

Friday 22 March 2013

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4O-00603 by Richard Lochhead on 26 January 2012 (Official Report, c. 5771), what issues will be discussed during its 2013 review of the role of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board.

Holding answer issued: 21 March 2013

(S4W-13540)

Richard Lochhead: Decisions on the form and scope of the review of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board have yet to be taken. An assurance can be given that the key participants (NFUS, SLAE and Unite the Union) will be given an opportunity to present their views.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether the Estates Charter introduced by the Scottish Executive in 1999 remains in force.

Holding answer issued: 21 March 2013

(S4W-13541)

Paul Wheelhouse: Yes. It is standard practice for the principles behind the Estates Charter to be taken into account when managing the Scottish Ministers' estate, alongside other Scottish Government policies and the requirements of the Scottish Public Finance Manual.

Governance and Communities

Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government for what reasons it postponed the 2015 revaluation of properties for non-domestic rates until 2017.

(S4W-13669)

John Swinney: The UK Government announced in October 2012 that it would postpone the 2015 business rates revaluation for commercial properties in England until 2017.

If the Scottish Government did proceed with the 2015 revaluation it is likely that our ability to maintain business rate parity with the rate of the UK would be jeopardised.

The time between now and 2017 will be used to have a thorough and comprehensive review of the business system. Any changes to the rating system resulting from the recent consultation "Supporting Business - Promoting growth" will be put in place in time for the next revaluation, but where early actions are identified and affordable these can be implemented much sooner.

Health and Social Care

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-12567 by Alex Neil on 27 February 2013, how many compromise agreements have been used by each NHS board and how many contained confidentiality clauses.

(S4W-13683)

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government does not hold this information. As I said in my reply to S4W-12567, the use of confidentiality clauses in compromise agreements is entirely an issue between individual NHS boards and their employees.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-12564 by Alex Neil on 27 February 2013, whether the hotline will cover all of Scotland.

(S4W-13684)

Alex Neil: The National Confidential Alert Line, which will operate as a Freephone service, will be available to all NHS staff in Scotland.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government if there are any plans to extend the duration of the public inquiry into the *Clostridium difficile* outbreak at the Vale of Leven hospital.

(S4W-13876)

Alex Neil: Lord MacLean, Chairman of the Vale of Leven Hospital inquiry requested a further extension to the duration of the inquiry which was due to report by 31 May 2013. Members will be aware that Lord MacLean has been unwell and, whilst the inquiry Team have continued to make progress, Lord MacLean has requested extra time to allow him to fully engage in the work of the inquiry.

Under these circumstances, I have agreed to a further extension and Lord MacLean will now endeavour to publish his final report in Autumn 2013. I have also requested that Lord MacLean update me in August 2013 with a specific date by which he will report and I will update Parliament at that time.

Learning and Justice

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to review the provision of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology to children in mainstream education.

(S4W-13611)

Alasdair Allan: The Scottish Sensory Centre, who are funded by the Scottish Government, published a *Review of assistive technology and environmental aids to pupils with a sensory impairment in Scotland* in November 2012. This Review includes information on the provision of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology for children in mainstream education.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with (a) NHS boards and (b) local authorities regarding the provision of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology for children in mainstream education.

(S4W-13612)

Alasdair Allan: The Scottish Government has had no direct discussions with NHS boards or local authorities regarding the provision of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology for children in mainstream education.

However, the Scottish Sensory Centre, who are funded by the Scottish Government, published a *Review of assistive technology and environmental aids to pupils with a sensory impairment in Scotland* in November 2012. The Review included interviews with 18 local authorities. All but one reported that they used frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what advice it has given to education authorities on the use of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology.

(S4W-13613)

Alasdair Allan: The Scottish Government has not provided any advice to education authorities on the use of frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology. Responsibility for the design, construction and maintenance of schools rest with local authorities.

However, following consideration of a *Review of assistive technology and environmental aids to pupils with a sensory impairment in Scotland*, published in November 2012 by the Scottish Sensory Centre. The Scottish Government will instruct that over the next two financial years, the Scottish Sensory Centre will:

Establish a national hearing impairment technology group in order to bring together local authority staff and other specialists to share knowledge and expertise.

Develop their expertise in this area in order to establish themselves as a source of advice and support for local authorities on the use of assistive technology and environmental aids to pupils with a sensory impairment in Scotland.

Assistive technology such as frequency-modulated (FM) amplification can be an important element of the additional support a pupil with a hearing impairment received in order to access learning. By increasing their capacity in this area, the Scottish Sensory Centre will help ensure that pupils across Scotland with a hearing impairment can benefit from the latest technological developments.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many children have been provided with frequency-modulated (FM) amplification technology in (a) primary and (b) secondary school in each year since 1999, broken down by (i) local authority and (ii) NHS board.

(S4W-13614)

Alasdair Allan: This information is not held centrally.

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many police support staff there were in (a) each police force, (b) the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency and (c) the Scottish Police Services Authority on 31 December 2012.

(S4W-13622)

Kenny MacAskill: Police staff play a critical role in the success of Scottish policing, and supporting the delivery of crucial frontline services, and will continue to do so in the future. The number of police support staff (full time equivalent) on 31 December 2012 is given in the following table.

Number of police support staff (FTE) on 31 December 2012

Police Authority	Number of Support Staff
Central	312
Dumfries and Galloway	220
Fife	381
Grampian	637
Lothian and Borders	1,034
Northern	314
Strathclyde	2,280
Tayside	459
SPSA	1,111
SCDEA	138
Scotland	6,885

Notes:

1. Figures are expressed in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) police support staff, rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Scotland totals may not equal the sum of the parts due to rounding.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many kinship carers there are, also broken down by local authority area.

(S4W-13635)

Aileen Campbell: Data on the number of kinship carers of looked after children is not held centrally.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Independent): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answers to questions S4W-13242 and S4W-13243 by Kenny MacAskill on 6 March 2013, whether it will publish information on any final measures required to transpose the obligations of the EU directives into domestic legislation and, if so, when.

(S4W-13641)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government regularly provides to the Justice Committee a high level update on EU directives. This generally includes an assessment of actions that the Scottish Government might be required to take in order to comply with individual directives. We consider that secondary legislation under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1975 will be required in order to transpose fully the directives mentioned in his earlier questions. The secondary legislation will set out the specific measures being taken to transpose the obligations into domestic law.

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much money has been confiscated by the courts in each of the last five years following convictions for (i) the illegal sale of and (ii) selling illicit tobacco.

(S4W-13821)

Kenny MacAskill: This question relates to operational matters that are the responsibility of the Scottish Court Service (SCS) corporate body. The question has been passed to the Chief Executive of the SCS who will reply in writing within twenty days.

The following questions received holding answers:

S4W-13542
S4W-13544
S4W-13548
S4W-13561
S4W-13563
S4W-13564
S4W-13565