SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government which rivers have smolt release programmes for the boosting of salmon stocks.

(S4W-25307)

Aileen McLeod: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-25306 on 5 May 2015. Managers of a number of rivers have experimented with stocking of salmon smolts over the years, including the Tay, Lochy, Dionard, Leven, Irvine, Conon and Carron. Of these managers, only those on the Lochy currently stock salmon smolts. The Scottish Government did not receive any applications to stock salmon smolts in 2014, although such consents may have been approved by local district salmon fishery boards.

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

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what evidence there is regarding whether smolt release programmes sustain salmon stocks for angling.

(S4W-25308)

Aileen McLeod: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-25306 on 5 May 2015. There is evidence that stocked salmon smolts return to Scottish rivers as adults. However, the survival rate is very low and much lower than that of wild-reared smolts. The report currently being published by the Scottish Government suggests that the revenue accrued by smolt ranching is unlikely to cover the costs of the activity in many circumstances, a conclusion also reached by certain local managers, as published by the Ness and Tay District Salmon Fisheries Boards. There is a further problem that there may be negative effects on wild stocks as a result of smolts stocking. Where financial outlay and conservation concerns are not serious impediments, smolt release programmes could sustain salmon stocks for angling.

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Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many businesses have used its Rural Payments and Services website to register for support.

(S4W-25319)

Richard Lochhead: As of 13 May 2015, 19,619 businesses have used the Rural Payments and Services website to register for support.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the report in *The Press and Journal* on 18 April 2015 that contractors working on the development of its Rural Payments and Services website were threatened with being dismissed if they reported defects.

(S4W-25320)

Richard Lochhead: We take all allegations and claims of this nature very seriously. We have conducted an investigation and found no evidence to substantiate this claim.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many single application forms have been (a) started and (b) completed using its Rural Payments and Services website.

(S4W-25321)

Richard Lochhead: As of 13 May 2015, 6,103 single application forms have been started and 3,516 have been completed using the Rural Payments and Services website.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many paper single application forms have been received by its Rural Payments and Inspection Division in the current year.

(S4W-25322)

Richard Lochhead: As of 13 May 2015, 2,545 paper single application forms have been received.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many complaints it has received regarding (a) its Rural Payments and Services website and (b) the single application form process.

(S4W-25323)

Richard Lochhead: We recognise that the new Rural Payments and Services (RPS) system has not been operating at the performance level we desire and have been working hard to resolve the issues raised by our customers, including making a number of changes to fix known defects. Customer issues and enquiries are a normal feature in the launch of a new IT system and new Common Agricultural Policy programme. We have received one formal complaint; in addition, we are in constant dialogue with all of our customers on matters related to the RPS system and the single application form process and shall continue to keep in regular contact with them.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much it cost to develop its Rural Payments and Services website and how this was monitored.

(S4W-25324)

Richard Lochhead: Development of the Rural Payments and Services website is part of a wider programme of work to deliver improvements to the way in which rural payments and inspection services are provided, and also to implement reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. The total programme expenditure as at 31 March 2015 was £90 million, which includes the IT system, staff training, and stakeholder engagement and communication. Costs are monitored through programme governance and as part of routine Scottish Government financial controls.

Health and Social Care

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many GP referrals to gynaecologists have been made in each year since 2007, broken down by NHS board.

(S4W-25400)

Shona Robison: The number of GP referrals to gynaecologist made in each year since 2007, by NHS board is provided in the following table.

Health Board of Treatment	Referrals during Calendar Year							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014[2]
NHS Scotland	84,185	103,529	109,538	103,213	103,094	100,602	96,978	97,733
Ayrshire and Arran	5,485	6,745	6,886	6,465	5,962	6,447	6,625	6,748
Borders	1,799	1,983	1,939	1,888	2,355	2,518	2,678	2,472
Dumfries and Galloway	2,094	2,415	2628	2,454	2,295	2,433	2,371	2,606

	Referrals during Calendar Year							
Fife	5,572	5,942	6247	6,031	6,543	6,392	6,081	5,632
Forth Valley	3,374	5,330	5905	5,755	5,636	5,196	5,261	5,049
Grampian	8000	10,260	11,443	10,720	10,679	11,555	11,352	11,069
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	24,228	29,147	31,685	28,986	28,984	25,814	24,758	26,539
Highland	5096	5,510	5,385	5,232	4,891	4,544	4,374	3,659
Lanarkshire	8,735	10,983	10,969	10,268	9,649	9,016	8,836	9,101
Lothian	13,046	17,729	17,997	17,061	17,701	17,584	16,789	16,753
Orkney	231	248	250	276	245	248	270	356
Shetland	267	371	520	422	426	377	381	388
Tayside	5,845	6,317	7,084	7,111	7,218	8,012	6,740	6,834
Western Isles	413	549	600	544	510	466	462	527

Source: Information Services Division Scotland (SMR00[1] and Waiting Times Data Warehouse[2])

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government when humidification levels in hospitals were last recorded and what the results were, broken down by NHS board.

