



# SAFETY NET-WORKS

FEBRUARY 2024

## VIOLENCE REDUCTION EDITION

[www.safercommunitiesscotland.org](http://www.safercommunitiesscotland.org)

### SCSN Funding Cuts: An update for our Members and Stakeholders

By Lorraine Gillies, SCSN  
CEO



You will all know that the [Scottish Community Safety Network](#) is about to lose 50% of its funding. That's disastrous for us and particularly galling when the work we do is valued to a high degree by our members and community safety organisations across Scotland and beyond. They see how much our work contributes to prevention and to the Vision for Justice

I'm working with the Board to see what we can continue to do in 2024/25 and will update our members when I can. In the meantime, I'd like to thank everyone for your gallant and brave support to us over the past few weeks. The staff team and board are humbled by your care for us. This may be our last newsletter for a while, but we will continue our presence on social media, and you can still contact us by email in the usual way.

Anyhow, here we are, just last week, speaking to the Chief Executive of the Policing Authority Ireland, her colleagues and Amanda Coulthard from the [Scottish Police Authority](#) about the work we do in Scotland. It's a real pleasure to see our work recognised, valued, and replicated as they develop similar community safety partnership arrangements in Ireland - and are using our model as a baseline.

### Imagine a Man - Building positive masculinity with young people

Imagine a Man is an initiative that is all about talking to boys and young men about positive masculinity. The Imagine a Man resource is the result of 2 years of research and consultation with boys and young men about what is important to them.

Calling men 'toxic' doesn't work.

We need to reframe the narrative around masculinity to talk up positive behaviour. If we don't have good role models or places to talk about what manhood means, then our boys and young men are much more likely to go off the rails. Boys and young men need to feel as if they matter in society.

This all day in-person **Imagine a Man** training is for anyone wishing to explore and build 'positive masculinity' with young people in Dundee as part of a citywide rollout.

Book your place & view upcoming NKBL events [here](#).

SCSN Updates & Question of  
the Month - Page 2

Safer Communities Scotland  
Podcast - Page 3

Focus on Violence Reduction  
Pages 6-7

MUP: why it's important in CS  
Page 9

Latest Home  
Safety Scotland  
news & updates -  
Pages 10-11





### The SCSN Bids Farewell to Comms Officer David Barbour

After almost 8 years in post, sometimes full time, sometimes part time - the SCSN is sad to say goodbye to its Communications Officer David Barbour. David will be moving on at the end of February to take up a similar role at Alcohol Focus Scotland.

David is currently SCSN's longest serving staff member and has played a major role in developing SCSN's communications channels in that time - as well as contributing to wider policy work. Though we'll miss him, we wish him every success in his new role.

### SCSN Consultation Response: Ending Conversion Practices in Scotland

The SCSN has submitted a response to the Scottish Government consultation on 'Ending Conversion Practices in Scotland'. We strongly support a ban on LGBT conversion practices. We believe these practices constitute abuse and a form of violence against LGBT people.

You can read our response [here](#). To submit a response of your own, click [here](#).

## Question of the Month

Our Question of the Month for January 2024 related to the recent news that the Scottish Government has proposed a 50% cut in grant funding to the SCSN.

We have been consulting with partners and stakeholders around what impact this may have on their work - and on our ability to provide support to drive forward community safety priorities in Scotland.

We asked:

***'Do you believe that a 50% cut in grant funding to the SCSN will have a negative impact on building safer communities/community safety work in Scotland?'***

- 64.2% said Yes
- 35.8% said No
- 0% said Not Sure

## Question of the Month February 2024

Our Question of the Month for February 2024 relates to our Violence Reduction theme for this newsletter and comes from our latest Safer Communities Scotland Podcast guest, Jimmy Paul, Head of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit.

We're asking:

***"Would you like to see more youth work and for it to continue to be valued as an important aspect of violence reduction?"***

Take part in our Poll [here](#).

