SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason the data used in the sea lice dispersal model for Loch Linhe was not made available prior to being published in the Journal of Fish Diseases and on what date Marine Scotland Science received the data.

(S4W-14053)

Paul Wheelhouse: At no point during this project’s progression have data been withheld. Marine Scotland Science received the information by 30 October 2012 and further work on the model using this information is being carried out, given the dispersal modelling still has a year to run.

The paper, published in the journal of Fish Diseases, aims to present the approach and scientific principles relevant to the project and to ensure the modelling methods and procedures are assessed by peer review, to give confidence that the work is deploying a scientifically valid methodology.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what arrangements it has in place with the salmon farming industry for the provision of sea lice data for the purpose of scientific research and whether these will be extended to include weekly counts of sea lice at each farm.

(S4W-14055)

Paul Wheelhouse: As indicated during stage 2 of the Bill, the Scottish Government has a commitment from the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation to provide Marine Scotland with access to sea lice information at farm management area level to support defined areas of research of benefit to our understanding of how to best support the sustainable development of Scotland’s aquaculture sector.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to prevent the publication of sea lice data being published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

(S4W-14059)

Paul Wheelhouse: No. The content of publications is determined by scientific needs. The Ministerial Group on Sustainable Aquaculture Working Group on Science and Research will take forward discussion of how best to coordinate and maximise the impact of resources deployed on research in the aquaculture sector to benefit the industry, academic community and to support policy development and regulatory functions of Scottish Government and its agencies. This will provide a useful platform for discussion of knowledge exchange, while respecting commercial sensitivities.

Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to impose conditions that would limit the use of sea lice data for scientific purposes.

(S4W-14060)

Paul Wheelhouse: No. Data or information released by the Scottish Government would have no conditions limiting its use.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when the marketing contract for its Greener Scotland policy was put out to tender; which companies submitted bids and what their registered addresses are; which company secured the contract, and what the value is of the contract.

(S4W-14241)
The following answer was corrected on 15 May 2013

John Swinney: The Scottish Government’s greener marketing campaigns help change behaviours which impact on carbon emissions. This, in turn, helps Scotland achieve its climate change targets of a 42 per cent reduction in CO2 by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050.

Campaign results include:

76 per cent of those who saw the Travel & Transport campaign were willing to leave their car for shorter journeys.

95 per cent of those who interacted with the Eat In Season campaign went on to cook or eat in season food.

The Scottish Government has tendered contracts for a number of marketing services to deliver the campaigns.

These are Marketing Communications, Public Relations, Research and Direct Marketing.

The following table gives the information requested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Contract (Service)</th>
<th>Date of Invitation to Tender</th>
<th>Bids Submitted (Successful Bidder in Bold)</th>
<th>Registered Address</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>April 24, 2012</td>
<td>Leith/Stripe</td>
<td>37 The Shore</td>
<td>£375,610</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BIG Partnership</td>
<td>5 Park Circus Pl</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glasgow G3 6AH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidated PR</td>
<td>22 Endell Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London WC2H 9AD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weber Shandwick</td>
<td>84 Eccleston Sq</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London SW1V 1PX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Communications</td>
<td>June 2, 2010</td>
<td>Story UK Ltd.</td>
<td>Quay House 142</td>
<td>£2,863,045</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial St. Edinburgh EH6 6LB</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Merle Agency</td>
<td>14 Elliot Place</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skypark 3 Glasgow G3 6EQ</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Leith/Tangible Group Ltd.</td>
<td>37 The Shore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edinburgh EH6 6QU</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newhaven Communication Ltd/Hush Communications</td>
<td>77 Montgomery Stree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edinburgh EH7 5HZ</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Union Advertising Agency Ltd.</td>
<td>1 Rutland Court</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Edinburgh EH3 8EY</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>July 23, 2010</td>
<td>TNS UK Ltd.</td>
<td>TNS House Westgate</td>
<td>£413,220</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Progressive</td>
<td>HBJ Gateway Exchange Tower</td>
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<td>IFF Research</td>
<td>Chart House 16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chart Street London N1 8DD</td>
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<td>Direct Marketing</td>
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<td>The Leith Agency/Tangible Group Ltd.</td>
<td>37 The Shore</td>
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<td>Commercial St. Edinburgh EH6 6LB</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RAPP Limited</td>
<td>1 Riverside Manbre Rd</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London W6 9WA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Newhaven Communication Ltd/ Hush Communications</td>
<td>77 Montgomery Street</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Edinburgh EH7 5HZ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Published details of Scottish Government marketing spend can be found at: [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/Directorates/Communications/advertising-marketing/spend](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/Directorates/Communications/advertising-marketing/spend)

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what targets it expects Registers of Scotland to achieve in 2013-14.

