

Wednesday 30 January 2013

## SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

### Enterprise and Environment

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many snare users have attended the training required to qualify for an identification number for the purpose of setting snares.

(S4W-12368)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** 1,376 snare users have attended the snaring training courses, as set out in the Snares (Training) (Scotland) (No.2) Order 2012.

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government its position is on making the Scots Pine Scotland's national tree.

(S4O-1746)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** If Scotland is to have a national tree then the Scots pine as an easily identifiable and iconic species may be a good option. However I am keen to hear the views of the public on this and look forward to seeing the Public Petitions Committee report on the issue.

**Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met the retail sector to discuss the loss of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certificate for mackerel.

(S4O-1747)

**Richard Lochhead:** The Scottish Government have been in close contact with the main retailers, and the fishing industry, since the Marine Stewardship Council announced the suspension of the MSC certification. It has been agreed with the industry that this issue will be discussed at the next Scottish Grocery Retailers' Forum on 27 Feb 2013, that I will chair.

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to involve communities in the decision-making process in relation to new special protection areas required under EU directives.

(S4O-1748)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies use the UK Special Protection Area selection guidelines to identify the most suitable territories for the bird species that are covered by the provisions of the EU Wild Birds Directive. Once suitable locations have been identified Ministers will ensure that communities and authorities are engaged in discussions on the future management implications before a formal public consultation and classification process is undertaken.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will ensure that hydraulic fracturing does not lead to contamination of (a) ground water or (b) surface water.

(S4W-12011)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Any proposed hydraulic fracturing would involve the high pressure injection of water, often including additives, down a borehole. A Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) licence under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) Regulations 2011 would be required to carry out this activity. SEPA would only issue a licence for this activity where appropriate information from the applicant had been received to demonstrate that any injection would not lead to unacceptable impacts on groundwater or surface waters. For example, operators would be required to provide details of the chemical additives contained in drilling and fracturing fluids, and the borehole to be used for fracturing would have to be of a suitable construction and integrity.

SEPA would also require monitoring of the fracturing operations and the surrounding groundwater and surface waters, and SEPA would audit the results. Baseline monitoring prior to any development taking place would be an essential requirement.

Low permeability layers are commonly found in the subsurface, which restrict the flow of groundwater between aquifers. This means that there can be several distinct aquifers in any given location. SEPA would take this into account when considering if the injection of fracturing fluids would have unacceptable impact on groundwater and surface waters, especially with respect to the protection of public and private water supplies.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how additives used in the hydraulic fracturing process can be guaranteed not to spread contamination from one area of ground water to another.

**(S4W-12012)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12011 on 30 January 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether all aquifers are linked and, if so, how contamination can be contained in one area with no impact on the public water supply.

**(S4W-12013)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12011 on 30 January 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how it can ensure that contaminants used in the hydraulic fracturing process do not flow into an aquifer used for drinking water.

**(S4W-12014)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12011 on 30 January 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what chemical additives are used in the hydraulic fracturing process.

**(S4W-12038)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Fracturing fluids would consist primarily of water but would also include a variety of additives. The number of chemicals used would vary depending on the conditions of the specific well being fractured. Operators would have to provide details of the chemical additives contained in drilling and fracturing fluids which the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency would use in their examination of any application to ensure that substances involved are of a type and concentration that would not cause pollution of the water environment.

Whilst site specific, a list of the most commonly used chemicals in shale gas fracking in the US can be found at:

<http://fracfocus.org/chemical-use/what-chemicals-are-used>.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how the abstracted flowback water that contains naturally occurring bicarbonates, sulphates, chlorides of sodium and potassium and radionuclides is dealt with during hydraulic fracturing.

(S4W-12039)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The production of “flow-back” fluid from hydraulic fracturing is a mining waste activity. These activities would be controlled through planning permission for the site through an agreed waste management plan. Operators would need to have a waste management plan in place, and to be able to demonstrate to planning authorities how they would store and dispose of wastes safely without causing pollution to the environment. This would include a requirement to have a CAR authorisation for any discharge of any pollutants to the water environment.