## Safer Communities Scotland Podcast:

With Jimmy Paul, CEO of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit



### SAFER COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND PODCAST

In our latest Safer Communities Scotland Podcast episode, we spoke with Jimmy Paul, Head of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit.

In a wide ranging discussion we spoke to Jimmy about the history of the Violence Reduction Unit and violence reduction in Scotland. We also discussed recent increases in youth violence and their causes, the changing nature of youth violence and how public health and trauma informed approaches help to reduce violence.

You can listen to the Podcast episode on Spotify/Anchor [at this link](#).

You can listen on YouTube [at this link](#).

### Event: Developing a Community Safety Lens for the Place Standard Tool

The SCSN is delighted to be able to rearrange the information session we had planned for 18th January.

We have decided to expand this to an exciting half-day, in-person, engagement event in March and hope you will all still be able to attend.

We encourage you to bring any interested parties with you on the day, especially those with an interest in data as we'll hold a workshop to explore how we can better use data to inform Community Safety Lens delivery in your localities.

We'll also hold a workshop on plans for developing the Community Safety Lens, including timelines and seeking early interest from areas who could pilot the resource.

**Date: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

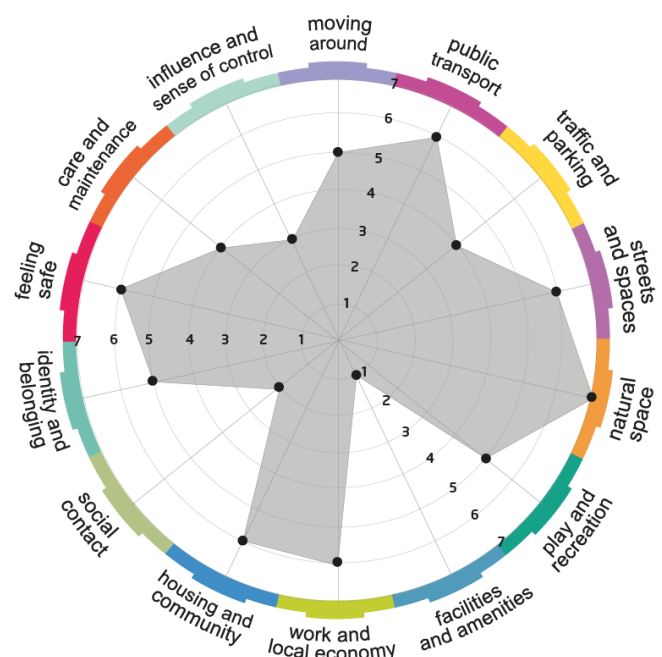
**Venue address: Trades Hall Of Glasgow, 85 Glassford Street. Glasgow, G1 1UH**

**Event programme: 9.30am - 1pm (programme to follow)**

### Lunch: From 1pm (please let us know any dietary requirements)

Please contact Dawn Exley [dawn.exley@scsn.org.uk](mailto:dawn.exley@scsn.org.uk) to confirm your place and any others you would like to attend on the day. For planning purposes, please let us know who would be interested in attending the data workshop.

### N.B. This event is for members of Community Safety Partnerships only!







## New Short Documentary 'A Little While Longer' Sheds Light on Suicide Stigma Experienced By Male Suicide Attempt Survivors

**Screening, 26 March**

Every two hours, a man in the UK takes his own life. This alarming statistic highlights the urgent need to address the issue of suicide and the stigma surrounding it. In an effort to break the silence and promote understanding and support for those who have attempted and survived suicide, filmmakers Tom van den Hurk and Dr Isa Rao have created 'A Little While Longer', a short documentary that follows three male suicide attempt survivors as they come together to share their stories.

Supported by the See Me Scotland Anti-Stigma Fund, 'A Little While Longer' is a powerful and emotional short documentary that explores the struggles, survival, and resilience of these three men. The film takes place on the Isle of Arran, where the survivors spend three days sharing their experiences and opening up about their journey towards recovery.