(S4W-14518)

Fergus Ewing: Scottish Ministers have set the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland the financial targets of achieving:

A 3% cash-releasing efficiency saving; and an increase in Register of Scotland’s commercial income of 5%. In addition, the Keeper has set the following service standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register of Scotland’s Service Standards 2013-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where it is in the Keeper’s power, legally appropriate and not subject to an individual agreement with the applicant:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Record new Land Register applications on the application record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Process ARTL applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Process CAJR applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Process Crofting Register applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Process Sasines applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Register Dealings of Whole (DW’s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those DWs that are dependent on prior or same date First Registrations and TPs will be delivered to their Service Standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Register Standard First Registrations (FR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those FRs that have had pre-work carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Register Other First Registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those FRs that have had no pre-work carried out. Those FRs that are dependent on TP applications will be delivered to their Service Standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Register pre-31 December 2012 Transfer of Parts by 30 September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Register Transfer of Parts from 1 October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Process customer enquiries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Increase our Public Service Quality Index rating from 72 to 74.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Complete 98.5% or more of registrations, over a 12 month rolling period, without corrective action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finance

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government when the decision was taken to support the buyout of the Scottish Public Pensions Agency building; what savings will result, and over what time period.

(S4W-14043)

John Swinney: The decision was taken to support the Scottish Public Pensions Agency lease buyout on 30th January 2013.

This will realise an immediate annual cash saving of £648,452 on rental costs. In the medium to long term this will make an expected saving, at net present value, of £1.01 million by 2022 and £10.15 million by 2042.

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government who will benefit from the social wage and how.

(S4W-14105)

John Swinney: Through the Social Wage we have defended and extended key core universal services, rights and benefits to deliver the social and economic circumstances for everyone to benefit.

Key commitments include: the removal of prescription charges, benefitting every Scottish citizen and potentially saving those with long term illnesses around £104 per year; free eye examinations, benefitting every Scottish citizen and having delivered almost two million examinations in 2011-12; free personal care, benefitting over 77,000 older, vulnerable people in our society; council tax freeze, benefitting over 1.8 million homes; sustainable domestic water charges benefitting all Scottish households on a public water supply; free university tuition, saving students around £27,000 a year compared to the cost of the studying in England; concessionary travel to help older and disabled people in Scotland; the abolition of bridge tolls; legislating through the Children and Young People Bill to deliver an increase to 600 hours of free, flexible early learning and childcare to around 120,000 children across Scotland; and the implementation of a Scottish Living Wage for the duration of this Parliament.

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the value was of contracts awarded through Public Contracts Scotland to (a) Scotland-based and (b) international small or medium-sized companies in (i) 2010, (ii) 2011 and (iii) 2012.

(S4W-14306)

Nicola Sturgeon: It is not possible to calculate the value of contracts awarded via Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) because at the time of the publication of the award notice only an estimated value or range of values is provided by the contracting authority. In addition, many contracts are multi-supplier agreements, often frameworks arrangements, and it is not possible at the point of contract award to calculate how any estimated contract value will be divided between the participating suppliers over the course of the contact.

However, information from the Scottish Procurement Information Hub (the Hub) indicates that the value of spend with Scottish-based small and medium sized companies per financial year is £2.63 billion in 2010-11, and £2.68 billion in 2011-12. A further £1.1 billion was spent in each of the financial years above with Small and Medium Enterprises located elsewhere in the UK. Figures for 2012-13 are not yet available.

All Hub figures quoted above are based on data where both the employee numbers and region of the supplier are known. The Hub does not classify regions outside the UK.