It is likely that the fluids that might flow back to the surface after hydraulic fracturing would also contain naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM). The production of oil and gas is classed as a NORM Industrial Activity for which the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 (RSA93) provides threshold values for radioactive concentration. If the fluid is above the relevant threshold values then it would be classed as radioactive waste and would be subject to the requirements of RSA93.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much public money was spent on deer fencing in each of the last 10 years, broken down by (a) organisation and (b) source of funding.

(S4W-12042)

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Committed spending on deer fencing is set out in the following tables:

(a) Organisation

	SG* (£)	FCS* (£)	FES (1)* (£)	SNH* (£)	Total (£)
2003	47,884	153,270	354,500	16,143	571,797
2004	20,584	410,207	327,500	11,147	769,438
2005	8,321	936,327	453,400	16,307	1,414,355
2006	26,864	1,939,691	463,000	12,545	2,442,100
2007	15,357	1,694,402	476,700	57,415	2,243,874
2008	270,714	661,264	491,900	54,317	1,478,195
2009	298,285	434,804	557,800	25,510	1,316,399
2010	2,100,189	Nil	1,324,700	15,200	3,440,089
2011	3,614,213	28,004	894,300	6,853	4,543,370
2012	3,617,743	Nil	1,491,600	18,109	5,127,452
Total	10,020,154	6,257,969	6,835,400	233,546	23,347,069

\* Scottish Government, Forestry Commission Scotland, Forest Enterprise Scotland, Scottish National Heritage

(b) Source of funding

	SRDP SFGS (2) (£)	FES Direct Expenditure (£)	SRDP RP (3) (£)	Legacy Agri Environment Schemes (£)	SNH MA & NNR (4) (£)	Total (£)
2003	153,270	354,500	Nil	47,884	16,143	571,797
2004	410,207	327,500	Nil	20,584	11,147	769,438
2005	936,327	453,400	Nil	8,321	16,307	1,414,355
2006	1,939,691	463,000	Nil	26,864	12,545	2,442,100
2007	1,694,402	476,700	Nil	15,357	57,415	2,243,874
2008	661,264	491,900	261,858	8,856	54,317	1,478,195
2009	434,804	557,800	286,879	11,406	25,510	1,316,399
2010	Nil	1,324,700	2,091,996	8,193	15,200	3,440,089
2011	28,004	894,300	3,612,196	2,017	6,853	4,543,370

2012	Nil	1,491,600	3,617,743	Nil	18,109	5,127,452
Total	6,257,969	6,835,400	9,870,672	149,482	233,546	23,347,069

(1) Figures for 2003 – 2008 are an estimate as expenditure for deer fencing was not identified separately within Forest Enterprise Scotland accounts.

(2) Scottish Forest Grants Scheme.

(3) Rural Priorities Scheme – the value of funding is based on SG committed expenditure, based in turn on information provided by successful applicants. Payments to beneficiaries are made on a reimbursement basis.

(4) Scottish National Heritage expenditure on management agreements made under Section 15 of The Countryside Act 1968 (as amended) and expenditure on National Nature Reserves.

**Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what investigations it has carried out into creating a subsidiary of Scottish Water to enter the utilities retail market.

**(S4W-12353)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The Scottish Government has not carried out any formal investigations into that matter. Scottish Water keep all issues of business growth under review whilst preferring to build on core strengths and existing areas of expertise and they keep Scottish Government apprised of their considerations. Were Scottish Water to create a subsidiary to enter the utilities retail market it would open up an entirely new business area requiring specific skills and expertise and would require them to take out a licence which brings considerable expense and obligation - they do not consider this to be a viable proposition at this time.

Scottish Water is working hard and successfully to increase the level of renewable energy generated from its estate and assets both as part of the core business and through its Horizons subsidiary. Scottish Water are also working diligently to reduce energy consumption across its operations. We believe that there is considerable opportunity for growth in energy production from the estate and assets both to reduce operating costs and for commercial gain by working with strategic partners through commercial arrangements for example landlord rental schemes for on-shore wind on Scottish Water catchments.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many snare users it estimates still need to attend the training required to qualify for an identification number for the purpose of setting snares before 1 April 2013.