The filmmakers, Tom van den Hurk and Dr Isa Rao, have a personal connection to the subject matter. Van den Hurk is a suicide attempt survivor himself, while Dr Rao is a cognitive neuroscientist. Having previously directed award-winning and BAFTA nominated short films like 'Blue Hour' and 'Crannog', the filmmakers are passionate about using film as a medium for social change and their collaboration on 'A Little While Longer' aims to raise awareness and provide a platform for discussion on suicide and male mental health.

'We wanted to create a film that gives a voice to those who have survived suicide attempts', says van den Hurk. 'We hope that by sharing their stories, we can break the silence and end the stigma surrounding suicide.'

'A Little While Longer' will have its online release on the 8th of March and will also be shown at community and charity screenings across the UK.

'This documentary serves as a wake-up call to address the issue of male suicide and the stigma surrounding it. It is a powerful reminder that we all play a role in supporting those who have experienced mental health struggles and that there is hope and healing in sharing our stories', says Dr Rao.

The SCSN is particularly excited about the screening of this documentary as it features our Comms Officer David Barbour, sharing his story on surviving suicidal thoughts and discussing how we break the stigma around suicide.

You can book tickets for the screening [here](#).

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## Who should the police be in the 21st Century?

This webinar is the first of a series of bi-monthly webinars entitled *Security and Justice Futures* which aim to confront the dilemmas, re-imaginings and futures of security and justice from a cross-regional perspective. Drawing from a range of speakers from north and south contexts, the series seeks to engage



with both academic and practitioner audiences to encourage a mutual dialogue on the futures of security and justice in diverse contexts.

The focus of this first webinar, chaired by Dr Julie Berg, Director of SCCJR, will include talks from Dr Mutuma Ruteere and Professor Jennifer Wood, who consider the challenges and future directions of the police/policing in diverse contexts faced with new and emerging harmscapes.

You can book your place [at this link](#).

## Guidance on inclusive design for town centres and busy streets

When the design of town centres and busy street environments does not fully take into account the needs of all members of the community, people may become excluded from these areas and the essential functions that they provide. Potential barriers to access should be removed and not included in any scheme.

This [national guidance](#) has been developed to support the design of town centres and busy streets that are inclusive. It is based on the premise that if the area is designed for

disabled people, then the majority will benefit.

This draft guidance was developed in response to [research](#) which identified that street design should consider the needs of everyone and should take into account all Protected Characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). The research recommended that the principles which it identified should be embedded in guidance and applied practice.

The Scottish Government are seeking views on this draft guidance through a consultation.

You can read more and submit your views to the consultation [here](#).

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## Transport poverty – a public health issue

The Public Health and Sustainable Transport Partnership Group, hosted by Public Health Scotland, has published a new briefing on transport poverty.

Transport plays a vital role in our health and wellbeing. It provides links to education and employment, to social connections, to affordable and quality nutrition, and to leisure activities.

A lack of transport options that are available, reliable, affordable, accessible and safe, referred to as transport poverty, creates serious health and social implications by blocking people's ability to meet their daily needs and provide a good quality of life.

Based on a review of key literature and engagement with a wide range of partners, this briefing highlights the causes of transport poverty and how it contributes to poor health, providing recommendations to increase awareness of the issue and guide actions for change.

Read more on this briefing [here](#).

## Place Standard with a Community Safety Lens

The SCSN believes access to reliable, affordable, accessible and safe travel also impacts on community safety.

We're working with Public Health Scotland on developing a community safety lens for the Place Standard Tool. You can read more about this [here](#).

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## Love Letham: the power of children's participation in pursuing social justice

[Love Letham](#) is a partnership project between the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland (WEAll Scotland) and Perth and Kinross Council funded by Cattanach. The project focuses on bringing the community together to make Letham the best place it can be for children to grow up. This blog is published on the Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland website. The SCSN are proud members of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance.

