



Covid 19 Media Monitor

Week beginning 27 July

Alcohol consumption

- Over a quarter of Scots are drinking more than usual during lockdown, sparking fears of a health crisis once coronavirus containment measures are eased.
- A new survey for Alcohol Focus Scotland and Alcohol Change UK revealed that 27% of Scots reported drinking more than usual since late March, increasing to 33% among those who were already heavy drinkers (defined as drinking seven or more units on a single occasion).
- Dealing with stress was cited by around one fifth of all respondents as a reason for drinking, rising to 51% among those who are drinking more than usual. Almost half (48%) of this group admitted they were concerned about their alcohol consumption. [Third Force News](#)

Inequalities

- 'How disabled people have been completely disregarded during the coronavirus pandemic' - [The Conversation](#)

Young people

- Almost 70% of Scotland's disadvantaged young people have struggled to do any school work since the start of lockdown. Mentoring charity MCR Pathways surveyed 1,347 young people aged 13 to 18 from city, town, rural and island settings during lockdown.
- Of those surveyed, 56.1% were care-experienced and either currently or were previously in the care system and 43.9% of the young people are on the edges of the care system experiencing various forms of disadvantage
- The study found 40% of young people were too stressed and one in four had caring responsibilities that took priority over school work. Two thirds of the young people reported feeling low, anxious or stressed and 90% said their sleeping patterns had "dramatically altered" since going into lockdown, with a quarter experiencing significantly disturbed sleep. [Holyrood News](#)

Domestic abuse

- Crimestoppers recorded an 81% increase in contacts during lockdown concerning those at risk of abuse in the home, while doorstep crime calls shot up by 30% and drug dealing reports rose by 40%. [Press and Journal](#)
- No Recourse to Public Funds is leaving women experiencing abuse without any support [Holyrood News](#)

Week beginning 20 July

Crime

- Fearless, the youth programme of independent charity Crimestoppers has thanked young people for speaking up about crime anonymously during the coronavirus crisis. The charity says it has been overwhelmed by the numbers sharing the campaign messaging, with more than 16,000 young people going to the [Fearless website](#) to find out more. Young people in different parts of Scotland have spoken up about child harm and neglect, drugs and violent crime. [John O’Groat Journal](#)

Week beginning 13 July

Health inequalities

- Barnardos has published a report - Mental Health and COVID-19: In our Own Words – in which young people set out a range of recommendations for decision-makers as the UK’s nations begin easing the lockdown. These include calls to involve children and young people in recovery plans, provide free summer activities, prioritise young people’s welfare in the education system and provide targeted information to young people. A recent poll for Barnardo’s found that at least a third of those aged 8-24 had experienced worsening mental health and wellbeing during lockdown. [Third Force News](#)
- This disproportionate impact on the mental health of young people is also echoed in findings from a Mental Health Foundation survey, with ¼ of 18-to-24 year-olds saying they had felt hopeless as a result of the pandemic during the previous two weeks. [Third Force News](#)
- The National Records of Scotland released its study into the effects of ethnicity during the pandemic, revealing that people from South Asian backgrounds in Scotland are almost twice as likely to die from COVID-19. This has led to calls for the Scottish Government to increase health services, advice and guidance for South Asian communities. The delay in publishing this data has been criticised. [Holyrood News](#)

Disabilities

- Disabled people shielding from Covid-19 feel abandoned, research from Inclusion Scotland has shown. The research uncovered particular difficulties experienced by disabled Scots without an official letter telling them to shield, who still need to shield because of their high risk from the virus, or because they cannot follow physical distancing rules due to the nature of their disability. Anxiety among this group was widespread, with some reporting that they had lost out on vital support with food and medicine deliveries, and felt ‘abandoned and forgotten about’ by statutory services set up to support the shielding group. [Third Force News](#)

Week beginning 6 July

Unemployment

- Requests for advice on redundancy have increased by 100% since February, according to Citizens Advice Service. [Holyrood News](#)

Support for asylum seekers

- Refugees for Justice, a new campaign organised by refugees and asylum seekers, has launched in Glasgow in response to the Glasgow Park Inn Hotel incident. Asylum seekers had been moved to the hotel in response to the coronavirus pandemic, but charities have [raised concerns](#) about the quality of the food and accommodation. Refugees for Justice is calling for a full independent investigation into the treatment of refugees in Glasgow. [Scottish Housing News](#)

Loneliness

- New research has shown almost three quarters (71%) of over-55s have struggled with the lockdown, prompting Age Scotland to raise concerns about how older people are coping. [Third Force News](#)

Week beginning 29 June

Safer Communities and Justice Brief

- The Safer Communities & Justice Brief for May has now been published on the Scottish Government website and can be downloaded from [here](#).