**(S4W-12369)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Representatives of the shooting industry estimate that there are approximately 5,000 snaring operators in Scotland. On the basis that 1,376 snare users have already attended the snaring course, this leaves approximately 3,624 that have still to attend the snaring training course. It is not compulsory for snaring operators to attend the course before 1 April 2013 unless they are required to set a snare from this date.

It is the responsibility of an individual snaring operator to attend a snaring training course and produce a valid training certificate when requested to do so. Only when they have completed a training course can they obtain an identification number from the chief constable of their local police force. It will be an offence from 1 April 2013 to set a snare without displaying a tag on the snare which contains the snaring operator's identification number.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will ensure that training is attended by everyone who needs to qualify for an identification number for the purpose of setting snares before 1 April 2013.

**(S4W-12370)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12369 on 30 January 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to protect the narrow-headed ant.

**(S4W-12482)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The narrow-headed ant (*Formica exsecta*) is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and is included on both the Scottish Biodiversity List and the UK Red Data Book.

All mound-building red wood ant species are threatened by degradation of forest habitat and fragmentation as a result from increased forest cover caused by low levels of grazing, deer culling and encroachment by scrub and bracken.

The most important management practice for the narrow-headed ant is to maintain open areas within the forest. This management requirement has been taken into consideration in two important areas for the species, one as a site of special scientific interest and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve, and the other a Forestry Commission Scotland forest where foresters are proactively helping to protect and enhance populations of the ant.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) published a report in 2006, *A Review of wood ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in Scotland* which contains information on the ecology of the species. SNH has also been a member and a strong supporter of the National Wood Ant Steering Group, which includes the James Hutton Institute, Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB, among other organisations and individuals. The group has promoted surveys and collated information on wood ants. SNH recently contracted the James Hutton Institute to gather information to inform the Biodiversity Surveillance Strategy in relation to wood ants and a report has been produced which is currently being reviewed.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on the number of narrow-headed ants in Scotland.

**(S4W-12483)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The species is considered to be declining in the UK but most of the Scottish populations appear to be stable. However, at present there is not a complete national picture of the distribution of this species.

The narrow-headed ant is primarily found in the Scottish Highlands. Its stronghold is the open parts of the Scots pine forests of Abernethy, Glenmore and Rothiemurchus. There are several recent records from Strathspey, Loch Ard in Stirlingshire, the Plockton area, Ross and Cromarty, and Mudalach birch wood on Skye.

Older records exist for Mar Lodge, Black Wood of Rannoch, and from parts of Argyll including North Knapdale and Kintyre. The ant is likely to occur in parts of Deeside, Perthshire, and in suitable areas throughout Stirling and Argyll and Bute, but little survey work has been carried out. Anecdotal evidence suggests it may also be present in southern Scotland.

## Finance

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government how many meetings there have been between ministers or officials and members of the Independent Budget Review since the publication of Independent Budget Review: The Report of Scotland's Independent Budget Review Panel.

**Holding answer issued: 29 January 2013**

**(S4W-12260)**

**John Swinney:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12256 on 28 January 2013, the Independent Budget Review (IBR) report sets out a menu of options for delivering public services within a significantly constrained public expenditure environment and the Government consulted widely on the IBR's recommendations.

Against that background, Scottish ministers and officials discussed the Independent Budget Review report with members of the panel at the time of its publication in 2010. The Independent Budget Review panel then stood down.

All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

### Governance and Communities

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions the Lord Advocate has had with the Advocate General concerning the agreement between the UK and Scottish governments on an independence referendum.

(S4O-1758)

**Frank Mulholland:** I have regular discussions with the Advocate General on a range of issues. The content of those discussions is confidential.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will reassess its anti-poverty policies in light of the UK Government's welfare reform policies.