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many and what percentage of contracts were awarded to supported businesses through Public Contracts Scotland in (a) 2010, (b) 2011 and (c) 2012.

(S4W-14309)
Nicola Sturgeon: The information requested by the member is set out in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Supported Businesses** awarded contracts via PCS</th>
<th>2010*</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Supported Businesses** awarded contracts via PCS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of suppliers awarded contracts via PCS</td>
<td>1,252</td>
<td>8,329</td>
<td>13,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Supported Businesses awarded contracts as a percentage of all suppliers awarded contracts via PCS</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2010 figures are for October to December only as this is when supported business reporting functionality became available in Public Contract Scotland (PCS).

** Supported business classification based upon supplier registrations on PCS.

A new Scottish Government reserved framework for supported businesses became effective in September 2012. To date (22 April 2013), 52 contracts have been placed by 17 different public bodies under the framework with a value of around £180,000. Due to the date of the framework’s implementation many of these will not be captured in the table.

The PCS statistics do not include any public contracts placed with supported businesses outwith the PCS portal. Much of the economic activity for supported businesses comes directly from their partner local authority e.g. Glasgow City Council and Royal Strathclyde Blindcraft Industries (RSBi). This can be substantial and is not competed through PCS.

Governance and Communities

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made since January 2013 on establishing a welfare reform mitigation fund for advice services and how it will ensure that the fund provides support for client groups with particular needs.

Holding answer issued: 23 April 2013

Nicola Sturgeon: The Scottish Government has announced £7.9 million of funding for advice services to deal with the impact of welfare reform.

On 25 April 2013 it was announced that the Scottish Legal Aid Board would distribute £5.1 million of Scottish Government funding as part of a single programme also incorporating £2.35 million funding from the Money Advice Service. The Scottish Government funded elements of this programme are expected to open for applications on 13 May 2013, when full details of the criteria will be published.

In addition, we have allocated £2.5 million to Citizens Advice Scotland up to March 2015 and have invested £300,000 in a number of other projects in 2012-13.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason the Third Sector budget was reduced in the 2012-13 Spring Budget Revision.

John Swinney: The purpose of the Spring Budget Revision is to amend the Budget (Scotland) Act 2012, which authorises the Scottish Government’s spending plans for the financial year 2012-13.

There was a delay completing the procurement of fund management arrangements for the successor to the Enterprise Growth Fund resulting in a underspend of £5 million. The project is now in progress with budget allocation expected to be fully committed going forward.
There was also a transfer of £1 million to the Justice budget for the Reducing Re-Offending Change Fund.

**Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what the impact will be of changes to the Third Sector budget in the 2012-13 Spring Budget Revision.

**(S4W-14037)**

**John Swinney:** The £1 million transfer to the Justice budget for the Reducing Re-Offending Change Fund was a planned reallocation of funds. The Reducing Reoffending Change Fund has two key aims:

- To provide offenders with substantial one-to-one support through evidence based mentoring schemes.
- To promote a strong and equal working partnership between third and public sector organisations.

The £5 million transfer was redeployed to other purposes within the overall Scottish Government budget.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what funding is available to (a) local authorities and (b) community groups to invest in town and village centres.

**(S4W-14136)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Local authorities have responsibility for delivering local economic development and local regeneration. It is the responsibility of each local authority to allocate the total financial resources available to it on the basis of local needs and priorities.

In February 2013, we announced a £2 million fund for housing providers, whether public or private, to encourage the development of affordable housing in vacant town centre properties. We are currently finalising the criteria for this fund.

There are a range of Scottish Government funds to support community organisations, including those working in town and village centres. We are currently mapping what Scottish Government funding is available to support communities and we intend to publish this on our webpages later this year. There are also many other organisations that offer funding support for communities, including BIG Lottery, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to extend the availability of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund to all local authorities.

**(S4W-14137)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** As signalled in the Regeneration Strategy the Scottish Government and Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities are currently conducting a review of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund. The review is likely to conclude in summer 2013.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish the report of the national review of town centres.

**(S4W-14138)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The External Advisory Group of the Town Centre Review, established in September 2012, are currently considering their recommendations. We expect to receive the report in May 2013.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much it has given to the advice services that are assisting people effected by the recent welfare changes, broken down by (a) year and (b) service provider.

