

Public Health Bulletin

July 2026



Public Health Reports Digest

September 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.

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 2026

Alcohol

Alcohol's hidden impact on health in Scotland

Public Health Scotland, 1st September 2026

“In this blog, Craig Collins, Service Manager, Health Harms Intelligence, explores the latest data on partially attributable alcohol admissions and deaths, and explains why understanding these wider harms is important for reducing inequalities and improving health outcomes.”

Cancer

Very hot drinks may damage the food pipe and increase cancer risk

BBC News, 9th September 2026

“Regularly drinking beverages like tea and coffee at very hot temperatures increases the risk of cancer of the food pipe or gullet, known as oesophageal cancer, UK research suggests.”

NICE recommends Enhertu for people with HER2-low advanced breast cancer

NICE, 17th September 2026

“Around 1,000 people with HER2-low advanced breast cancer can now be offered Enhertu after NICE recommended it for routine NHS use.”

Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy activity

Public Health Scotland, 17th September 2026

“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.”

Children & Young People

Have we kicked the habit? The rise of youth vaping and the next phase of tobacco control

King’s Fund, 25th August

“Vapes, also known as e-cigarettes, are now more common than smoking among adults in England. Their use is particularly high among 16–24 year olds, with 12.9% reporting daily or occasional use in 2024, down from 15% the previous year.”

Falling through the cracks: how childhood hardship shapes life chances

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 15th September 2026

“This briefing finds persistent poverty more than triples the risk of being out of education and work. It shows how childhood experiences of poverty impact on young adulthood, how a weak safety net leaves young people struggling to afford the essentials and to return to earning or learning, and what support young people say they need now.”

Young people aren't snowflakes - mental distress is rising, says head of official review

BBC News, 21st September 2026

“Prof Peter Fonagy said in an exclusive interview that there had been a real rise in mental distress among children and young people, with anxiety, depression, self-harm and eating disorders the most common.”

Place, inequalities and children and young people’s mental health

Centre for Mental Health, 9th September 2026

“Our briefing, Place, inequalities and children and young people’s mental health, summarises recent research from the University of York, demonstrating how children’s mental health is strongly shaped by where they grow up, with mental health inequalities driven by poverty, poor quality and insecure homes, access to good quality green space, and access to culturally competent mental health support.”

Environment

Sustainability reporting in the public sector: a leap forward

CIPFA, July 2026

“This report expands on CIPFA’s previous work in Public sector sustainability reporting: time to step it up, published in 2023. There has been considerable progress in this area in the last three years, including the release of the first public sector sustainability reporting standard by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB) on climate-related disclosures.”

Unlocking Nature for All

The Wildlife Trust, 2026

“The Wildlife Trusts stand ready to assist the UK Government in giving more people more nature to enjoy. The proposals in this Green Paper, if delivered, would improve public health, protect people against climate shocks and bring pride back to places forgotten by Westminster.”

Dental Health

N/A

Drugs

Evaluation examines impact of Residential Rehabilitation programme across Scotland

Public Health Scotland, 15th September 2026

“It looks at how the Residential Rehabilitation programme affected the way residential rehab is organised, how easily it can be accessed, and how well it supports people across Scotland.”

Iacobucci G. **Drug deaths rise sharply in Scotland, with fifth of fatalities linked to nitazenes**
BMJ 2026; 394 :e100969 doi:10.1136/bmj-2026-100969

Health & Social Care

Nurse prescribers in adult social care: Making nurse prescribing work for all

King’s Fund, 28th August 2026

“Loreen Chikwira explores the benefits and barriers to effective nurse prescribing in adult social care.”

Ethnic minority leadership in the NHS: progression, representation, retention and organisational culture

The NHS Alliance, 15th September 2026

“This report is intended to support NHS organisations, board leaders and staff to better understand the experiences of employees from ethnic minority backgrounds working within the NHS and to inform practical actions that strengthen progression, representation, retention and inclusion within NHS leadership.”

