

Tuesday 10 February 2015

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Communities

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has carried out of whether the information provided by landlords registering under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 is being used by local authorities when marketing their housing portal services.

(S4W-24197)

Margaret Burgess: The Scottish Government has not carried out any assessment on whether the information provided by landlords registering under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 is being used by local authorities when marketing their housing portal services.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with the providers of private sector housing portals regarding the provision of integrated marketing for private and social rented housing.

(S4W-24198)

Margaret Burgess: The Scottish Government has had no recent discussions with the providers of private sector housing portals regarding the provision of integrated marketing for private and social rented housing.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact on private sector housing portals of the launch by local authorities of the Home Choice initiative.

(S4W-24199)

Margaret Burgess: The Scottish Government has made no assessment of the impact on private sector housing portals of the launch by local authorities of the Home Choice initiative.

Michael Russell (Argyll and Bute) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what advice it has given to local authorities regarding the Custom and Self Build Scheme launched by Capita and Lloyds Banking Group and whether it will develop a right to build scheme similar to that operating in England.

(S4W-24257)

Margaret Burgess: It is for local authorities to decide whether they would wish to support this scheme in Scotland, taking account of their particular circumstances and priorities. The Scottish Government's revised guidance to local authorities on the preparation of local housing strategies notes that self and custom build approaches can be viable options for a variety of households across a range of areas, both urban and rural.

There are no current plans to introduce a right to build scheme in Scotland.

Enterprise and Environment

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the statement by Fergus Ewing on 28 January 2015 (Official Report, c.17), whether it will provide additional details of the full public health impact assessment on unconventional oil and gas production announced by the minister.

(S4W-24207)

Fergus Ewing: The public health impact assessment was announced as part of a wider body of work that the Scottish Government will undertake, including a full public consultation, during the period of the moratorium on unconventional oil and gas planning consents. As indicated during my announcement on 28 January 2015, I will keep Parliament informed of progress and further details will be announced in due course.

Finance

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-24015 by John Swinney on 28 January 2015, how much it spent on each of these products in 2013-14.

(S4W-24245)

John Swinney: The Scottish Government spend on different categories of liquid fuels is shown in the following table. Prior to October 2013, spend on heating oils was not centrally collated. As a result spend for only part of the year 2013-14 is shown:

Purchasing Entity	Fuel Type	Annual Spend
Marine Scotland (Marine Gas Oil)	Marine Gas Oil	£2.54M (April '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Heating Oils)	Kerosene and Gas Oil A2	£41.1k (Oct '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Car Hire Fuel Top-Ups)	Ultra-low Sulphur Mixed Fuels	£25.3k (April '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Ministerial Cars - Diesel)	Ultra-low Sulphur Diesel	£91.4k (April '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Ministerial Cars - Petrol)	Ultra-low Sulphur Petrol	£11.4k (April '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Pool Car Fuel - Diesel)	Ultra-low Sulphur Diesel	£239.9k (April '13 – March '14)
Scottish Government (Pool Car - Petrol)	Ultra-low Sulphur Petrol	£25.9k (April '13 – March '14)

Health and Social Care

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to review the regulations regarding people's eligibility to be blood donors.

(S4W-24292)

Maureen Watt: When assessing a donor's eligibility the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) have to take into consideration more than 300 deferral criteria. The guidelines are constantly evolving, for example in calendar year 2014 SNBTS revised 13 of their donor selection rules and the deferral criteria for 32 countries. Changes in deferral criteria are often complex and sometimes need to be made quite rapidly, for example in response to changes in the pattern of infectious diseases in other parts of the world.

SNBTS procedures and policies support staff to make the correct decisions about donor eligibility. Regular reporting and review of donor deferrals aim to reduce variation in practice and highlight criteria to be reviewed at SNBTS or UK level.

SNBTS is represented on the Joint United Kingdom Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation Services Professional Advisory Committee, the UK Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs and relevant subcommittees which maintain a watching brief on new and emergent issues relevant to donor selection and blood and tissue safety.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has regarding how many people in Scotland have received a blood transfusion in each year since 1980.

