

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

11th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

Public Health Scotland - Note by the Clerk

Background

1. At today's meeting, Members will take evidence from a panel of witnesses from Public Health Scotland, including the two COSLA-nominated Non-Executive Directors of Public Health Scotland.
2. Public Health Scotland is an NHS Board sponsored by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Local Authorities (COSLA) on behalf of local government. It was established on 1 April 2020, following the merger of the Information and Statistics Division of NHS Scotland (ISD) and NHS Health Scotland.
3. Public Health Scotland's website states:

“Since 1 April 2020, Public Health Scotland has been:

 - leading and supporting Scotland to respond to its health challenges
 - making a difference to the lives of people in our communities.”
4. The Committee has heard from representatives of Public Health Scotland on various subjects since its establishment, but this will be the first evidence session focused on the work of the organisation itself.
5. Published by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2025, [The Population Health Framework](#) contains the key national strategy for Public Health Scotland. It is a ten-year, whole system plan that focuses on preventing ill health and reducing health inequalities.
6. On 27 January 2026, Public Health Scotland published [‘Together we can: our 10-year strategy to 2035’](#). The strategy is a national plan with two key aims of improving life expectancy and reducing health inequalities. It identifies the following five areas of focus for the organisation:
 - building a prevention-focused system
 - improving social and economic factors
 - strengthening places and communities
 - enabling healthy living
 - providing equitable access to health and care.

7. Public Health Scotland has also recently published its [PHS Policy for 2026](#) document which sets out key actions for the next Parliament.
8. In anticipation of giving evidence today, Public Health Scotland have sent the Committee a [letter](#) outlining key points for consideration and areas of potential policy focus for the next parliamentary session.

Today's meeting

9. At today's meeting, Members will take oral evidence from:
 - Paul Johnston, Chief Executive, Public Health Scotland
 - Alastair Boyle MBE, Board Chair, Public Health Scotland
 - Cllr Nairn Angus-McDonald, Non-Executive Director, Public Health Scotland
 - Cllr Julie Bell, Non-Executive Director, Public Health Scotland

Clerks to the Committee
March 2026