk of bowel cancer.”

[Study Available](#)

Bowel cancer prediction test for IBD patients 90% accurate

BBC News, 30 January 2025

“The researchers used tissue samples from IBD patients - but it is hoped their method can be used to develop a simple blood test to identify those IBD patients most at risk.”

Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy activity

Public Health Scotland, 30 January 2025

“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.”

Covid -19

[Viral respiratory diseases \(including influenza and COVID-19\) in Scotland surveillance report](#)

Public Health Scotland, 9th January 2025

“Influenza-related hospital admissions in Scotland, which reached a record high of 1,596 in week 52, have decreased by 36% to 1,021 in week 1. Similar sharp declines in laboratory-confirmed influenza case numbers were observed following the week 52 peak.”

[Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy activity](#)

Public Health Scotland, 9th January 2025

“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.”

[Keyhole op used to remove head tumour in UK first](#)

BBC News, 20th January 2025

“Many of these types of tumour would have previously been considered inoperable because of where they are situated in an area called the cavernous sinus.”

Children & Young People

Treat eating disorders as an emergency, MPs urge

BBC News, 22nd January 2025

“And greater awareness about different types of eating disorders and how they affect males and females of all ages and ethnicities is urgently needed. NHS England acknowledged services were under extreme pressure but said all mental-health trusts now offered teenagers and young people early help.”

Environment

Understanding and addressing inequalities in air quality: summary

GOV.UK, 15 January 2025

“Although air pollution is harmful to everyone, some people are more affected because of where they live, the level of air pollution they are exposed to in their day-to-day lives, or their susceptibility to health problems caused by air pollution.”

Dental Health

N/A

Drugs

N/A

Health & Social Care

Technology enabled care: Support provided or funded by local authorities in Scotland 2023/24

Public Health Scotland, 21st January 2025

“This annual release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides information on Technology Enabled Care funded by Local Authorities in Scotland throughout financial year 2023/24. Technology Enabled Care allows people to live safer and independent lives by reducing the risks of falls and vulnerable situations through technology and equipment.”

How improvement can help NHS productivity

The Health Foundation, 10th December 2025

“For productivity improvement to be seen as a worthy goal in the eyes of staff and patients, a new narrative is needed that frames it as a path to boosting or maintaining care quality.”

National therapeutic indicators data visualisation, Data to September 2024

Public Health Scotland, 28 January 2025

“There are currently 75 primary care, and 17 secondary care prescribing indicators detailed in the publication. The example indicator above shows that the number of females prescribed valproate per 1,000 list size of females aged 0 to 54 has decreased overtime, from 1.38 in July to September 2022 to 1.10 in July to September 2024.”

Designing inclusive and trusted digital health services with people and communities

The King’s Fund, 30 January 2025

“Increased use of digital tools provides an unprecedented opportunity to apply modern approaches to understanding patient needs and behaviour to the NHS. In future, digital tools could be used to gather sophisticated insights to better tailor services around specific groups.”

Health Inequalities

[Bridging the gap: A guide to making health inequalities a strategic priority for NHS leaders](#)

Royal College of Physicians, December 2024

[Building Health Equity: The role of the property sector in improving health](#)

Institute of Health Equity, 2025

[UK Poverty 2025](#)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 29 January 2025

“This report sets out the nature of poverty in the UK in the run-up to 2024's General Election. It also sets out the scale of action necessary for the Government to deliver the change it has promised.”

Health Protection

[Surge in vomiting bug keeps pressure on hospitals](#)

BBC News, 23 January 2025

“Hospitals in England have been “hit by a surge” of norovirus - the winter vomiting bug - adding to mounting pressure on the NHS, health officials say. Data shows there were 784 patients a day in hospitals with the virus last week. This is up almost 80% on the same period the year before.”

[Laboratory reports of norovirus in Scotland](#)

Public Health Scotland, 26 January 2025

“This report presents provisional information on laboratory reports of norovirus in Scotland up to the end of week 4 (week ending 26 January 2025) compared to the same time last year and the average for the same time period of years 2015 to 2019.”