(S4W-24293)

Maureen Watt: Please refer to the following table that shows the number of patients who received a blood transfusion in Scotland per calendar year. Data was obtained from the Scottish National Blood

Transfusion Service's (SNBTS) Account for Blood (established in 2009). This data is not available prior to 2009:

Calendar year	Patients transfused
2009	38,894
2010	39,782
2011	38,667
2012	37,871
2013	36,139
2014	34,557

Please note:

The data presented does not reflect full coverage of transfusions in Scotland. Due to changes in blood bank systems it has not been possible to get full consistent coverage. The following should be noted when interpreting this information:

The Western Infirmary blood bank data is not available for 2009 and approximately half of 2010. The addition of data from this blood bank in the latter half of 2010 most likely accounts for the apparent 2% increase in patients transfused in that year against a background of 2-4% decrease in other years.

Data from the Western Isles blood bank is only available from 2014.

Wishaw General, Caithness General and Belford blood bank information is not available.

Private hospital data are not available.

The number of patients transfused is a count of patients transfused with any blood component at any location. The same patient may be transfused with different blood component types in different locations.

The count of patients uses the patient Community Health Index (CHI). Where the CHI is unknown or unable to be derived a patient is identified through the local blood bank system identifier.

SNBTS currently holds a record of individual units issued dating from 1999. Data on the number of patients transfused began to be formally recorded following the establishment of Account for Blood in 2009.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has regarding how many cases of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) have been recorded in Scotland in each year since 1980.

(S4W-24294)

Maureen Watt: Definite or probable variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) cases in Scotland, where Scotland was the last residence before death, from 1 May 1995 to 31 December 2014, are shown in the following table:

Year of death	Number of deaths in Scotland
1995	0
1996	3
1997	0
1998	1
1999	4
2000	5
2001	4
2002	2
2003	0
2004	2
2005	0
2006	0

Year of death	Number of deaths in Scotland
2007	1
2008	0
2009	0
2010	0
2011	0
2012	0
2013	0
2014	0
Alive	0
TOTAL	22

No deaths were recorded for vCJD in the UK prior to 1995.

Learning and Justice

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether the statutory guidance accompanying the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 will include reference to the specific needs of disabled children.

(S4W-24200)

Fiona McLeod: Draft statutory guidance on parts 4, 5 and 18 (section 96) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 contains references to the specific needs of disabled children. We discussed the developing draft statutory guidance with key stakeholders and launched the full, public consultation on 6 February 2015 as set out in the answer to question S4W-24342. We are committed to working with stakeholders during the consultation period.

In addition, the statutory guidance which was published to support the implementation of the early learning and childcare provisions of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 includes a chapter on children with additional support needs, including those with additional support needs arising from a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

Statutory guidance on Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act requires corporate parents to take into account barriers related to the special needs of disabled children. They must then identify and implement appropriate actions to help these children and young people overcome the barriers, so that they can benefit from the opportunities, services and support available to them. The corporate parenting guidance is currently out to public consultation until 15 March 2015 at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/12/2912/downloads#res466889>.

Furthermore, the Children's Rights and Services Planning Working Group, which includes members from local authorities, NHS boards and the third sector, oversees and advises on the national support and engagement required for the implementation of Children's Services Planning duties (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 - Part 3), including the development of statutory guidance and regulations. This will include how statutory guidance will reflect the need for children's services plans to provide for children's services both universal and targeted (including for disabled children), as well as reflecting Part 3 requirements to provide services in a local area which: support wellbeing, prevention and early intervention, are integrated and make the best use of resources.

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>.

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the suggestion in the second survey of Children in Scotland's Parent Participation Project that 'disabled children and their parents and carers frequently find it very difficult to access services that could enable the children to lead fulfilling lives, achieve the best life outcomes possible, and support families adequately'.

(S4W-24201)

Fiona McLeod: The Scottish Government is committed to equality of access to support and services for disabled children and young people in line with our responsibilities under the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 to take steps in support of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We recognise that currently many children with disabilities face barriers to access of services that could help them achieve their potential. The Getting It Right for Every Child framework has been developed to improve the ability of health boards, local authorities and partner services and agencies to work in partnership in their delivery of wellbeing support all children and their families, including those where disability features. Moreover, under Part 3 of the Act, children's services planning for an area as a whole will now be a joint responsibility of local authorities and health boards and will need to focus on prevention and early intervention, which should ensure more joined-up planning between services in support of disabled children and their families. Work is currently under way to develop statutory guidance for public consultation later in the year.