Love Letham is more than another consultation exercise within a 'deprived' community. It's about understanding, contextualising, and facilitating better conversations and on the ground action

Co-creating and co-delivering solutions in the local area that make our children's lives better. Ensuring adults are listening, advocating and championing for the rights of children in Letham. We're going from 'doing it to' to 'doing it with' - something Perth & Kinross Council have been huge champions of.

Read the blog in full [at this link](#).



## Safe Space? The past, present and future of violence reduction in Scotland



Violence is a critical issue around the world. In addition to the high financial costs, it takes a heavy toll on community wellbeing. Young people are most commonly affected by violence, with the World Health Organisation estimating that 43% of global homicides involve people aged 10-29 (WHO 2016).

Over the last two decades, Scotland has witnessed a remarkable reduction in serious violence, including homicide, and has managed to sustain this while rates of violence in other parts of the UK have increased. This has led to an increasing consensus around Scotland's 'public health approach' to violence reduction and heavy investment in specialist violence reduction units across England and Wales.

Despite the perceived success of the Scottish approach, however, there has to date been a lack of evidence on the causes of violence reduction in Scotland. While it is clear that lessons can be learned, there is confusion over what public health approaches are, how they work, and the conditions under which such ideas can travel.

This briefing paper aims to summarise the evidence-base on violence reduction in Scotland and highlight key lessons for other jurisdictions. It is based on a three-year research project, funded by the ESRC, involving detailed analysis of statistical data on violence, 190 interviews with senior stakeholders and community participants across the UK, reviews of Scottish Government policy, and case-studies with communities affected by violence. The briefing focuses on lessons that can be drawn from Scotland's violence reduction journey, answering four basic questions: (1) What has changed? (2) Why did it change? (3) Where are we now and (4) Where do we go from here?

You can download the full report [here](#).

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## Making the internet safer for all

A new offence which makes it a crime to encourage or assist another person to self-harm came into effect in Scotland on 31 January.

The offence can be committed online, in correspondence or publications, or in-person and applies regardless of whether an individual goes on to injure themselves or not. Anyone found guilty of this crime can face up to five years in prison.

It is hoped it will act as a deterrent to anyone who sets out to deliberately encourage others

to self-harm and will create a safer online environment, particularly for people who may be in distress and looking for help on the internet.

Mental Wellbeing Minister Maree Todd said: "We welcome this new offence which criminalises people who encourage or assist another person to serious self-harm. It will help to make the internet a safer place for everyone."

Read more [here](#).

## Spotlight on the Violence Prevention Framework

***We thought it might be useful to reintroduce readers (or introduce if you aren't familiar) with the Scottish Violence Prevention Framework.***

This Framework sets out our vision to prevent violence across Scotland, and when it does occur, to reduce its harm. It is supported by an evidence supplement, spotlights some cross government work and includes priority aims and an action plan, outlining the initial activities going forward.

Scotland recognises that violence is like a disease, both visible and hidden, with potential for the harm to escalate affecting our families and communities for generations if left untreated.

For well over a decade, the Scottish Government and its partners have focused on

the prevention of violence through the public health approach. This means that we are drawing on the approach health professionals use to tackle disease. Public health is all about prevention – and, just as it is better to vaccinate against a disease than it is to treat the disease, it is better to prevent violence happening in the first place than to react once it has occurred.

The ground-breaking preventative work of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and third sector partners such as Medics Against Violence and Youth Link Scotland has been central to Scotland's approach to violence prevention, which has been praised by the World Economic Forum and is now championed by other areas across the UK.

You can read the full Scottish Violence Prevention Framework [at this link](#).

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## Shaping positive masculinity

First Minister Humza Yousaf has held a roundtable with practitioners and leaders who are working to promote positive masculinity in their broader approach to achieving equality across our communities.

This involves highlighting to boys and men the benefits that positive masculinity can provide for their everyday lives including mental health and wellbeing as well as positive relations. It also includes highlighting the harm that can be caused by negative behaviours associated with 'toxic masculinity' which may also manifest itself in sexism, misogyny and abuse or violence against women and girls.