COVID Recovery

- Only 6% of the British public want things to go back to how they were before the coronavirus crisis, according to a new poll by YouGov. It comes as 300 leaders from the likes of charities, trade unions and community groups are calling for the country to "build back better" with a recovery plan that will create a "stronger, fairer and greener" economy after the pandemic. [Sky News](#)

Crime

- A partnership between police and the Scottish Borders Council have seized £1.4m worth of illegal drugs. [BBC News](#)

Homelessness

- Research published in [The Conversation](#) explores why some homeless people prefer sleeping rough to hostel or hotel accommodation, something which has been highlighted during the pandemic. [Evidence shows](#) that when given access to a home of their own and support if they want it, people who avoid or abandon shared accommodation are often able and willing to sustain a regular tenancy. But anxiety may be generated from shared accommodation which is insecure, temporary and can feel less safe than sleeping rough.

Support for asylum seekers

- The Home Office has been urged to investigate treatment of asylum seekers in Glasgow after the stabbings that took place at the Park Inn hotel in Glasgow on Friday. Sheila Arthur, the director of the asylum housing charity Community InfoSource, said that – because the Home Office withdrew all financial support when the asylum seekers were moved into hotels – the former Park Inn residents were struggling to replace what they had left behind. She added that it was vital that the group of about 90 men and women, many of whom are

trauma survivors, received immediate psychological support in their native language. [The Guardian](#)

Health inequalities

- A survey drawing on responses from 2,000 Unison Scotland members, predominantly health and social care workers, has found that Scotland's black and ethnic minority (BAME) health and care workers are feeling panicked and vulnerable. It finds that black workers are more fearful of infection than other workers, more concerned about access to PPE, more worried about onward infection to family, less likely to get sick pay, more anxious about struggling to pay bills as a result of COVID infection and more fearful of losing their job. The survey also found that black workers had daily contact with "noticeably higher numbers of service users" than staff as a whole, and are typically overrepresented in what Unison describes as "lower paid, insecure roles". [Holyrood News](#)
- Research suggests the mental health of LGBTQ people may be disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This may be partly due to the fact that LGBTQ people may be caught in unsupportive or abusive environments as a result of social distancing and self-isolation, with some either having to come out to potentially unsupportive family or hide part of their identity. There have been barriers in accessing mental health care too, which most online services aimed at heterosexual users and seldom catering to the needs of LGBTQ people. [The Conversation](#)

Week beginning 22 June

Economic recovery

- A Scottish Government advisory group has made recommendations to ensure Scotland's economic recovery plan after the pandemic prioritises green industries and creates a jobs guarantee for young people. The full report is available [here](#).

Scams/Cyber crime

- New research by Citizens Advice has revealed 36% of people have been contacted by scammers since the start of the pandemic. Polling conducted on behalf of the charity also showed that certain groups were at an increased risk of being contacted by a scammer, often those who could least afford it. Of those with a disability or long term illness, 45% said they had been targeted and half of those at an increased risk of coronavirus or shielding had been contacted. [Third Force News](#)
- Cyber-crime attacks on Scottish public bodies and their bosses have been soaring since staff began working from home, it has emerged. The head of Audit Scotland said senior figures in the spending watchdog had been targeted in recent weeks. Caroline Gardner, the auditor general for Scotland, raised fears that the switch to remote working for tens of thousands of workers during the coronavirus lockdown had left many organisations, such as councils and NHS boards, under threat. [Press and Journal](#)

Health inequalities

- The Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has said it has serious concerns that the rights of older people may have been breached as care homes responded to the coronavirus crisis. [Third Force News](#)

- People living in Scotland's most deprived areas are twice as likely to die of Covid-19 as those in the least deprived areas, figures have shown. The National Records of Scotland (NRS) said the death rate was 2.1 times higher in the poorest areas. [BBC News](#)

Gender-based violence

- The Scottish Government published evidence of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on people experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. This is available [here](#).

