

Public Health Bulletin

December 2025



Public Health Reports Digest

December 2025

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.

We make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to the links and information contained in these CABs. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

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 – December 2025

Alcohol

Policy briefing: alcohol

Public Health Scotland, 11th December 2025

“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 that has been made through minimum unit pricing.”

Cancer

Pioneering new treatment reverses incurable blood cancer in some patients

BBC News, 8th December 2025

“The treatment involves precisely editing the DNA in white blood cells to transform them into a cancer-fighting "living drug".

Cancer waiting times: 1 July to 30 September 2025

Public Health Scotland, 23rd December 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) presents the quarterly update of Cancer Waiting Times statistics, reporting two National Standards on how long patients waited for their first cancer treatment. This release covers patients who started their first treatment by quarter ending 30 September 2025.”

Covid -19

N/A

Children & Young People

Australian PM says social media ban a 'proud day' - but some teens say they still have access

BBC News, 9th December 2025

“Instagram, Facebook, Threads, X, Snapchat, Kick, Twitch, TikTok, Reddit and YouTube are among the platforms required to enforce the new legislation.”

How healthy are Gen Z?

King’s Fund, 8th December 2025

“A large proportion are transitioning into adulthood or are already fully fledged adults. So, were Gen Z any healthier than previous generations? And is there anything the government can learn from the changing health patterns of this generation?”

Child Poverty Strategy: Is the mission-led government in action, and will it work?

King’s Fund, 10th December 2025

“The headline policy is undoubtedly the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap. This single change is predicted to lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty and could significantly benefit their health.”

Environment

N/A

Dental Health

Dentists to prioritise urgent care and save some patients more than £200 under plans

BBC News, 16th December 2025

“People needing urgent dental treatment and patients requiring complex care will be prioritised under government plans to improve access to NHS dentists in England.”

Drugs

N/A

Health & Social Care

Shaping change together: co-producing innovation in social care

SCIE, November 2025

“This SCIE report shows that co-production (working in equal partnership with people who draw on care and support, carers and frontline staff) is vital to making new ideas work in practice. The report shares findings from SCIE’s 2025 Co-producing Innovation in Social Care Survey, which explored how co-production supports innovation, what barriers people face, what makes it work, and whether it is leading to change.”

Delayed discharges in NHSScotland monthly: Figures for October 2025

Public Health Scotland, 2nd December 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.”

How are GPs using AI? Insights from the front line

Nuffield Trust, 3rd December 2025

“While a number of governments have sought to improve access to general practice, or the working lives of GPs, via a mix of technological, administrative and staffing interventions, the idea that Artificial Intelligence (AI) could play a meaningful role is far more recent.”

Health Inequalities

Poverty in Northern Ireland 2025

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 4th December 2025

“Progress on tackling child poverty in Northern Ireland has stalled and focusing on work alone will not shift the dial on child poverty. It is time to invest in a better future for children.”

The right to housing and its impact on health

Public Health Scotland, 16th December 2025

“This publication highlights the role of adequate housing as a fundamental component of the right to health. It outlines dimensions of housing that shape health and health inequalities and provides evidence and context relevant to Scotland.”

Health Protection

How the new maternal RSV vaccination prevents serious illness in Scotland: 219 babies and counting

Public Health Scotland, 1st December 2025

“In 2024-25, with similar levels of RSV infection circulating in Scotland, PHS and academic partners are now able to report that children of mothers who had the vaccine had around 80% lower odds of RSV-related hospital admissions in their first three months of life compared to unvaccinated mothers.”

Immunisation and vaccine-preventable diseases quarterly report: July to September 2025 (Q3)

Public Health Scotland, 2nd December 2025

“This release by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides quarterly information for the period July to September 2025 (week 39”)

Flu activity continues to increase in Scotland

Public Health Scotland, 4th December 2025

“New figures published today show that laboratory-confirmed cases of flu more than doubled in the past week, rising from 845 to 1,759. Hospital admissions due to flu also increased by 70% in the past week, rising from 426 the previous week to 724.”