We need to talk: Public attitudes to social care and the NHS

The Health Foundation, September 2026

“This briefing takes stock of what the public thinks about social care and the NHS, based on our latest survey with Ipsos. We surveyed 2,238 people via Ipsos’s UK KnowledgePanel in May 2026, shortly before the Makerfield by-election.”

Health Inequalities

State of Ageing Spotlight: Older LGBTQ+ people

Centre for Aging Better, 26th August 2026

“This spotlight examines the inequalities they can face in later life — across housing, work, finances, health, care and community connections — indicates how these experiences are shaped by decades of discrimination, and sets out recommendations for policy and practice.”

Closing the Mortality Gap: Tackling health inequalities for people living with severe mental illness

Rethink Mental Illness, September 2026

“This report provides recommendations for improving practice and reforming policy.”

Health Protection

Vaccines in England explained

The King’s Fund, 15th September 2026

This explainer covers vaccines, from how they were invented to how they are used today.

Medical Conditions

Draft guidance aims to improve identification of OCD and body dysmorphic disorder

NICE, 17th September 2026

“People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) could be identified earlier and offered more appropriate treatment under draft NICE guidance published today.”

Mental Wellbeing

Addressing the impact of non-recent child sexual abuse on the mental health of adults

RC Psych, August 2026

“This statement addresses how sexual abuse during childhood can impact on the wellbeing of adults, and the implications of this in the context of mental health disorders and their management.”

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Obesity & Healthy Eating

N/A

Older People

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Pharmacy

Nurse prescribers in adult social care: Making nurse prescribing work for all

King’s Fund, 28th August 2026

“Loreen Chikwira explores the benefits and barriers to effective nurse prescribing in adult social care.”

Prescribing practice and dispensing pharmacy open data April – June 2026

Public Health Scotland, 8th September 2026

“This quarterly release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) contains data on prescribing activity in the community in an open data format. The latest quarter available is for 1 April to 30 June 2026.”

Physical Activity

New estimates reveal the impact of physical inactivity on health

Public Health Scotland, 15th September 2026

“The report estimates that more than 12,000 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) are attributable to physical inactivity from mental health and musculoskeletal conditions alone.”

Population Statistics

Accident and emergency

Public Health Scotland, August 2026

Official accredited statistics

Ophthalmic workload statistics Statistics as at year ending March 2026

Public Health Scotland 2026

“This annual release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides information on NHS funded eye examinations provided by community optometrists under General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) arrangements and NHS optical voucher claims for 2025/26, with comparisons to previous years.”

Public Health

Assisted dying: How laws differ around the world

BBC News, Updated 15th September 2026

“Around 400 million people now live in countries which have legalised assisted dying. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Austria are among those which have changed the law in recent years, with some allowing help to die for those who are not terminally ill.”

BRIEFING: The Impact of Extreme Heat on Patients

RCN, 16th September 2026

“We asked about the impact of extreme heat on members’ ability to provide care and the impact of the heat on the people they care for. This briefing summarises the findings and sets out the RCN's analysis and recommendations.”

Sexual Health

Rain rot”: first case of this sexually transmitted skin infection is detected in UK

BMJ, 26th August 2026

“A sexually transmitted skin infection dubbed “rain rot” disease has been detected in the UK for the first time, amid rising cases in Europe. Cases of the infection, known as dermatophilosis, have been reported in several European countries this summer, including France, Germany, Norway, and Spain.”

Smoking

Have we kicked the habit? The rise of youth vaping and the next phase of tobacco control

King’s Fund, 25th August

“Vapes, also known as e-cigarettes, are now more common than smoking among adults in England. Their use is particularly high among 16–24 year olds, with 12.9% reporting daily or occasional use in 2024, down from 15% the previous year.”

Suicide & Self Harm

N/A

Women’s & Infant Health

**Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) Key Clinical Indicator (KCI) Year ending 31st
March 2026**

Public Health Scotland, 22nd September 2026

“This annual release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) reports on the prescribing of long acting reversible methods of contraception (LARC) in primary care and sexual health settings in Scotland.”