



## **MEDIA RELEASE – REDUCING INCOME INEQUALITIES IN SCOTLAND**

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NHS Health Scotland has today published information that highlights options for reducing income inequalities in Scotland.

The new Inequality Briefing from NHS Health Scotland sets out recent discussions on Universal Income policies<sup>1</sup> and how they can impact on health inequalities. This briefing highlights some of the arguments for and against the policy, and considers how Universal Income may impact on health. Currently, the Scottish Government is working with local government to support four universal income pilot schemes across Scotland. This briefing outlines the potential impacts of such schemes and the uncertainties, in order to inform future discussion on the nature and evaluation of those pilots.

Also published today, a research report: ‘Modelling the impact of policy interventions on income in Scotland’ which estimates the impact of a broad range of policies on household income distribution in Scotland. This will be used to estimate the impact of changes to tax and social security policy on health inequalities in Scotland. These reports form part of a suite of resources available to inform decision-making at national and local level on how to improve health and reduce health inequalities in Scotland.

Overall, the health of people in Scotland is improving but not at the same rate for everyone. Access to a level of income that protects and promotes health is vital. People living in poverty are more likely to have poor health. Poverty can cause ill health because it forces people to live in circumstances that can make them sick.

**Dr Gerry McCartney, Head of Public Health Observatory at NHS Health Scotland said:**

“For wealthy countries like Scotland, socio-economic inequalities are the most important factor in determining the extent of health inequalities. Reducing income and wealth inequality in Scotland is therefore a crucial part of any approach to achieving improved health for all. I’m delighted that we’re publishing these two important resources today to inform how that is done.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Fiscal and Distributional Implications of Alternative Universal Basic Income Schemes in the UK. (2017). <http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/the-fiscal-and-distributional-implications-of-alternative-universal-basic-income-schemes-in-the-uk/>

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**Contact**

For further information and a copy of the Inequality Briefing on Universal Income and the research on Modelling the impact of policy interventions on income in Scotland, please contact NHS Health Scotland's Communications and Engagement Team on 07500 854574 or email [nhs.HealthScotland-Communications@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.HealthScotland-Communications@nhs.net)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Several terms have been used to describe universal income policy. This includes: citizen's income, minimum income, basic income and universal basic income. These different terms reflect, to an extent, the variation in the underlying rationale for the policy.
2. The policy should not be confused with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Minimum Income Standard which is a calculation of an income threshold rather than a specific policy or intervention. The Informing Investment to reduce health Inequalities (III) in Scotland project includes numerical models of the potential impact of 11 interventions on overall population health and health inequalities. A range of interventions across the determinants of health (including 'upstream', 'downstream', individually-focused and population-wide) were included. The interventions were chosen based on the highest quality and most generalisable evidence linking them to changes in mortality and hospital admissions. Available at:  
<http://www.scotpho.org.uk/comparative-health/health-inequalities-tools/informing-investment-to-reduce-health-inequalities-iii>