

# Public Health Bulletin

## February 2026



### Public Health Reports Digest

February 2026

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 – February 2026

### Alcohol

N/A

### Cancer

#### **Four in ten cancer cases could be prevented globally**

WHO, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

“Up to four in ten cancer cases worldwide could be prevented, according to a new global analysis from the World Health Organization (WHO) and its International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The study examines 30 preventable causes, including tobacco, alcohol, high body mass index, physical inactivity, air pollution, ultraviolet radiation – and for the first time – nine cancer-causing infections.”

#### **Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy activity**

Public Health Scotland, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports on systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT) activity across NHS services in Scotland.”

## Children & Young People

### **Measles outbreak could see unvaccinated pupils excluded from schools in north London**

BBC News, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Parents in north London have been told their children could be excluded from school if they are not fully vaccinated against measles amid an outbreak of the highly-contagious disease.”

### **Do you want to ban kids from social media? The government is asking**

Sky News, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026

“The government is describing this as the "world's most ambitious consultation" and its results could bring about the biggest change to social media since Myspace went mainstream in the early noughties.”

## Environment

N/A

## Dental Health

N/A

## Drugs

### **PHS urges caution following reports of increased harm from changes in Scotland's drug supply**

Public Health Scotland, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“The medetomidine alert highlights the emergence of a new sedative drug. Medetomidine is likely to be consumed unknowingly and has most commonly been detected in drugs sold as heroin and benzodiazepines.”

### **Improving timely drug harm intelligence in Scotland: How Databelt is strengthening RADAR reporting**

Public Health Scotland, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Working with partners across Scotland, we identified inconsistencies in how suspected drug deaths were being shared from Police Scotland to NHS Board DRD Coordinators. The previous process required Police Scotland staff’s manual review of sudden death reports across 13 police divisions and only allowed limited aggregate information to be shared monthly.”

### **Drug-related hospital statistics**

Public Health Scotland, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This annual release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports on inpatient or day case admissions (stays) that occur within NHS Scotland hospitals in relation to controlled drug use (substances for which manufacture, possession and use are regulated by government, due to their potential for abuse or harm).”

## **Health & Social Care**

### **Faster, fairer access to HealthTech under new national programme**

NICE, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“People across England and Wales are set to receive faster, fairer access to innovative HealthTech under the new National HealthTech Access Programme (NHAP).”

### **“It shouldn’t be this hard” Solving the NHS maze for patients and GPs**

Royal College of General Practitioners, February 2026

“This report brings together the voices of the patients whose stories and experiences echo what RCGP members are hearing from patients across the four nations. We heard accounts of long waits and rushed appointments, lost referrals and unmanageable administrative burdens.”

## Health Inequalities

### **UK Poverty 2026**

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026

This report sets out the nature of poverty in the UK, and evaluates changes under the last Conservative-led Government. It also sets out the scale of action necessary for the current Government to deliver the change it has promised.

### **Ethnicity, poverty, and in-work inequalities in the UK**

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This literature review looks at the main patterns, themes and key issues relating to research on ethnicity and experiences in work in the UK.”

### **Why buses matter for health and reducing transport poverty**

Public Health Scotland, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“These reports summarise work to investigate how and why bus services impact on health and transport poverty in Scotland and make recommendations to integrate consideration of health and health inequalities into policy making for bus and related policies.”

## Health Protection

### **Viral respiratory diseases in Scotland surveillance report**

Public Health Scotland, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This weekly release by Public Health Scotland presents epidemiological information on respiratory infection activity, including COVID-19, across Scotland. Due to the dynamic nature of all datasets included in this report, figures contained within each update may be subject to change in future releases. Any revised figures will then be reflected within the latest update.”

## Medical Conditions

### **NICE says paperclip-sized sensor could help thousands monitor heart condition from home**

NICE, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“A wireless sensor the size of a paperclip could transform care for people living with chronic heart failure, enabling them to monitor their condition daily from home and catch warning signs before they become emergencies, NICE has said.”

### **Eating disorders, Research briefing**

UK Parliament, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This briefing outlines the different types of eating disorders and current government policy to tackle eating disorders.”

### **Major changes to type 2 diabetes treatment could save thousands of lives**

NICE, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“New guidance means millions of people will get access to medicines that protect the heart and kidneys, while NHS savings of £560 million from using generic dapagliflozin can be reinvested elsewhere in NHS care.”