There are a number of Scottish Government funding initiatives designed to increase the range and availability of wellbeing support available locally, for example, national projects for disabled children and young people funded through the Strategic Partnership and Early Intervention Funds, the Keys to Life and the Scottish Autism Strategy programme funds, and the Short Breaks funding (£13 million between 2010 to 2015) that supports largely disabled children and young people through a grant scheme providing opportunities that include access to leisure and sporting activities.

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the suggestion in the second survey of Children in Scotland's Parent Participation Project's that disabled children should be asked about their views of the services that support and engage with them.

(S4W-24202)

Fiona McLeod: The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 puts into Scottish law the requirement under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to seek the views of children in services planning. The Children's Rights and Services Planning Working Group, which includes members from local authorities, NHS boards and the third sector, has a remit to oversee and advise on the national support for the implementation of Part 1 (sections 2 and 3) public authorities duties to report on the UNCRC, and Part 3, children's services planning duties on behalf of Scottish Ministers. This includes the development of statutory guidance and regulations, and ensuring that appropriate and effective participation and engagement takes place in the preparation for the new duties.

The remit will also include how statutory guidance will reflect the need for children's services plans to provide for children's services both universal and targeted (including for disabled children), as well as reflecting Part 3 requirements to provide services in a local area which support wellbeing, prevention and early intervention, are integrated and make the best use of resources.

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to ensure that adequate service provision is allocated to ensure equality of provision for disabled and non-disabled children.

(S4W-24203)

Fiona McLeod: Under the Equality Act 2010 service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and provide auxiliary aids and services to avoid substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled children. In addition, service providers have a duty to actively deal with inequality, and to prevent direct disability discrimination, indirect disability discrimination and discrimination arising from disability and harassment or victimisation on the basis, or a perceived basis, of protected characteristics, including disability. It is for individual service providers to ensure that they comply with these duties.

In addition, under the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 responsible bodies have duties to develop and publish accessibility strategies to increase pupils access to the curriculum, access to the physical environment of schools and improving communication with disabled pupils. Also education authorities and other agencies have duties under

the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 (as amended) to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils, including disabled pupils.

Furthermore, the Children's Rights and Services Planning Working Group, which includes members from local authorities, NHS boards and the third sector, oversees and advises on the national support and engagement required for the implementation of children's services planning duties (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 - Part 3), including the development of statutory guidance and regulations. This will include how statutory guidance will reflect the need for children's services plans to provide for children's services both universal and targeted (including for disabled children), as well as reflecting Part 3 requirements to provide services in a local area which: support wellbeing, prevention and early intervention, are integrated and make the best use of resources.

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether a child rights impact assessment should be included in all legislation.

(S4W-24204)

Fiona McLeod: Consistent with ministers' responsibilities within Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, once commenced, child impact assessment screening will be undertaken in relation to all proposed new Government legislation and policies. Full child impact assessments will be completed where initial screening indicates any relevant impact on the rights and wellbeing of children in Scotland. A template and supporting guidance, for such assessments is being prepared currently.

Cara Hilton (Dunfermline) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on each of the key findings reported in the second survey of Children in Scotland's Parent Participation Project.

(S4W-24205)

Fiona McLeod: The Scottish Government welcomes the survey undertaken and will consider its findings carefully. We take a human rights based approach in the development of The Getting It Right for Every Child framework that is designed to improve the delivery by all services and agencies working with disabled children and their families of the wellbeing support that they need. We recognise that some disabled children and young people continue to face health and social inequalities and we have developed a number of strategies that call on localities to promote equality and actively involve people in developing the local services that affect them. Besides the participation work we fund that is described in answers to S4W-24201 and 24202 on 10 February 2015, the national strategies the Keys to Life and the Scottish Autism Strategy have strands of work for children and families, for example, the Parent Participation Project, and local work providing sensory/autism play opportunities and family support. National disabilities organisations are also funded to provide information to parent carers and provide signposting to relevant information.

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>.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-24012 by Roseanna Cunningham on 28 January 2015, whether it has set aside additional resources to enable Skills Development Scotland to meet the First Minister's commitment to increased provision for the Adopt an Apprentice scheme in the oil and gas industry and, if so, how much.

(S4W-24296)

Roseanna Cunningham: Adopt an Apprentice is demand-led. As such, the level of demand will determine Skills Development Scotland (SDS) expenditure on this initiative. As explained in my answer to S4W-24012, should additional resources be required to meet the First Minister's commitment this will be managed through existing SDS Sponsorship arrangements.

To date there has not been significant numbers of modern apprentices being released by employers in the oil and gas industry. SDS will continue to engage with oil and gas companies which have employees at risk of redundancy.