**(S4W-14253)**
**Nicola Sturgeon:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-13907 on 26 April 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](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx).

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much it has received in Barnett consequentials from the UK Government to fund the advice services that are assisting people effected by the recent welfare changes.

(S4W-14254)

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Barnett consequentials accrue to the Scottish Block as a whole and it is for Scottish Ministers to decide how to allocate the total resources available to them across devolved spending programmes.

The Scottish Government received £3.4 million in Barnett consequentials over 2013-14 and 2014-15 as a result of additional UK spending on advisory services, which adds to the total budget available to the Scottish Government in these years.

**Learning and Justice**

**Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to maximise the available resources to improve the outcomes for vulnerable young children and what steps it has taken to improve the system of data collection for measuring their (a) educational and (b) social outcomes.

(S4W-13961)

**Aileen Campbell:** The Getting it Right for Every Child programme aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people. It does this by providing a common framework, practice model and language to deliver a co-ordinated approach which is appropriate, proportionate and timely and has the child at the centre. It involves reducing duplication and streamlining processes which will maximise available resources.

The Scottish Government manages three data collections in which vulnerable young children in Scotland can be identified and their outcomes measured.

(a) Educational Outcomes

1. The Scottish Government currently collects data via local authorities on attainment, attendance and exclusion rates in school and for all young children (ages 5-11) in Scotland which are published annually.

   Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living: [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/4917/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/4917/0)


(b) Social Outcomes

3. The Scottish Government, Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) survey collects data on over 10,000 children in Scotland from birth and the data has been analysed by different family demographics such as low income households or families who live in deprived areas. Data is reported on and published measuring cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development, physical and mental health and wellbeing outcomes for children aged 0-8 years. The data can be found at: [http://www.growingupinscotland.org.uk/](http://www.growingupinscotland.org.uk/)

   The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill proposes duties on relevant authorities in each Community Planning Partnership area to report on progress in improving outcomes for all children. The Scottish Government will be working with partners to identify how best existing data can be used.
to inform the reports which might be expected and whether other sources of data collection might also be used to inform these reports.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will request that the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) prepare an evidence-based guideline on recovery from opiate drug addiction in line with the outputs of the independent expert group on opiate replacement therapies.

\(\text{(S4W-14095)}\)

Roseanna Cunningham: The Scottish Government is committed to improving all aspects of quality in how drug treatment is delivered in Scotland.

The Chief Medical Officer, Sir Harry Burns, is currently leading an independent expert group to gather evidence on opiate replacement therapies used to treat people with drug addiction in Scotland (announced in October 2012). The Group is due to report its findings in the next few months.

Any individual or group can propose a SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidance Network) guideline at any time: http://www.sign.ac.uk/about/introduction.html. For a topic to be suitable for the development of a SIGN guideline there must be evidence of variation in practice which affects patient outcomes and a strong research base providing evidence of effective practice. In addition, the potential benefit to patients must be sufficient to justify the resources invested in the development and implementation of a SIGN guideline. A decision on whether SIGN should be asked to consider a guideline on recovery from opiate drug addiction will be made following the report from the independent expert group.

The Scottish Government has also committed to revise the 2006 National Quality Standards for Substance Misuse Services through the development of an Alcohol and Drug Quality Improvement Framework. This Quality Improvement Framework is the focus of the next stage of delivery of the Road to Recovery Strategy and builds on recommendations within the Quality Alcohol Treatment and Support Report (2011), making sure quality is embedded across all services in Scotland: quality in the provision of care, treatment and recovery services; and quality in the data that will evidence the medium and long term outcomes of people in recovery. The Quality Improvement Framework will drive further improvements setting standards of care, which will be measured by quality indicators of recovery. Quality standards, improved data and evidence, and planning and reporting requirements will all contribute to an effective Recovery Orientated System of Care delivering an integrated approach to service planning, commissioning, design and delivery focused on individual needs.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when further details of the improvement partnership programme announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013 will be available; which stakeholders will participate, and how schools wanting to participate (a) can apply and (b) will be chosen.