### **First treatment for vitiligo recommended by NICE for NHS use, bringing hope to over 80,000 people**

NICE, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“For the first time, NICE has recommended a medicine that effectively treats the underlying cause of devastating skin condition vitiligo”

### **CARDRISS**

Public Health Scotland, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“CARDRISS is the Congenital and Rare Conditions Registry Service for Scotland. This leaflet and poster explain more about the CARDRISS service.”

## **Mental Wellbeing**

### **Do you want to ban kids from social media? The government is asking**

Sky News, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026

“The government is describing this as the "world's most ambitious consultation" and its results could bring about the biggest change to social media since Myspace went mainstream in the early noughties.”

## Obesity & Healthy Eating

### **Improving the nation's diet: the impact of ultra-processed food**

BMA, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This report sets out our calls to action to improve the food environment and address the health impacts of poor diet, including food high in salt, sugar and fat and UPFs (ultra-processed foods).”

## Older People

### **Promoting Healthy Ageing in Scotland**

Scottish Parliament, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026

## Pharmacy

### **PHS urges caution following reports of increased harm from changes in Scotland's drug supply**

Public Health Scotland, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“The medetomidine alert highlights the emergence of a new sedative drug. Medetomidine is likely to be consumed unknowingly and has most commonly been detected in drugs sold as heroin and benzodiazepines.”

## Physical Activity

N/A

## Population Statistics

### **Drug-related hospital statistics**

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### **NHS waiting times - stage of treatment**

Public Health Scotland, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This monthly release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) focuses on the length of time patients wait to be seen as a new outpatient or admitted for treatment as an inpatient or day case. Revised calculations of wait featured in the 2023 waiting times guidance published by the Scottish Government in December 2023 have been implemented by PHS since July 2025.”

## Public Health

### **Public Health Scotland publishes new 10-year strategy: Together We Can**

Public Health Scotland, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

“Public Health Scotland (PHS) has today published its new 10-year strategy, Together We Can, setting out a clear and ambitious direction for improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of people across Scotland.”

### **Exploring Career Experiences in Health Services Research**

HSR UK, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This report examines the career experiences of researchers working across the health services research (HSR) landscape, highlighting the structural, cultural and personal factors that shape progression, inclusion and long-term sustainability in the field.”

### **England’s first men’s health strategy: will system design still leave some men behind?**

King’s Fund, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This is a guest blog. Guest authors bring different perspectives and diverse voices to our blog. They do not always represent the views of The King’s Fund.”

## **Sexual Health**

### **IVF waiting times in Scotland, Quarter ending 31 December 2025**

Public Health Scotland, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides a quarterly update on how long eligible patients waited from referral to a screening appointment for in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment by the NHS in one of Scotland's four specialist centres in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh or Dundee.”

### **Sperm swim more quickly in summer, study finds**

BBC News, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Understanding these seasonal patterns could improve fertility treatments, by optimising the timing of treatment and fertility testing to provide better guidance to couples trying to conceive.”

## Smoking

### **New stop smoking campaign encourages people to call or click for support**

Public Health Scotland, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Developed by Public Health Scotland (PHS) in collaboration with NHS 24 and NHS boards, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the support available to anyone who wants to stop smoking. Quit Your Way offers help through NHS inform, a free telephone helpline, and a pharmacy-based programme of support.”

## Suicide & Self Harm

N/A

## Women’s & Infant Health

### **Women encouraged to take up cervical screening offer following publication of new statistics**

Public Health Scotland, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Figures show that 55.3% of eligible women have had a cervical screening test within the past 3.5 and 5.5 years (depending on their age group). This is what is termed as ‘coverage’ within the report and compares to 63.3% the previous year.”

### **IVF waiting times in Scotland, Quarter ending 31 December 2025**

Public Health Scotland, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides a quarterly update on how long eligible patients waited from referral to a screening appointment for in vitro fertilisation

(IVF) treatment by the NHS in one of Scotland's four specialist centres in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh or Dundee.”

### **Taking collagen keeps skin more elastic but won't stop wrinkles, say scientists**

BBC News, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

“Experts looked at the available evidence and say they are highly confident that collagen pills or powder provide "some legitimate" skin gains if taken over time but are no quick fix.”