**Holding answer issued: 28 January 2013**

(S4W-12210)

**Margaret Burgess:** The Scottish Government's approach is to tackle the long term drivers of poverty through early intervention and prevention. Our Solidarity target reflects the importance we attach to reducing income inequality, something which the UK Government's policies risk exacerbating. We have serious concerns that welfare reform will impact on the most vulnerable in society and our plans for mitigation, such as the Scottish Welfare Fund, look to help those in poverty who might suffer the most.

### Health and Social Care

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what percentage reduction in alcohol consumption it expects to achieve from the introduction of a 50 pence per unit minimum price of alcohol and how this compares with the reduction in alcohol consumption between 2009 and 2011 recorded in *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: Second Annual Report*.

(S4W-12025)

**Alex Neil:** In the *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report*, analysis of the most recent data shows that per adult sales decreased by 5% between 2009 and 2011 (two year time period). This is a total reduction across adult sales and is not broken down by drinker type. The report does not estimate what impact the reduction in sales has had on harm. Caution is required when considering changes in alcohol sales over such short time periods; it is generally considered good practice to assess trends over as long a time series as the data allows. On this basis, alcohol sales have increased by 10% since 1994.

The Scottish Government is committed to introducing minimum unit pricing in order to help tackle alcohol misuse in Scotland. A key component of minimum unit pricing is that it targets a reduction in consumption of alcohol which is cheap relative to its strength. This is significant because it is these alcoholic products which are favoured and consumed by hazardous and harmful drinkers. Minimum unit pricing would, therefore, affect hazardous and harmful drinkers more than moderate drinkers, in terms of the amount they drink, how much they spend and how much they benefit from reductions in harm.

The University of Sheffield modelling estimates that a 50 pence minimum unit price will result in a reduction in overall alcohol consumption of 5.7% per annum. This is allocated differentially over drinker type with moderate drinkers estimated to reduce alcohol consumption by 2.8%, hazardous drinkers by 4.8%, and harmful drinkers by 10.7%.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to ask the University of Sheffield to provide an update of its alcohol minimum price modelling research to take into account the most recent data included in *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy: Second Annual Report*.

(S4W-12037)

**Alex Neil:** There are no plans for the Scottish Government to update the modelling carried out by the University of Sheffield. The most recent report on the modelling was published in January 2012 and contained the most up to date data available at that time, and on which the Parliament passed the Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012.

**Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) counsellors, (b) psychotherapists and (c) cognitive behavioural therapists the NHS employs.

(S4W-12053)

**Alex Neil:** Information on the number of (a) counsellors, (b) psychotherapists and (c) cognitive behavioural therapists the NHS employs is as follows:

(a) The number of counsellors employed under the psychology budget in NHS Scotland can be found in the publication "*Workforce Planning for Psychology Services in NHSScotland - Characteristics of the Workforce within Psychology Services 2012*": Table 1 or 1b. at the following link: <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2012-11-27/2012-11-27-Psychology-Workforce-Tables.xls>.

(b) Information on the number of psychotherapists employed in NHS Scotland is not centrally available. However, information on the number of psychotherapists who work within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service can be found at the following link in Table 1. [http://www.isdscotland.org/Health%2DTopics/Workforce/Publications/2012-11-27/CAMHS\\_September2012.xls](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health%2DTopics/Workforce/Publications/2012-11-27/CAMHS_September2012.xls).

(c) The number of Cognitive Behavioural Therapists employed in NHS Scotland can be found in the publication "*Workforce Planning for Psychology Services in NHSScotland - Characteristics of the Workforce within Psychology Services 2012*": Table 1 or 1b. at the following link: <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2012-11-27/2012-11-27-Psychology-Workforce-Tables.xls>.

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to assist NHS Education for Scotland streamline sponsorship arrangements for trainee GPs requiring tier 2 visas.