Surveillance of hepatitis C in Scotland

Public Health Scotland, 28 January 2025

“Progress on elimination of hepatitis C as a major public health concern: 2024 update.”

National quarterly report of tuberculosis in Scotland: Provisional data for quarter 4, 2024

Public Health Scotland, 30 January 2025

“This release presents provisional data from the national enhanced surveillance system for TB in Scotland. This is in addition to an annual TB surveillance report which is published by PHS.”

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

Public Health Scotland, 30 January 2025

“Overall influenza-related hospital admissions in Scotland decreased by 38%, from 416 in week 3 to 258 in week 4, though with a small increase in influenza B admissions (from 33 to 43).”

Medical Conditions

Green light for groundbreaking hearing aids

GOV.UK, 16th January 2025

“Tens of thousands of people with hearing loss to benefit from government action as it delivers Plan for Change to drive growth and improve living standards.”

Tackling inequalities in care for people with learning disabilities and autistic people

Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2025

Scottish stroke statistics, Year ending 31 March 2024

Public Health Scotland, 28 January 2025

“The incidence rate (the frequency of new cases) for cerebrovascular disease decreased over the last decade by 9% from 262 cases per 100,000 population in 2014/15 to 239 per 100,000 in 2023/24. Incidence rates were 32% higher in males than females in 2023/24.”

Scientists trial patch to mend failing hearts

BBC News, 29 January 2025

“Damaged hearts could be mended using small “patches” of heart muscle grown in the lab, say scientists writing in Nature. The technology could give new hope to millions of people with advanced heart failure whose treatment options are currently limited, the German researchers say.”

Mental Wellbeing

'Sandwich carers' experience decline in mental and physical health

Science Daily, 6th January 2025

“People who care for both their children and older family members -- also known as 'sandwich carers' -- suffer from deterioration in both their mental and physical health over time, finds a new study.”

Journal reference: Baowen Xue, Rebecca E. Lacey, Giorgio Di Gessa, Anne McMunn. [Do mental and physical health trajectories change around transitions into sandwich care?](#) Results from the UK household longitudinal study. Public Health, 2025;

Mental health trends among working-age people

Health Foundation, 22 January 2025

“The mental health of the working-age population appears to be getting worse. Over 10% of working-age people report signs of poor mental health across a range of data sources, including self-reported survey measures, screening tools and clinical diagnoses.”

Understanding the crisis in young people’s mental health

Health Foundation, 27 January 2025

“Professor Peter Fonagy, Head of the Division of Psychology and Language Sciences at UCL, argues that the mental health crisis among young people cannot be addressed without fundamentally rethinking how we support their development.”

Obesity & Healthy Eating

Definition and diagnostic criteria of clinical obesity

The Lancet, 14th January 2025

“This Commission sought to define clinical obesity as a condition of illness that, akin to the notion of chronic disease in other medical specialties, directly results from the effect of excess adiposity on the function of organs and tissues.”

How easy is it to get weight loss drugs?

Sky news, 15th January 2025

“It's not just celebrities and TikTok creators jumping on the weight loss drug hype - more than 500,000 people in the UK are now taking either Mounjaro or Wegovy, with experts predicting a nationwide fall in obesity rates. But what if they are misused?”

Calorie labels have small effect on eating habits – study

BBC News, 17th January 2025

“A review of [25 studies](#), external on calorie labelling in a number of countries found a small reduction in the calories people chose to eat - equivalent to two almonds - but even this modest effect could help prevent adults putting on weight as they get older.”

New clues to the mechanism behind food tolerance and allergies

Science Daily, 28 January 2025

“Study reveals how immune cells in the gut distinguish between food and harmful pathogens, shedding light on the origins of both food allergies and intestinal diseases.”

Study Available: Maria C. C. Canesso, Tiago B. R. Castro et al. [Identification of antigen-presenting cell–T cell interactions driving immune responses to food](#). *Science*, 2024;

Older People

Why our biological clock ticks: Research reconciles major theories of aging

Science Daily, 21st January 2025

“Two major theories of aging both involve DNA, but in very different ways. Researchers have revealed that these theories may not be so different after all.”