Week beginning 15 June

Hate crime

- A new study released by Disability Equality Scotland reveals 99% of disabled people have experienced difficulties with distancing during lockdown. Key concerns related to infrastructure, with pavements not being wide enough, nor equipped to accommodate disabled peoples' needs even without the added complication of retaining a two-metre distance. Pavement parking further exacerbated this issue as did street clutter such as bins or street furniture
- Many disabled people experienced abuse and hostility from members of the public. Many disabled people reported being approached and accused of breaking lockdown or questioned about whether their journey was essential, with some being spat at on the street. Some felt that strangers expected them to be shielding and/or potentially 'infecting others' by being outside. [Third force news](#)

Community justice

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) said people with learning disabilities, autism and brain injuries have been left "bewildered" by the system as they called for urgent reforms to ensure they are given a fair trial. Many people with disabilities and mental health issues were not being provided with the adjustments needed to ensure they could properly participate in the legal process. The warning comes after a recent EHRC report found the increasing use of video hearings to conduct trials during the coronavirus pandemic had "significantly hindered" communication and understanding for people with disabilities. [Holyrood News](#)
- Researchers for [The Conversation](#) have detailed the experience of trans and non-binary people in prison during the pandemic. People in prison are currently locked in their cells for 23 to 23.5-hours per day, although respondents explain that physical distancing is very difficult to maintain in prisons, particularly in shared cells. The main issue for the correspondents is that the lockdown has reduced access to medical services, including mental health care and support for their transition. Many explain that they have felt very isolated even before lockdown.

Poverty

- Nearly 2/3 of families on universal credit have been forced to borrow money during the pandemic. Meanwhile, 70% of families said they had been forced to cut back on food and other essentials during the outbreak. [Holyrood News](#)

- Findings from a survey by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) suggest that families who are more worried about money are more likely to say they are finding it difficult to continue their children's education under the current schooling arrangements. 40% of low-income families in Scotland who responded said that they were missing at least one essential resource to support their children's learning. One third of those already most worried about money have had to buy a laptop, tablet or other device to make sure their children could take part in online schooling. [Holyrood News](#)

Universal Basic Income

- A study group looking into whether Scotland should implement a basic income for every citizen has backed proposals to run a pilot scheme. Councils in Fife, North Ayrshire, Edinburgh and Glasgow are part of the group which has now endorsed plans to run a pilot. [BBC News](#)

Fly tipping

- Perth and Kinross Council have created a fly-tipping fund after a spike on the number of fly-tipping reports during the coronavirus outbreak while recycling centres were closed. [The Courier](#)

Week beginning 8 June:

Income concerns

- A third of people are concerned about their incomes during covid-19, a new poll for Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) reveals ([Third Force News](#))
- 36% of people are concerned about their income amid the covid-19 outbreak according to a ScotPulse survey for the charity carried out in May. The equivalent figure for April was 41%.

Abuse towards key workers

- An annual survey carried out by Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers shows that abuse from customers towards retail workers is on the rise. Since the outbreak, one in six workers are currently experiencing abuse on every shift they work. Even more concerning is the fact that 196 out of 5,000 participants have been physically assaulted. ([The Conversation](#))

Crime

- Violent crime including sexual assault have fallen by around a quarter in April compared with the same period last year. Shoplifting and speeding have also fallen dramatically, with rises in fraud and 'other violence' (including threats and extortion). [BBC News](#)

Week beginning 1 June:

Crime

- Criminals are exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic and playing on the fears of businesses and the public, Scotland's [Serious Organised Crime Taskforce](#) has heard. Criminals have been

targeting those most vulnerable at home and in the care sector, for example scamming care homes by pretending to be PPE providers. Police Scotland's advice on how to avoid scammers can be found [here](#).

- Scottish Government's [Crime and Justice statistics](#) have been released. The number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland was 18% lower in April 2020 than in April 2019. The majority of recorded crimes followed this downward trend.

Safer Communities and Justice Brief

- The Safer Communities & Justice Brief for May has now been published on the Scottish Government website and can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.scot/publications/monthly-safer-communities-and-justice-briefs/>.

Substance use

- Global Drug Survey has found a big rise in binge drinking and poor health during lockdown. In the UK, nearly 47% of Britons who drink reported doing so earlier in the day than in February. More than 50% of British drinkers who responded reported an increase in the number of days consuming alcohol each week during the Covid-19 crisis, with a third reporting an increase in binge drinking. The main reasons given for increased drinking were boredom and having more time to drink. [The Guardian](#)

Housing

- A bill to control rent levels has been introduced at Holyrood. The bill prevents a landlord from increasing rent by more than a set level, related to inflation; allows a tenant to apply to the rent officer to have a 'fair open market rent' set for the property (a tenant can do this only once in any 12-month period); and requires landlords to include details of the rent they charge in the Scottish Landlord Register. [Scottish Housing News](#)