(S4W-12297)

**Alex Neil:** This is primarily a matter for NHS Education for Scotland and NHSScotland boards to consider and, at this stage, the Scottish Government is encouraging the development of proposals on a collaborative basis that will (a) satisfy the UK Borders Agency requirements for sponsors of trainees, (b) ensure our health services can continue to attract good quality doctors to come and train in Scotland and (c) seek to minimise any financial or bureaucratic burdens falling on such trainees, or NHSScotland boards.

In developing proposals, one option under consideration is how best to achieve a single sponsor system to host the oversight and co-ordination arrangements of all trainee doctors requiring tier 2 visas. There is recognition that such a solution would seem to offer operational advantages, and be less costly for trainees, but would also require agreement on where best to locate this host arrangement.

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the need for a single sponsor system for trainee GPs in Scotland requiring a tier 2 visa and what plans it has in this regard.

(S4W-12299)

**Alex Neil:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-12297 on 30 January 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many staff shortages NHS boards have reported in remote and rural communities in each year since 1999, broken down by (a) doctors, (b) nurses and (c) dentists.

**(S4W-12306)**

**Alex Neil:** The information requested on how many staff shortages NHS boards have reported in remote and rural communities in each year since 1999, broken down by (a) doctors, (b) nurses and (c) dentists is not held centrally.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the delivery of health services in relation to projected population changes.

**(S4W-12310)**

**Alex Neil:** The Scottish Government takes account of population change and projected population change in determining funding for the provision of health care services and the allocation of those funds between health boards. The delivery of health services is the responsibility of individual health boards in the context of their local circumstances.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether written guidance has been issued to NHS boards following the decision to make Kalydeco available on the NHS.

**(S4W-12377)**

**Alex Neil:** A letter from the Scottish Government was issued to NHS boards on 23 January 2013 to clarify the interim arrangements for immediate requests for ivacaftor (Kalydeco®) for NHS patients suffering from cystic fibrosis who have not had a lung transplant and who have the G551D gene mutation.

Further guidance will be issued to NHSScotland on the operational arrangements for the Rare Conditions Medicines Fund in due course.

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what schemes it funds to help families affected by muscular dystrophy.

**(S4W-12409)**

**Michael Matheson:** We want to ensure that people living with neuromuscular conditions, including their families, get access to the best possible care and support.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland published the *Neurological Clinical Standards* in October 2009. These standards will help ensure people with neuromuscular conditions get the earliest and most appropriate neurological treatment locally, but with access to specialist services when needed. That's why we provided boards with £1.2 million, to develop improvement groups as the main vehicles to take them forward.

We have also funded:

Three neuromuscular care advisor posts in the South East and Tayside, the North of Scotland, and the West of Scotland for two years. These regional care advisors will be able to signpost people living with neuromuscular conditions and their families to services and support in their local area.

The Wheelchair and Seating Services Quality Improvement Framework which supports the timely provision of wheelchairs in a way that responds to people's needs at each stage in the progression of their condition.

A £1.5 million investment in improving services for complex respiratory conditions, which has created a number of new posts (including consultants, dieticians, physiotherapists, nurses and pharmacists) enabling more people to be treated locally.

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it gives families to access the specialist Myotonic dystrophy support group based in Nottingham.

**(S4W-12410)**

**Michael Matheson:** We fully recognise the valuable role that peer support can play in enabling and supporting people living with neuromuscular diseases.

We are not aware of any requests for support made to the Scottish Government from families wishing to attend the Nottingham based Myotonic dystrophy support group.

**Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what support it has given to families travelling to the Myotonic dystrophy support group conference in Bristol.

**(S4W-12411)**

**Michael Matheson:** We are not aware of any requests for support from families wishing to attend the Myotonic Dystrophy Support Conference in Bristol. The Scottish Muscle Network is currently working to improve the support that individuals with neuromuscular conditions and their families receive. This has included:

Appropriate sign-posting to services and support groups provided by third sector organisations; and the development and auditing of standards on the information and support provided within Myotonic dystrophy clinics.

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how its forthcoming consultation on a new food body will address meat inspection issues.