\(\text{(S4W-14125)}\)

Michael Russell: Full details concerning this programme will be available to all schools and local authorities by end June 2013. Between now and then Education Scotland will be working with key stakeholders including Association of Directors of Education in Scotland and School Leaders Scotland to work out the details including how to apply and criteria to be applied.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how long it expects relationships between schools established under the improvement partnership programme announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013 to last and how it will determine whether a relationship is successful.

\(\text{(S4W-14127)}\)

Michael Russell: Each improvement partnership will be tailored to individual circumstances. It is expected that some of these relationships will be over the longer-term, in some cases six months to a year or more. National criteria for success will be developed by key stakeholders before the end of June 2013. These will be augmented by local criteria for success negotiated as part of each partnership.
Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government on what date it will publish the consultation paper on class sizes and teacher numbers announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013.  

Michael Russell: The Scottish Government is working with the Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities, with a view to issuing a joint consultation paper within the coming weeks. No date has been fixed for the publication.

(H4W-14128)

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government (a) how much it will cost and (b) who it will work with to develop the senior phase benchmarking tool announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013.

Michael Russell: The development of the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool is estimated to cost £0.7 million over the three financial years 2011-12 to 2014-15. The tool will be launched in August 2014.

The tool is being developed through a project-based partnership involving the Scottish Government, local authorities, secondary schools, national education agencies and other partners including teachers and unions.

(H4W-14129)

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much it will cost Education Scotland to develop the website with schools data for parents, which was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013, and whether it will be developed in-house.

Michael Russell: Education Scotland are about to start scoping the work and finalising the requirements. After this phase is complete, it will be possible to estimate costs. The existing websites, Parent Zone and Scottish Schools Online are currently managed and developed in-house by Education Scotland. It is likely that the most cost-effective approach for this new development would be to build upon the existing functionality. The first meeting to discuss the scope and requirements was held on Tuesday 16 April 2013.

The new website will be developed to reflect the views parents provided into during the consultation on the School Handbook legislation. This highlighted that parents want a richer mix of information about their own school, and education in Scotland, rather than just a list of statistics.

(H4W-14130)

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much it will cost "to improve the quality of information going to parents about Curriculum for Excellence" and "produce a new publication to be provided to every parent in Scotland" as announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 27 March 2013.

Michael Russell: The Scottish Government is continually looking at ways to respond to requests to improve information and engagement with parents on Curriculum for Excellence. In response to direct feedback from parents, a new leaflet for parents is being developed in partnership with the National Parent Forum of Scotland. Final costs for this are not yet available.

(H4W-14131)

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much it costs school pupils to apply for college and university courses through UCAS.

(H4W-14345)
Michael Russell: For the 2013 application cycle, the UCAS application fee is £12 for those applying for only one course or £23 for those applying to between 2 and 5 course choices.

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how the charge for school pupils to apply for college or university courses through UCAS impacts on poorer students and families.

(S4W-14346)

Michael Russell: UCAS is a charity, non-profit distributing and as such the modest charge is designed to cover the cost of operating and maintaining the system. School pupils apply through their schools rather than direct to UCAS.

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when the charge for school pupils to apply for college and university courses through UCAS last increased and whether it will increase in the future.

(S4W-14347)

Michael Russell: UCAS is an independent UK Charity and avoids increasing fees whenever possible. The UCAS application fee for between two and five course choices increased from £22 in the 2012 cycle to £23 in current 2013 cycle.

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made following publication of the Review of Proposals to Improve Arrangements for Independent Monitoring of Prisons.

(S4W-14505)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government will publish its response to Professor Coyle’s review on 26 April 2013. The decision has been made that HM Chief Inspector of Prisons will oversee four prison monitors who will be supported by lay monitors. The prison monitors will be further supported by an advisory group which will be made up of key stakeholders from the justice sector. This group will provide guidance on monitoring, appointments and training.

The legislative process to transfer and modify the existing prison visiting committee statutory powers, as well as amendments to the Prison Rules, will be made through a Section 14 Order under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. The parliamentary process and transition from prison visiting committees to independent monitors will take a number of months to complete. We anticipate the transition and introduction of the new independent monitoring service to be completed by autumn 2014.

The following questions received holding answers:

S4W-14038
S4W-14255
S4W-14256
S4W-14260