Vulnerable children report

- The Scottish Government have released their report on vulnerable children, particularly focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on children and families and considerations for the next stages. The full document can be found [here](#) and a 1-page summary can be found [here](#) and a useful 1 page on critical issues [here](#)

Week beginning 25 May:

Mental health & wellbeing

- More than £8 million has been awarded to projects to deliver mental health support and wellbeing services for people who are feeling isolated during the coronavirus pandemic. This is part of the Scottish Government's £50 million Wellbeing Fund that is helping people through the pandemic. [Third Force News](#)
- Girlguiding survey on mental health of girls showed almost a quarter (23%) of girls aged 11-14 said the lockdown has had a negative impact on their mental health. Over a third (38%) of those aged 4-10 said they felt sad most of the time, while a third of girls aged 11-14 told

researchers they struggled with loneliness. Nearly all girls aged 11-18 in Scotland (89%) said they would like more information about what to expect in the future, including details on the reopening of schools.

Drug use

- Article from [The Conversation](#) suggesting that drug use and drug dealing has been going ahead almost as usual. Supply has largely stayed the same, particularly for cocaine and cannabis. Drug deals have been wearing PPE and taking precautions to avoid the spread of COVID. Demand is still high even for party drugs, and amongst older adults as well as young people

Week beginning 19 May:

Support for women involved in sex work

- Scottish Government are investing more than £60,000 to provide additional support to women involved in prostitution/sex work. This will enable 9 organisations to increase their staffing, and enable women to access support and trauma counselling.
<https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-women-involved-in-prostitution/>

Domestic abuse

- Coronavirus lockdown may be putting older adults at greater risk of abuse – older adults may have less access to professional services as a result of staff shortages and be less able to escape abusive situations. Only about 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse is reported, with one barrier being lack of knowledge about services <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-lockdown-measures-may-be-putting-older-adults-at-greater-risk-of-abuse-137430>
- New guidance for councils dealing with domestic abuse, by COSLA and SG <https://www.gov.scot/news/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19/>
- Edinburgh Council has designed new domestic abuse policy approaches, which aim to give people affected by domestic abuse a range of housing options. They have also called for greater powers for councils to evict perpetrators in joint tenancy cases. The policy also aims to proactively prevent and address domestic abuse and suffering with early intervention. It prioritises, where possible, those subjected to abuse safely staying where they are or moving quickly and with strong support into a safer space.
<https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/edinburgh-puts-safety-of-domestic-abuse-victims-at-heart-of-housing-approach>
- NSPCC has raised fears that child abuse may be going unreported during lockdown. A new survey has revealed one in five adults in Scotland are unsure where to seek help about suspected child abuse despite worries about the heightened risks to young people during the lockdown. [Third Force News](#)

Substance use

- Concerns over those in recovery as Scots reduce NHS services use. A YouGov survey showed 64% of people in Scotland are less likely to access health services at the moment, due to fear of placing additional strain on the NHS and of catching coronavirus - <http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/concerns-over-those-in-recovery-as-scots-reduce-nhs-service-use>

Community justice

- The Scottish Human Rights Commission has written to the Justice Committee at the Scottish Parliament to highlight concerns about measures being taken in prisons during the covid-19 pandemic. Some prisoners are being confined to their cell for 24 hours a day, for extended periods of time, with no access to shower facilities or time out of cell including access to outdoor exercise. [Third Force News](#)

Equalities/disproportionate impacts of Covid

- A study by [Close the Gap](#) has highlighted the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women's employment. Unemployment will/has hit women harder, particularly young women and BAME women, because they are more likely to work in service sectors such as hospitality and retail. Women are also bearing the brunt of the increase of childcare and care for adults in the home, making it difficult to do their paid work from home, where this is required by their employer [Third force news](#)
- Coronavirus death rate twice as high in deprived areas. Almost 1/3 involve people with dementia or Alzheimer's, & men are more likely to die of COVID than women [Holyrood news](#)

Young people

- A study by The Conversation ([The Conversation](#)) focused on children's coronavirus concerns, and how parents are addressing these – mostly by 'playing it down'/reassurance, but many children are still anxious & feel their parents' reassurances conflict what they are hearing elsewhere. Not sure how newsworthy this is but it got me thinking about the lack of engagement in media etc with children & young people's views on Covid, particularly around the lack of attention to what children think about schools reopening?