**(S4W-12424)**

**Michael Matheson:** The forthcoming consultation on a new food body will focus on transferring existing Food Standards Agency (FSA) functions to a new body, and examine what options exist to expand its scope and responsibilities beyond the existing FSA functions. Meat inspection is already a FSA function.

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish its consultation on a new food body.

**(S4W-12425)**

**Michael Matheson:** The Scottish Government website sets the timing for publication of the forthcoming consultation on a new food body as "winter 2012-2013".

**Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when the clinical standards for breast screening (a) were last published and (b) will be revised.

**(S4W-12445)**

**Michael Matheson:** The clinical standards for breast screening were last published on 1 October 2002. Five core standards were updated in 2008: lung, breast, ovarian, core and bowel. A Cancer Quality Performance Indicators Programme was developed following the publication of the core standards.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is currently working with their partner organisations to review and update their work around national screening programmes, including screening for breast cancers. They are currently developing a governance mechanism for Cancer Quality Performance Indicators

which will be piloted in March 2013. Findings from this pilot will further inform their national screening programme work.

**Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when the clinical standards for cervical screening (a) were last published and (b) will be revised other than to amend the age for commencement of routine screening.

**(S4W-12446)**

**Michael Matheson:** The clinical standards for cervical screening were last published on 1 December 2001.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is currently working with their partner organisations to review and update their work around national screening programmes, including screening for cervical cancers. They are currently developing a governance mechanism for Cancer Quality Performance Indicators which will be piloted in March 2013. Findings from this pilot will further inform their national screening programme work.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-11979 by Alex Neil on 9 January 2013, whether the £14.2 million allocated for people affected by thalidomide is index-linked.

**(S4W-12457)**

**Alex Neil:** The £14.2 million funding for Thalidomiders in Scotland will be index linked over the 10-year period, beginning April 2013.

#### **Learning and Justice**

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what guidance it issues to the police regarding their use of social media when investigating criminal activity.

**(S4O-1757)**

**Kenny MacAskill:** It is for chief constables to determine the best way to investigate criminal activity. The Scottish Government does not provide guidance on how they should do this.

The Police Service of Scotland is already working on guidance for the use of social media by the police from 1 April 2013.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4O-01594 by Kenny MacAskill on 12 December 2012 (Official Report, c.14637), what powers currently held by the Department of Work and Pensions it considers would help it improve the collection of fiscal direct penalties.

**Holding answer issued: 23 January 2013**

**(S4W-11857)**

**Kenny MacAskill:** The Scottish Court Service (SCS) is responsible for collecting unpaid fines and penalties in Scotland and to do so often requires them to access information about a known offender held by other public sector bodies.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) require an information sharing gateway to be in place before they will allow other public sector organisations direct access to the information they hold. The SCS has been working with the DWP for some time now to secure direct access and provide them with the same rights and access to information which is already afforded to fines enforcement teams in England and Wales.

I have written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions requesting that SCS urgently be afforded direct access to DWP information systems.

**Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many superfast computers are in operation in Scotland and at what operating speeds, expressed in petaflops; how many graphics processing units are involved in parallel computing and what percentage of the maximum computing power they achieve; which universities are engaged in their operation, and what non-Scottish universities are involved in any superfast computing collaboration.

(S4W-12056)

**Alasdair Allan:** Most higher education institutions in Scotland own resources for research computing. The trend until recently has largely been to purchase such resources at the departmental level, with specific research goals in mind, funded by research grants. These resources tend to be “compute clusters”, and are often designed for high-throughput computing, rather than for the massively parallel simulations which traditional supercomputers are designed for. They tend to lack the high-speed network interconnect between compute nodes which defines a supercomputer.

The overall speed of such a system is usually not measured due to the irrelevance of this number to the system – the system is not designed to work on a single problem at once. Also, the departmental nature of such systems means that they tend to be rather limited in size, and therefore theoretical peak performance.

Many companies, for instance in the oil and gas sector, are likely to own large systems for engineering simulations, however commercial interests mean that information on such systems is not publically available.