In his Programme for Government speech, the First Minister committed to leading on this issue.

"If we can promote positive masculinity, then we address deep rooted inequalities in our society, and tackle the root cause of violence against women and girls, namely abusive behaviour perpetrated by men.

"We need to create the safe spaces for boys and men to come together to talk, without judgement about the challenges they face, the anxieties they have and to talk about the positive male identity.

Read more [here](#).

## Fund to Leave: domestic abuse fund open for applications

The Scottish Government's pilot [Fund to Leave](#) is open for applications. Women experiencing domestic abuse in Scotland in designated pilot program areas can receive **up to £1,000** to pay for the essentials they need when leaving a relationship with an abusive partner.

It is hoped that this fund will provide women and children with more choices. These choices may include but are not limited to increasing safety within the home, moving home, seeking legal aid, providing for children experiencing domestic abuse and remaining safely within the home. The fund is limited to **£500,000** and is distributed in a first come first serve basis.

The funding will cease on **31 March 2024** or before depending on how long the allocated £500,000 fund lasts. Women's Aid groups that are part of the pilot will announce when the funding has ceased via their social media and websites.

For more information contact Scottish Women's Aid [on this link](#).



## Trans Pride Scotland March

30th March, Kilmarnock

Setting off at 12:45 the march will gather at Howard Park off Dundonald Road from 12:30 and head back into the centre to the venue at Ayrshire College for the Trans Pride Market event.

There you can enjoy meeting with others in the community, visit stalls and take part in discussions and workshops. Free entertainment may also be provided!



The Trans Pride March and Trans Pride Market event afterwards are free to attend, family-friendly, and alcohol-free. And while you are welcome to bring your dog on the march, only service dogs will be allowed into the Trans Pride Market event at Ayrshire College.

While tickets are free, if you would like to make a donation you can also do that via the event webpage.

**If attending both the Trans Pride March & Trans Pride Market event please book a ticket please book the dual ticket. If attending the Trans Pride March only, please book that ticket.**

Find out more and book tickets etc [here](#).

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## Human Rights Consortium urges UN Committee to question Government on civil and political rights in Scotland

The Human Rights Consortium Scotland has asked the UN Human Rights Committee to question the UK Government, and the Scottish Government, on areas where they are failing to uphold civil and political rights, having submitted a report containing stats, insights, and lived experience of human rights violations across several areas.

Areas where the HRC considers the UK and/or Scottish Government to be failing to uphold human rights in areas including:

- **Gender Recognition Reform:** The report highlights the challenges faced by the transgender community in Scotland concerning legal gender recognition. Despite the Scottish Parliament passing the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, the UK Government's intervention has prevented its enactment. The report questions the commitment of both the Scottish and UK governments to pass legal gender recognition reform and protect trans rights.
- **Right to Life and Conditions of Detention:** The report delves into significant human rights challenges in Scotland's prison system, addressing high rates of deaths in custody, overcrowded prisons, and the overuse of remand. It calls for urgent action to reduce deaths in custody, improve prison conditions, and address the overuse of remand.
- **Access to Justice and Legal Aid:** The report underscores the challenges in accessing effective remedy for human rights violations in Scotland. Barriers to justice, including limited legal aid services and advice, hinder the realisation of human rights. The report urges the Scottish Government to significantly improve access to justice and prioritise legal aid reform.
- **Fatal Accident Inquiries:** The report expresses concern about delays in the Fatal Accident Inquiries system in Scotland. Delays in holding inquiries have significant consequences for learning from the circumstances of deaths. The report calls for urgent action to review the system of Fatal Accident Inquiries to make it more effective and expedite the inquiry process.
- **Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers:** The report highlights concerns about the indefinite detention of individuals arriving in the UK by irregular means. It questions the necessity of detention and emphasises the need for alternatives. The report urges the UK Government to introduce a time limit on immigration detention and prioritise alternatives to immigration detention.