Police Scotland reported to Health and Safety Executive over breath tests

- Police Scotland has been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) over fears the use of breath tests for drink driving during the coronavirus outbreak may be putting officers at risk, with droplets potentially spraying officers and infecting them with Covid - [Holyrood News](#)

Week beginning 11 May:

Digital inclusion

- A new £5 million programme will offer an internet connection, training and support, and a laptop or tablet to vulnerable people who are not already online during the response to COVID-19. The Connecting Scotland programme will connect 9,000 more people who are considered at clinically high risk so they can access services and support and connect with friends and family during the pandemic. The [Connecting Scotland](#) project is being delivered by the Scottish Government, in partnership with local authorities, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, SCVO and the digital and IT sectors led by ScotlandIS ([Future Scot](#))
- Support has also been made available through the Scottish Government's 'No One Left Behind' scheme. Hundreds of Scotland's most deprived families who are enduring daunting self-isolating home environments are benefiting from receiving vital communication lifelines

including laptops and tablets after two of Scotland's largest children's charities joined forces with the Scottish Government's 'No One Left Behind' scheme ([\(Future Scot\)](#))

Poverty

- A 59% increase in applications for crisis grants in Scotland in March shows that low-income families are struggling to cope with the impacts of the coronavirus crisis, social security secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville has said.
<https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/spike-in-crisis-grant-applications>
- Universal credit claims up by nearly 2 million
<https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/universal-credit-claims-up-by-nearly-two-million>

Inequalities

- 400 asylum seekers forced into shared accommodation despite lockdown, amidst the death of a refugee. Transportation to the new accommodation did not facilitate social distancing. Meanwhile, their regular weekly allowance of £35.50 has been cut to zero, meaning they can no longer buy sanitary products, top up phones for essential calls, or use public transport to travel to food banks. ([Third Force News](#))

Mental health/wellbeing

- A survey of over 800 people from Inclusion Scotland shows that stress, fear and anxiety are widespread among disabled people in the wake of coronavirus. While the Scottish Government has provided emergency investment to councils to maintain care and support for disabled people and has stated clearly that social care support should not be removed from disabled people during this crisis, almost half of those who responded (48%) on this issue told the charity that their support had either stopped completely or had been reduced, leaving some individuals bedbound, unable to wash or feed themselves, or suddenly reliant on family carers, without training or support ([Third Force News](#))
- Enable Scotland have worked with the police to reassure disabled people about their rights during lockdown. The charity has made a digital image – clearly stating the right of people who have a learning disability to exercise outside more than once a day when they need to – freely available to download from its website. The image is endorsed by Police Scotland, and can be saved on smartphones by people who have a learning disability, their family members or carers to show if challenged. ([Third Force News](#))

Week beginning 4 May:

Community justice

- Scottish Government have approved the early release of up to 450 prisoners. Only those serving a sentence of up to 18 months or less, and with less than 90 days remaining of their sentence, will be eligible. Exclusions apply for serious crimes like terrorism and sexual offences, as well as domestic abuse and covid-19 related crimes. Each prison governor will have a veto over the release of any otherwise eligible prisoner if they have a concern for the safety of an identified individual in the community. This move will only reduce the prison population by 5% (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52531163>)

Fly-tipping

- Some councils continue to report increases in fly-tipping. The local authority in Dumfries and Galloway said rubble, furniture, garden waste and oil drums had been found dumped during lockdown. Although, the Scottish Borders council said it had not seen any noticeable increase in fly-tipping (BBC)

Poverty

- Perth & Kinross council appeal for foodbank donations as demand for services rises. <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/perth-kinross-council-appeal-for-foodbank-donations>
- Lack of internet access has left asylum seekers, particularly children, 'completely isolated'. There are at least 60 families awaiting asylum applications in Scotland who do not have access to the internet, leaving vulnerable children unable to engage with resources. People seeking asylum are forced to live on around £35 per week each, meaning that many families cannot afford essentials including wifi or mobile data. https://www.holyrood.com/news/view/exclusive-child-asylum-seekers-left-completely-isolated-during-lockdown_15446.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20print%20edition&utm_content=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20print%20edition+CID_0dcf2e2ce2d7dc7f293ad789be9081bf&utm_source=Email%20newsletters&utm_term=Exclusive%20Child%20asylum%20seekers%20left%20completely%20isolated%20during%20lockdown
- GDA has found that 40% of disabled people surveyed are worried about food, medication or money. They are also concerned about loneliness/isolation and inability to access services. Only 37% of disabled people reported to have home broadband or IT, and many lack the confidence or skills to use it.