The use of graphics processing units (GPUs) to speed up calculations is still a limited area, and although their use is increasing, no major systems in Scotland make heavy use of GPUs. The performance numbers of any GPUs are therefore not considered in the answer given.

In the list provided we have concentrated on large systems for which information is publically available, and those which have been designed, either wholly or partly, for running parallel workloads.

Table 1 lists the major systems hosted in Scotland, hosted at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Strathclyde. As mentioned above various smaller compute clusters are hosted by other Scottish universities, notably the University of Aberdeen, the University of Dundee, the University of Glasgow, Heriot Watt University, and the University of St Andrews. These are all smaller than the systems listed.

System Name	Hosting Institution	Collaborating Partners	Funders	Theoretical Peak Performance (PFlop/s)	System Details	GPU Component	Reference
DIRAC	University of Edinburgh	See note below	STFC	1.258	IBM BlueGene/Q 65000 cores, 5D Torus Interconnect, High Performance IO and Interconnect	No	[1]
HECToR	EPCC, University of Edinburgh	UoE HPCX Ltd, EPCC, NAG Ltd, Cray Inc, STFC Daresbury Laboratory, EPSRC. See note below <sup>1</sup>					
UK Research Councils	0.829	Cray XE6 90,112 cores (AMD 2.3 GHz 16-core processors) High speed Cray Gemini interconnect	Not in main system. Testbed available containing 14 GPUs	[2]			

System Name	Hosting Institution	Collaborating Partners	Funders	Theoretical Peak Performance (PFlop/s)	System Details	GPU Component	Reference
ARCHIE-WeSt	University of Strathclyde	University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Strathclyde, University of Stirling and University of the West of Scotland.	University of Strathclyde and EPSRC	0.038	3408 cores (Mainly Dual Intel Xeon X5650 @ 2.66 GHz) 4xQDR Infiniband Interconnect @ 40 GB/s	8 GPUs available	[3]
ECDF	University of Edinburgh	University of Edinburgh	University of Edinburgh	0.027	IBM iDataPlex. 2912 cores (Mix of Intel Westmere E5620 quad core and E5645 six core). Gigabit Ethernet connection and some QDR Infiniband	12 GPUs available	[4]

These systems are provided for the benefit of UK users, and therefore have users from many different academic institutions around the UK and beyond.

Sources:

[https://safe.epcc.ed.ac.uk/diracwiki/index.php/Edinburgh\\_6144\\_node\\_BlueGene/Q](https://safe.epcc.ed.ac.uk/diracwiki/index.php/Edinburgh_6144_node_BlueGene/Q)

<http://www.hector.ac.uk/>

<http://www.archie-west.ac.uk/>

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/research-support/research-computing/ecdf/>.

### Transport Scotland

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what (a) fuel and (b) carbon emissions savings have been made as a result of the Scottish Green Bus Fund.

**(S4W-12463)**

**Keith Brown:** Data submitted in periodic returns from bus operating companies to-date identify savings of 126,000 litres of fuel and 414 tCO<sub>2</sub> of carbon emissions. Returns submitted do not, however, reflect total savings, since returns are not yet due for vehicles recently coming in to service or those yet to enter service.

Total projected savings from vehicles purchased from the three rounds of the Scottish Green Bus Fund (including Bids yet to be approved under Round 3) are expected to realise 36,000 Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and a reduction of up to 60% in fuel consumption over the estimated 15 year lifespan of the vehicles.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what measures it uses to monitor the impact of the Scottish Green Bus Fund on fuel savings and carbon emissions.

**(S4W-12464)**

**Keith Brown:** As a condition of grant, operators receiving funding are required to submit periodic data detailing the operation and performance of each vehicle for which funding was provided. The data required includes details of CO<sub>2</sub> savings and fuel efficiency.

Total projected savings from vehicles purchased from the three rounds of the Scottish Green Bus Fund (including Bids yet to be approved under Round 3) are expected to realise 36,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and a reduction of up to 60% in fuel consumption over the estimated 15 year lifespan of the vehicles.

*The following question received a holding answer:*

S4W-12044