Journal Reference: Zane Koch, Adam Li, Daniel S. Evans, Steven Cummings, Trey Ideker. [Somatic mutation as an explanation for epigenetic aging](#). *Nature Aging*, 2025;

Pharmacy

Monthly prescribing activity data Data for October 2024

Public Health Scotland, 21st January 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents data for items prescribed in Scotland and reimbursed by the NHS, for October 2024. The data is in two formats - Open Data and an interactive dashboard.”

Physical Activity

Moderate exercise keeps appetite at bay

Science Daily, 28 January 2025

“A recent study has revealed that moderate-intensity exercise can significantly influence appetite-related hormones and perceptions in males with obesity.”

Study Available: Sogand Asri, Farhad Rahmani-nia, Payam Saidie, Timothy J. Fairchild, Shahin Khodabandeh. [Acute effect of exercise on appetite-related factors in males with obesity: A pilot study](#). Physiological Reports, 2024; 12 (24)

Population Statistics

Scottish pregnancy, births and neonatal data dashboard

Public Health Scotland, 14th January 2025

“This includes: number of pregnancies booked for antenatal care; number of terminations; gestation at booking; gestation at termination; location of extremely pre-term births; induction of labour; type of birth; perineal tears; gestation at birth; stillbirths and infant deaths and Apgar scores.”

Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly Figures for November 2024

Public Health Scotland, 14th January 2025

“A delayed discharge occurs when a hospital patient who is clinically ready for discharge from inpatient hospital care continues to occupy a hospital bed beyond the date they are ready for discharge.”

Cancelled planned operations Month Ending 30 November 2024

Public Health Scotland, 14th January 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides a monthly update on the number of operations in NHSScotland that were cancelled the day before or on the day of treatment. Please note that data for the specialty of obstetrics are no longer included in these figures.”

Accident and emergency

Public Health Scotland,

“This section focuses on statistics on accident and emergency (A&E) departments across Scotland.”

Public Health

Winter pressure bad as height of pandemic, NHS says

BBC News, 9th January 2025

“The pressures in accident-and-emergency units are as bad as during the Covid pandemic, NHS bosses say.”

PHS research strategy

Public Health Scotland, 9th January 2025

“The aim of this strategy is to help PHS become Scotland’s national strategic, collaborating and coordinating centre for public health research and innovation.”

Gambling Harms in Glasgow City: A System Map and Supporting Text

Public Health Scotland, 21st January 2025

“A pilot of a whole system approach to tackling gambling harm in Glasgow took place between 2022 and 2023. A systems map was created through stakeholder engagement in support of this work; discussions with lived experience, academia, public and third sectors were undertaken in its development.”

Sexual Health

HPV – cancers, warts and all

Public Health Scotland, 13 December 2025

“Human papillomaviruses (HPV) are very common. They form a group of around one hundred viruses that affect the skin and can cause a range of diseases. Many HPV infections don’t have symptoms, and may clear up without treatment, but certain types can cause cancers and genital warts.”

Smoking

FDA Proposes Significant Step Toward Reducing Nicotine to Minimally or Nonaddictive Level in Cigarettes and Certain Other Combusted Tobacco Products

US FDA, 15th January 2025

“Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a proposed rule that, if finalized, would make cigarettes and certain other combusted tobacco products minimally or nonaddictive by limiting the level of nicotine in those products.”

Suicide & Self Harm

N/A

Women's & Infant Health

Women seeking abortions after using 'natural' contraception

BBC News, 14th January 2025

“The data, published in [BMJ Sexual and Reproductive Health](#), external, shows a "shift" in contraception use in the last five years, from "more reliable" hormonal contraceptives such as the pill, to "fertility awareness-based methods", say researchers.”

Cervical screening knowledge gap 'costing lives'

BBC News, 20th January 2025

“The Eve Appeal says more women need to know they can ask for adjustments to their cervical screenings, which can be painful, uncomfortable or distressing for some.”

'Pregnancy is a risk I'm willing to take': Why some women are ditching the pill

BBC News, 18 January 2025

“When the BBC reported a shift in contraception use from "hormonal" products like the pill to "natural" fertility tracking apps among some women seeking abortions, many other women got in touch sharing their experiences.”