Domestic abuse:

- Stop It Now! Scotland reports a 'significant' rise in adults seeking help for having child abuse thoughts <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/significant-rise-in-adults-having-child-abuse-thoughts?top>
- Fathers with a history of domestic abuse have been using coronavirus as an excuse to refuse to return children to their mothers after contact visits. Scottish Women's Aid (SWA) said it has received calls from women whose children have not been returned to them following visits to the "non-resident parent". SWA said the abusive ex-partners claim "someone in the household has developed symptoms and therefore the child needs to isolate with them". The response that the women in question have had when reporting this to the police and to social work has been varied and often poor

Alcohol/drug use

- Fears as alcohol sales surge under lockdown http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/fears-as-drink-sales-surge-during-lockdown?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TFN%20digest%20Friday%201%20May%202020&utm_content=TFN%20digest%20Friday%201%20May%202020+CID_a78bcdcf2e2ce2d7dc7f293ad789be9081bf&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Fears%20as%20drink%20sales%20surge%20during%20lockdown

Hate crime

- The number of recorded hate crimes against Chinese people in the UK almost triple for the first 3 months of the year compared to data from previous years.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-hate-crimes-against-chinese-people-soar-in-uk-during-covid-19-crisis-11979388>

Week beginning 27 April:

Domestic abuse:

- 18% rise of requests to reveal past abuse since the start of lockdown:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52444555>. Police Scotland said the majority of the increase was down to "power to tell" requests made by police officers and social workers raising concerns about someone they think may be at risk of abuse
- New domestic abuse guidance has been written for social workers, in collaboration with Women's Aid & women with experience of domestic abuse

Scams

- 10% increase on fraud cases across Scotland

Equalities & HR

- Scottish government launches inquiry into the impact of covid-19 on equalities and human rights, and in what ways & how different groups are affected differentially
<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/114975.aspx>

Hate Crime

- Coronavirus conspiracy theories & fake videos fuel rise in Islamophobia (The Conversation)

Mental health/wellbeing

- 24% of adults in Scotland say they feel lonely, more than double that of the pre-lockdown figure
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/coronavirus-lockdown-mental-health-foundation-loneliness-a9477451.html>

Poverty

- Britain's energy suppliers are continuing to use debt collectors to chase unpaid bills after promising to help households during the coronavirus pandemic by offering payment plans to struggling customers. Under an agreement with the government, energy suppliers are expected to identify customers who might be in financial distress and offer to reassess, reduce or pause bill payments to help "reassure" homes during the coronavirus lockdown.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/apr/26/uk-energy-firms-using-debt-collectors-despite-coronavirus-agreement>

Week beginning 20 April:

Anti-social behaviour

- Anti-social behaviour increases but overall crime has decreased as a result of lockdown: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52298016>. ASB likely to be linked to breaches of lockdown

Abuse

- Hundreds of children contact childline about coronavirus. Counselling sessions about physical and emotional abuse have increased - http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/hundreds-contact-childline-about-coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TFN%20digest%20Friday%2017%20April%202020&utm_content=TFN%20digest%20Friday%2017%20April%202020+CID_a0289a5ed45e45b28abcc254e0848402&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Hundreds%20contact%20Childline%20about%20coronavirus
- LGBTQ people facing hostility and loneliness with many forced to move into domestic settings with families who are unsupportive or abusive – The Conversation
- Scottish Women’s Aid and CIH have partnered to produce guidance for social landlords on domestic abuse - <http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/CV19%20Scotland%20Domestic%20Abuse%20guidance.pdf>
- Domestic abuse helplines in Scotland have seen a decline in calls. This likely to reflect phone calls not being a safe method of communication with an abuser in the home, and the fact that many women do not report immediately - https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view,when-staying-home-is-unsafe-domestic-abuse-in-lockdown_15390.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20NEW%20print%20edition&utm_content=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20NEW%20print%20edition+CID_643867236e933fc7b5fa49322d0c4761&utm_source=Email%20newsletters&utm_term=When%20staying%20home%20is%20unsafe%20Domestic%20abuse%20in%20lockdown

Sex workers still forced to work on streets

- Drug use and poverty is forcing many sex workers to continue working on the streets during lockdown, exposing them to health risks, violence, and criminal charges <http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/sex-workers-forced-onto-streets-during-lockdown>