New evidence from Scotland shows that the flu vaccine provides important protection against severe illness

Public Health Scotland, 11th September 2025

“New data published today by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides clear evidence that this year’s vaccine is doing a good job of preventing severe flu. So far this winter, children in Scotland are 78% less likely to be admitted to hospital with flu if vaccinated; with vaccinated adults in Scotland aged 65 and over 37% less likely to be hospitalised.”

Medical Conditions

Seven digital platforms supporting at home cardiac rehab given conditional recommendations

NICE, 4th December 2025

“People with heart disease will be able to do their recovery sessions from home rather than travelling for rehabilitation appointments after our independent committee conditionally recommended 7 digital platforms for use in the NHS.”

Turning the tide on Tuberculosis with surveillance and solutions

Public Health Scotland, 9th December 2025

“To address this increase, and get us back on track, PHS is harnessing the powers of data, collaboration and innovation to fight this disease.”

Mental Wellbeing

Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism: terms of reference

GOV.UK, 4th December 2025

“Terms of reference for an independent review into the prevalence and support for mental health conditions, ADHD and autism.”

Mini brains reveal clear brain signals of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder

Science Daily, 28th December 2025

“Mini-brains in a dish are exposing the hidden electrical signatures of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, bringing precision psychiatry closer than ever.”

Obesity & Healthy Eating

N/A

Older People

Health, wealth and employment in the run-up to state pension age

IFS, 19th November 2025

“How has health among those in their late 50s and early 60s changed over time, and how are these trends associated with wealth and employment?”

Pharmacy

US and UK agree zero tariffs deal on pharmaceuticals

BBC News, 1st December 2025

“Under the agreement the UK will pay more for medicines through the NHS in return for a guarantee that US import taxes on pharmaceuticals made in the UK will remain at zero for three years.”

Physical Activity

N/A

Population Statistics

Life Expectancy in Scotland, 2022-2024

National Records of Scotland, 10th December 2025

“Life expectancy in Scotland increased steadily for decades. From 2012-14, life expectancy began stalling, and it fell during the COVID-19 pandemic. Life expectancy has risen again during the most recent two three-year periods, and it is now at a similar level to before the pandemic.”

Latest life expectancy data reinforces need for continued cross-sector action

Public Health Scotland, 10th December 2025

“New figures from National Records of Scotland show that life expectancy in Scotland has increased in the latest three-year period (2022–2024)*. This is welcome progress. Life expectancy remains similar to pre-pandemic levels and continues to be lower than in other UK nations.”

Understanding Ethnicity Data Gaps

Race Equality Foundation, December 2025

“Our report, ‘Exploring Ethnicity Data Use and Gaps in Health Care’, identifies the barriers to the collection, availability and use of quality ethnicity data and opportunities and best practice to overcome these barriers.”

Public Health

The Causes and Impacts of Burnout Among Primary Care Physicians in 10 Countries

The Commonwealth Fund, November 20th 2025

“Physicians report emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment that, if left unaddressed, will undermine the performance of our health systems.”

Public Health Scotland annual review 2025

Public Health Scotland, 16th December 2025

Sexual Health

N/A

Smoking

N/A

Suicide & Self Harm

National guidance on action to address suicides at locations of concern

Public Health Scotland, 2nd December 2025

“If you're dealing with suicidal thoughts or thinking about harming yourself, it's important to know that you are not alone. Help is available when you're feeling low – you do not have to hurt yourself or suffer in silence.”

Women's & Infant Health

How the new maternal RSV vaccination prevents serious illness in Scotland: 219 babies and counting

Public Health Scotland, 1st December 2025

“In 2024-25, with similar levels of RSV infection circulating in Scotland, PHS and academic partners are now able to report that children of mothers who had the vaccine had around 80% lower odds of RSV-related hospital admissions in their first three months of life compared to unvaccinated mothers.”

Formula feeding: How to feed your baby safely

Public Health Scotland, 19th December 2025

“Guidance on how to safely make up infant formula.”