Transport Scotland

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to concerns about the reliability of the Argyll Ferries service between Gourock and Dunoon and what action it will take to increase the reliability of the service.

(S4W-24216)

Derek Mackay: The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring a safe, reliable, frequent, commuter ferry service between Dunoon town centre and the rail terminal at Gourock.

Over the term of the current contract with Argyll Ferries Limited (AFL), the Scottish Government has put a number of measures in place to mitigate against reliability concerns with the town centre to town centre passenger only service.

Dedicated replacement buses now run when both its ships are off for prolonged periods, using the Western Ferries (Clyde) Limited service.

AFL have 'flipped' their vessels so that the MV Argyll Flyer is now the principal vessel which meets the fast train connections at peak times from Gourock.

The MV Coruisk has also been used as an additional vessel, in passenger only mode at certain peak periods in the morning and afternoon during both winter 2013-14 and 2014-15. In addition the MV Coruisk is also on standby relief when both AFL vessels are unable to sail to improve resilience on the route.

All these measures ensure that the effects of weather disruption, to AFL services, to regular commuters are kept to a minimum.

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many road closures there have been on the A83 between Arrochar and the junction with the A815 since May 2007; what the cause was in each case, and how long it took to reopen the road.

(S4W-24244)

Derek Mackay: Given the varied nature, cause, and methods of reporting road closures, Transport Scotland does not hold all the information necessary to determine the number of road closures, their cause and duration, on the A83 between Arrochar and the junction with the A815 since 2007.

Road closures result from a wide variety of causes, including fallen trees, recovery of broken down vehicles, consequences of road traffic accidents, landslides, flooding, snow, ice, high winds, criminal incidents, vulnerable persons and utility emergencies. Closure duration is dependent on the circumstances of each incident and the closures associated with debris, slight or non-injury accidents are often relatively short in timescale. Importantly, given the varied nature of the closures, they are not always reported to the operating company or Traffic Scotland and when they are, the information is not to a consistent standard, which makes subsequent reporting uncertain.

Road closure information is held on a variety of different databases across Transport Scotland, Traffic Scotland, trunk road operating companies and Police Scotland, for a variety of different purposes. Detailed records are held for injury accidents and for landslides affecting the A83 in this region. Records are held on other closures that are reported to Traffic Scotland and the trunk road operating companies, but this data cannot be considered comprehensive for the reasons outlined above.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Abellio regarding the proposal to allow no more than two bicycles per train on the Borders railway.

(S4W-24253)

Derek Mackay: Abellio have confirmed that the current on train cycle policy of at least two cycle spaces per train will be preserved and this includes rail services to the Borders. In addition Abellio will ensure that all on-train staff involved are briefed on cycle capacity procedures and how to provide additional ad-hoc spaces where conditions allow.

Abellio's overall strategy in the Netherlands has been to reduce the pressure on cycle spaces on board trains by investing in better storage facilities at stations and encouraging regular cyclists to either join their Bike & Go scheme for their onward journeys or maintain a second bike at their destination stations. Abellio intend to replicate this successful approach on ScotRail services.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what it considers should be the appropriate level of cycle storage on trains on the Borders railway.

(S4W-24255)

Derek Mackay: The appropriate allocation of space within a train is always challenging as rolling stock has to run on a variety of routes and cater for passengers with differing requirements.

In trying to attract more passengers onto train services it is necessary to balance space for seating, cycle racks, toilets, luggage space, facilities for disabled travellers and pram users; and also to ensure safe and quick access on and off the train.

Abellio have confirmed that the current on train cycle policy of at least two cycle spaces per train will be preserved and this includes the planned Borders rail services.

Depending on the trains allocated to Borders services there may be more than two spaces available for passenger usage but this cannot be confirmed at this time. Abellio are working to finalise rolling stock which will be allocated to all services, including those serving Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Independent): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the absence of livestock grazing on areas susceptible to landslides such as the Rest and Be Thankful.

(S4W-24277)

Derek Mackay: As part of the *A83 Route Study*, Transport Scotland commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to undertake an examination of potential ecological and related landslide solutions. TRL produced a report addressing the proposed solutions which includes a section on the use of livestock. The report is available online at:

http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/uploaded_content/documents/projects/A83/a83-rest-and-be-thankful-project-ecological-related-landslide-mitigation-options.pdf