Read more [here](#).



## National Care Service Co-design - Voice and Independent Advocacy

LGBT Health and Wellbeing is working with the Scottish government to ascertain what is important to LGBTQ+ people and their experiences regarding independent advocacy.



The results from [this survey](#) will feed into the co-design of the National Care Service to ensure LGBTQ+ experiences are considered in the formation of policy. If you need assistance or support to complete this survey, reach out to [rebecca@lgbthealth.org.uk](mailto:rebecca@lgbthealth.org.uk).

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### Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol: why it's important in Community Safety



Last week it was announced that plans to continue setting a minimum price per unit of alcohol and to increase it by 15p will go before the Scottish Parliament for approval. As part of a 'sunset clause' when Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) legislation was introduced in 2018, it will end on 30 April this year unless Parliament votes to keep it.

The Government says a price increase is required to counteract the effects of inflation and 65p has been selected to increase the positive effects of the policy.

The SCSN [supported a rise](#) in the Minimum Unit Price for alcohol to 65p in the recent Scottish Government consultation. We believe that MUP is part of a comprehensive range of interventions which must be delivered in order to help change Scotland's relationship with alcohol.

Price controls are seen as an essential weapon

in public health armoury by health experts across the globe, such as [Professor David Nutt](#) and Professor Sir Michael Marmot (who along with other experts from across the UK [endorsed the Public Health Scotland evaluation of MUP](#)) - and are also fully [endorsed by the World Health Organisation](#). The Scottish Government position on MUP was arrived at via intensive lobbying from these very third sector professionals, experts, scientists and doctors and via public consultation.

Minimum Unit Pricing is (and always was) targeted at 'harmful/hazardous' drinkers.

For the avoidance of doubt and confusion – The [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#) defines 'hazardous drinking' as 'a pattern of consumption that increases someone's risk of harm'. This label may be applied to those with Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Toolkit (AUDIT) scores of between 8-15, or anyone regularly drinking more than 14 units of alcohol per week.

'Harmful drinking' means drinking in a way which is likely to cause harm – either physical or mental. Again, this is sometimes defined using AUDIT scores (usually 16 and above) or unit consumption (regularly drinking above the 'hazardous' level of 35 units a week for women or 50 for men).

Read this blog post in full [here](#).

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### Behind closed doors: online learning event by Alcohol Change UK

The relationship between alcohol and domestic abuse is clear but complex. Alcohol is not the cause of abuse, but its role in intensifying and complicating abusive situations cannot be ignored. We know that

addressing alcohol use and domestic abuse together is essential. We also know that this is not always what happens in practice.

At this online learning event, you can hear from experts in both fields, and collaborate with others to identify unmet needs and work towards solutions. Book your place [here](#).

## LATEST COMMUNITY SAFETY RESEARCH

## Research

### Constructs associated with youth crime and violence amongst 6-18 year olds: A systematic review of systematic reviews

It is the duty of adults in the network around young people (e.g., parents/carers, educators, professionals) to meet their different needs. According to Child-First philosophy, if a young person becomes involved in youth crime and violence, this might be due to unmet needs that have escalated to the point of crisis. Research indicates a gamut of possible constructs indicating needs and strengths, and

the aim of the present research was to identify constructs with evidence of association with youth crime and violence amongst 6-18 year olds.

Among key findings of [this review](#) were:

- Meeting a young person's needs is a crucial part of a public health approach to youth crime and violence
- We identified absence of drug/alcohol use, positive [family relationships](#), and education/employment opportunities as protective factors

### Interact Policing Autism Research: Focus group participants sought

Are you autistic (clinical diagnosis or self identified) and live in either the English Midlands or Scotland?

The Interact team are looking for members of the public who are autistic and aged 18 or over to discuss your experiences of interactions between the police and the public where technology plays a part.