Human rights

- Scottish groups call for inquiry into human rights implications of COVID-19 measures, particularly in relation to exacerbating pre-existing inequalities on women, children, BAME people and people with disabilities, and what is being done to mitigate this: https://www.holyrood.com/news/view,scottish-groups-call-for-inquiry-into-human-rights-implications-of-covid19_15387.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20NEW%20print%20edition&utm_content=Holyrood%20Morning%20Roundup%20%20NEW%20print%20edition+CID_643867236e933fc7b5fa49322d0c4761&utm_source=Email%20newsletters&utm_term=Scottish%20groups%20call%20for%20inquiry%20into%20human%20rights%20implications%20of%20COVID-19%20measures

Community justice

- The Scottish Government and Scottish Prison Service intend to introduce mobile phones in Scotland's prisons to maintain contact between people in custody and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Citizens Advice Scotland launches new coronavirus helpline

Week beginning 13 April:

Road safety

- The number of motorists exceeding speed limits has doubled in some parts of the UK, with some drivers taking advantage of the quiet motorways.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/13/increase-in-speeding-incidents-on-uks-quiet-lockdown-roads>

Government support for those at high COVID-19 risk:

- A new national helpline is being set up to provide essential assistance to those who don't have a network of support but who are at high risk of contracting COVID-19.
- The service – which opens tomorrow (Tuesday) – will offer help to those who do not have family or existing community support and cannot get online and who are over 70, disabled, require the support of mental health services, are pregnant or receive a flu jab for health reasons <https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-those-at-high-covid-19-risk/>

Employee safety

- According to a survey of 1500 workers across the country, over half of Scottish workers do not feel safe, with many warning that their safety is being compromised by employers - particularly call centre workers (many of whom are being made to work despite not being deemed essential workers) and social care workers.
<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/more-half-scottish-workers-do-not-feel-safe-2536097>

Drugs

- Fears over drug supply chains mean people might turn to fentanyl, estimated to be 50-100 times stronger than heroin
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/12/coronavirus-triggers-uk-shortage-of-illicit-drugs>

Child sexual abuse

- Police Scotland have launched a campaign targeting sexual predators who groom and abuse children online, as children at heightened risk with predators having more time to access the internet

Week beginning 02 April:

Community Justice

- Sharp reductions in gang crime, including reports of stabbings, county lines and 'cuckooing' as a result of social distancing measures. Doesn't explicitly mention Scotland so may have to wait and see how this unfolds:

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-gang-rivalries-put-on-hold-and-violence-stops-due-to-lockdown-11970591>

Prisons

- Almost ¼ of Scottish prison staff are absent from work, and there is a shortage of PPE for staff still in work. This is adding to the major strain on prison operations caused by covid-19, with Humza Yousaf suggesting that the release of people on short-term prison sentences may help. This would be people serving less than a 12 month sentence and within the last 3 months of their sentence, and the justice secretary has emphasised that public safety will be a priority.
- This would follow the lead of other countries like Ireland, Italy, Iran and Argentina
- The justice secretary said options included home detention curfews, where prisoners were released and monitored by electronic tagging instead.
- MSPs passed the Scottish Government's emergency Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill which put in place provisions to allow prisoners to be released should the prison estate become overwhelmed. Under the new law, only those convicted of sexual or terror offences or someone who poses a threat to an identified person will be exempt from release.
- Howard League Scotland have stated that if the prison population was not decreased soon then the health of the general public would be put at risk because prisoners may end up taking up "a disproportionately high number" of Intensive Care Unit beds.

ASB

- Reports of people flouting lockdown rules is coming through from CSP leads as well as national news. Police breaking up large social gatherings, parties etc a UK-wide issue: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-52221688>

Domestic Abuse

- Scottish Government's Domestic Abuse campaign is being relaunched to reassure anyone experiencing abuse that help is still available around the clock. <https://www.gov.scot/news/supporting-domestic-abuse-victims/>

Mental health

- Anxiety charities are facing a huge surge in demand. Calls to Anxiety UK increased by 364% last week, and calls to OCD UK have seen a 35% increase since the outbreak began. There are widespread fears that the longer lockdown restrictions continue, the worse this may become. <http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/anxiety-charities-face-surge-in-demand>
- There are particular concerns over the wellbeing of children and young people. Young Scot have been given an extra grant by the government to communicate covid-19 info/resources to young people

- Glasgow University are launching a study into the impact of covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing. This will contribute to the international knowledge base and inform future public policy and practice: <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18369434.glasgow-university-launches-study-understand-impact-covid-19-mental-health/>