To find out how to get involved, email:

**England:** [w.j.a.andrews@keele.ac.uk](mailto:w.j.a.andrews@keele.ac.uk)

**Scotland:** [e.clayton@napier.ac.uk](mailto:e.clayton@napier.ac.uk)



### Scottish Drug Checking Project Key findings published

Drug checking is a service where people can hand in a small sample of drugs for testing, so that they can receive information about what is in their drugs. Services are confidential and anonymous.

[This study](#), which ran from January 2021-May 2023, created a programme of work to research, and plan/prepare for delivery of, drug checking services in Scotland. The study developed the evidence base on drug checking, to inform and build infrastructure for the delivery of drug checking services in three

cities: Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow. These cities were chosen as they were keen to support the development of drug checking services and have some of the highest drug-related death rates in Scotland.

This study involved a range of work packages, which are discussed in more detail in this briefing, including a Realist review of the international evidence; Qualitative research to inform the most effective models of care and Informing service planning and implementation in Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow.

View the Summary & Key Findings [here](#).

# Climate Crisis & Community Safety

"We can't have safer  
communities without a  
liveable climate."

## Learning to adapt to coastal change

Ten projects designed to highlight good practice in tackling coastal erosion have secured a share of more than £1m from the Scottish Government's Coastal Change Adaptation Programme.

Due to be delivered in 2024-25, the projects cover eight local authority areas and include plans to enhance natural defences to help reduce the rate of erosion and improve protection from flooding, such as at Kingston in Moray.

The funding – part of £12m committed for coastal change adaptation during the course of the current Parliament – will also be used to support engagement with local people, businesses and infrastructure owners on the process for developing coastal change adaptation plans, and for improvements to the monitoring of coastlines.

Read more [here](#).

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## Draft plan to tackle effects of climate change in Scotland

Members of the public are being asked to give their views on how climate change is currently impacting Scotland.

A [newly-launched public consultation](#) is also seeking views on how to protect and restore nature, improve green spaces in local areas and help prepare businesses for both the risks and the opportunities presented by climate change.

The consultation focuses on a draft Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029 (SNAP3), setting out proposals for managing the current and future impacts of climate change in Scotland. The increasing frequency of extreme weather such as storms, flooding, and heat will have impacts across society, ranging from agricultural production to critical supply chains for vital foods, goods and services.

The draft plan also outlines the potential economic opportunities for Scotland, such as the development of new, innovative products and services which support Scotland's

resilience to climate change. Examples include battery storage, new insurance products and expertise in areas such as heritage restoration.

Responses from the consultation will help shape actions to prepare Scotland for climate change, as well as provide direction for future Government investment.

## Ashden Local Authority Climate Adaptation Network workshop

**5 March 2024, London (Online Event)**

A workshop for any local authority officer working on adaptation. An opportunity to learn, connect and share.

At this second meeting of Ashden's Adaptation Network, we will be discussing Taking It to the Top: how to secure senior-level buy-in for adaptation within your council.

Guest speakers include Jonny Casey and Aoife Hutton of Sniffer Scotland.

Book your place [here](#).





## Latest news from the Home Safety Scotland Forum

We're always on the lookout for new members to join our forum! If you work in or are interested in home safety, and would like to join or attend our forum, please contact Kevin Chase at [hss@scsn.org.uk](mailto:hss@scsn.org.uk).

**N.B. The next meeting of the Home Safety Scotland Forum currently scheduled for Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March will be rescheduled to Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm.**

You can follow Home Safety Scotland on Twitter at [@HomeSafetyScot](https://twitter.com/HomeSafetyScot)

### Unintentional Harm: Is Prevention Better than Cure?

**By Kevin Chase, SCSN National Development Officer & Home Safety Scotland Forum Convener**

The famous line used by those involved in preventative work. The origin of the phrase is not certain, however it is mainly attributed to Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus, some 500 years earlier around 1500.