Poverty

- Scotland facing a 'cost of living' crisis with 34% of people worried about paying for their essentials. 41% of renters are worried about being unable to meet rent payments. Figures from Citizens Advice Scotland <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/article/scotland-is-facing-a-cost-of-living-crisis-amid-coronavirus-outbreak-says-cas>
- Civil society groups across Scotland have joined a coalition to urge the government to increase child benefit by £10 a week to help reduce child poverty.
- The Poverty Alliance published a briefing on 6th April on community organisations, activists and coronavirus. <https://www.povertyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Community-organisations-and-COVID19-PA-briefing-6-April-2020.pdf>
- Key points include:
 - sharp rise in food insecurity (food banks seeing 300% increase in demand in some areas)
 - lack of clarity in some communities as to who is responsible for providing responses – there is a general feeling that local authorities and community/voluntary organisations could be working together more efficiently
 - Support for children on free school meals is welcomed but inconsistent. Some families are required to collect food in person or use pre-paid vouchers only valid at one shop. This isn't working well and it is felt that a cash-based system is the most effective and dignified response
 - The 5-week wait for universal credit and the 3 month wait for support for the self-employed is having significant adverse impacts
 - **Those who are already at greater risk of experiencing poverty – like disabled people, lone parents (who are disproportionately women), and refugees and asylum seekers – are seeing the grip of poverty tighten, while many more people are at risk of being pulled into poverty**

Inequalities/social determinants

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52219070> BAME groups being hit disproportionately by coronavirus. Likely to do with the fact that BAME people disproportionately live in more crowded housing and work in low-paid front-line services. The nature of 'underlying health conditions' is also socially determined – e.g. respiratory issues linked to air quality and this linked to low-income, industrial and overcrowded areas.

Frontline worker safety

- A union for home and social care workers argue that the Scottish Government's protection/guidance is inadequate and is putting lives at risk: https://www.holyrood.com/news/view.home-and-social-care-workers-put-at-unnecessary-risk-by-scottish-government_15346.htm. Currently social care workers are only told they need a mask if working within 2 metres of a patient with suspected covid-19.

- Update – care workers now being told by gov that they can access full PPE
<https://www.scotsman.com/health/coronavirus/scottish-government-u-turn-over-ppe-care-workers-2533848>

Flytipping

- Flytipping continues to be an issue all over the country as councils reduce waste disposal services. This is of particular concern in rural areas, where waste and unwanted items are increasingly being dumped on farmland: <https://www.insider.co.uk/news/rural-businesses-urge-people-stem-21839460>

Week beginning 30th March:

Domestic Violence

<https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-victims-of-domestic-violence-during-covid-19-outbreak/>

To support the safety and wellbeing of women and children during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Scottish Government are providing additional grants to Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland. Scottish Women's Aid will receive £1.35 million over six months and Rape Crisis Scotland will receive £226,309 over six months.

This will help to manage the expected increase in domestic abuse cases, as well as support organisations to switch to remote services.

Fly tipping

w.b. 30th March: Councils are experiencing increases in fly tipping (e.g. Fife), likely due to councils closing household waste and recycling centres in efforts to curb social contact.

Abuse towards frontline workers

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/council-workers-face-increasing-abuse-amid-coronavirus-pandemic>

W.B. 30th March Council workers are facing increased abuse according to England's Local Government Association. Staff have reported racial abuse, being spat at, shouted at and assaulted by members of the public. The increase of abuse comes as many councils across the UK have scaled back on certain services, including reducing bin collections and shutting recycling centres.

Scams

<https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/news/beware-of-covid19-scams/>

w.b. 30th March There has been an increase in scams related to COVID-19. These include doorstep and online scams, particularly ones where scammers pretend to be volunteers offering to shop for elderly or vulnerable people in self-isolation.

<https://www.thesouthernreporter.co.uk/news/crime/young-people-urged-speak-about-doorstep-crime-during-covid-19-crisis-2522850>

Fearless is urging young people to learn the Fearless five tips to prevent doorstep crime and share them with those who may be more isolated and vulnerable at this time.

Community Justice

W.B. 30th March Scottish government are considering the early release of prisoners approaching the end of their sentences in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The overcrowded conditions within Scottish prisons make rapid transmission of viruses likely. As of Friday, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) confirmed that 111 individuals across 10 establishments were self-isolating

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/mar/28/coronavirus-scotland-may-release-prisoners-close-to-end-of-sentences>

Antisocial Behaviour