An organisation as reputable as the Royal College of Nursing [describes prevention](#) as the fundamental principle of modern health care, and inherent within health and social care settings across the UK. Yet as David Buck succinctly described the issue in his blog, ["Prevention is better than cure – except when it comes to paying for it."](#)

So, what is prevention? The Oxford Dictionary describes prevention as: ["The action of keeping from happening or making impossible an anticipated event or intended act."](#) There are different strategies of prevention delivered across governments, whether this is to prevent crime or attempts to prevent global warming, the next pandemic, the list is endless.

Now what if we turn our attention to accident prevention in Scotland. There are four areas of accident prevention; first in the workplace, governed by legislation and managed by experts in their field with Health and Safety Advisors with incidents reviewed by the Health and Safety Executive to establish if lessons need to be learned.

Second, road safety is also subject of legislative requirements via the standards of vehicles to ensure they are roadworthy. Collisions are investigated by professionals, accident "hotspots" are identified, departments review preventative work via road engineering, media awareness and road markings. There may also be partnership meetings to identify priority work in localities. The nature of road traffic collisions and legislative requirements means that the statistics are very accurate.

Third, water safety is the latest area receiving significant focus. Scotland has considerable waterways which has risks attached to it. Strategic Groups have been created to prevent deaths and injuries in our waterways. Currently led by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, there are innovative approaches being taken from education of young people, media awareness and signposts providing accurate descriptions of your location in case phone calls are required. (The SCSN along with other partners recently published a [Water Safety Signage Audit Report](#) submitted to the Scottish Government).

The last area of prevention is within the home space. There are some national organisations that work to prevent accidents in the home. In my role at the SCSN, I head up the Home Safety Scotland Forum – with other major national bodies in Scotland including the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT).

You can read this blog in full [here](#).



## England's oldest became frailer during austerity

The speed at which England's oldest adults became frailer accelerated during the UK Government's era of austerity politics, according to a new study.

Researchers say that the rate of frailty in people aged 85 and over in England increased 50 per cent faster per year between 2012 and 2018 compared with the preceding eight years.

The impact of frailty – a decline in a person's mental and physical resilience to illness and injury – on the oldest in society must be considered should any new austerity measures be introduced, experts warn.

### Frailty index

The study, led by researchers from the University of Edinburgh's Advanced Care Research Centre, analysed data from 16,410 people in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, a nationally representative sample of the English population aged at least 50 between 2002 and 2018.

Researchers combined this with the frailty

index, which captures broad age-related declines in functional ability and physical and mental health.

The sample had an average age of 67 years and an average frailty index score of 0.15 (on a scale of 0 to 1, with 1 being maximum frailty).

Researchers found that frailty index scores increased more rapidly across all genders and socio-economic groups during the study period but it was particularly noticeable in the oldest people.

One of the lead researchers Dr Carys Pugh said:

*"A key implication of this research should be a recognition that public spending reductions likely have negative impacts on health and, in turn, mortality, particularly amongst the oldest in society. Frailty normally increases with age but as we emerge from the pandemic and into a cost of living crisis, any new austerity measures need careful consideration given their potential impact on long-term health, especially among the eldest who appear particularly vulnerable."*

Read more [here](#).

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## Homing in: How to improve the lives of older renters in Scotland

A home is more than the building we live in. An affordable and secure home is critical to a good life, and it can be all too easy to assume that this is a guarantee for everyone in later life. But the truth is that many older people don't own their homes or have affordable, secure housing. Many instead live on a low income with constant concern about how they'll pay their rent and make ends meet.

In Scotland, 22% of older people rent – almost

50,000 in the private rented sector (PRS) and 177,000 in the social rented sector.

Some 150,000 older people in Scotland – that's 1 in 7 – live in poverty, and around half (75,448) of those are renters.

A home that is affordable, secure and suitable is essential to our wellbeing and should be a basic human right. However, for many older people living on a low income, being able to afford their housing costs, feel free from the threat of eviction and live in a decent standard of home is not the norm.

Read this Independent Age report [here](#).



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