(S4W-25423)

Shona Robison: Health boards, in general, do not provide humidification as there has been no identified clinical need and therefore they do not record any humidification data.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what guidelines have been issued by Health Facilities Scotland regarding humidification levels in hospitals and what action each NHS board has taken to follow these.

(S4W-25424)

Shona Robison: Health Facilities Scotland has issued *Scottish Health Technical Memorandum (SHTM) 03-01: Ventilation for healthcare premises*, which provides guidance on humidification. The Scottish Government does not hold information centrally on specific action taken by each NHS board.

SHTM 03-01 Part A 'Design and Validation':

Clauses 3.14 and 3.15 deal with humidity control requirements; and
Clauses 4.92 to 4.119 deal with humidification.

SHTM 03-01 Part B 'Operational management and performance verification':

Clauses 3.41 to 3.48 cover humidifiers.

There are other sections covering the cleaning and inspection of humidifiers. SHTM guidance advises that:

'3.14 Providing humidification is expensive in terms of plant, running costs and maintenance, and therefore its use should be restricted to where it is necessary for physiological or operational reasons.'

'3.15 Humidification was originally required for some healthcare applications, e.g. operating theatres, in order to control the risk associated with the use of flammable anaesthetic gases. The use of such gases has now ceased. Humidification is therefore no longer required unless there is a very specific application requirement.'

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what action is being taken to reduce airborne infections arising from reduced humidity in hospitals.

(S4W-25426)

Shona Robison: NHS boards, in general, do not provide humidification as there has been no identified clinical need. Therefore, there is no specific healthcare associated infection policy or guidance on this matter.

Finance

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4F-01163 by Alex Salmond on 31 January 2013 (Official Report, c.16266), which of the projects he listed have been completed.

Keith Brown: The current status of those projects listed in question S4F-01163 is provided in the following table.

Project name	Current status
Brechin High (Angus Council)	In construction
Wick High (Highland Council)	In construction
James Gillespie's High (City of Edinburgh Council)	In construction
Primary Care Health Centres (NHS Lanarkshire)	In construction
Woodside Health Centre (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)	In hub development
Eastwood Health and Care Centre (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)	In construction
Gorbals Health Centre (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)	In hub development
Maryhill Health Centre (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)	In construction
Redevelopment of Royal Edinburgh Hospital Campus – Phase 1 (NHS Lothian)	In construction
Royal Hospital for Sick Children/Department of Clinical Neurosciences and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (NHS Lothian)	In construction
Redesign of Mental Health Facilities Argyll and Bute (NHS Highland)	In hub development
Forres, Tain and Woodside Health Centres (NHS Grampian and NHS Highland)	Operational
Ayrshire College – Kilmarnock Campus	In construction
Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service National Centre NHS (National Services Scotland)	In construction
Acute Mental Health and North Ayrshire Community Hospital (NHS Ayrshire and Arran)	In construction
Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie-Tipperty Road Scheme	In construction

Learning and Justice

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to increase the number of young disabled people in further education.

Angela Constance: The most recent statistics from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) show that colleges are delivering more for young disabled students. In 2013-14, 22% of all learning hours delivered to students aged 16 to 24 were to students with a disclosed disability or requiring additional learning support; a two percentage point increase on the 2006-07 proportion.

The SFC has made improving access for disabled people a national priority. To support this, it will invest a record £100 million across the sector in 2015-16 to ensure colleges are resourced to meet the needs of this group.

Additionally, the SFC is working with the Equality Challenge Unit, Enable Scotland, College Development Network and other partners to continuously improve access and outcomes for these learners.

Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has for the Education Maintenance Allowance programme.

Angela Constance: Unlike the UK Government, the Scottish Government committed to maintaining the Education Maintenance Allowance programme and in the financial year 2015-16 invests £29.6 million, providing 34,955 young people aged 16 to 19 from low income households with a weekly payment of £30 to help them stay on at school or go to college. In line with the First Minister's commitment to help more young people access and stay on in education, we are currently considering how we might extend the scheme.

Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on progress with the college mergers programme.

(S4O-04322)

Angela Constance: As part of our successful college reform programme, all planned college mergers are now complete. As reform is a process, there remains work to be done to realise the full benefits from change and the Scottish Government is working closely with the Scottish Funding Council and colleges to ensure we build on early successes and monitor and evaluate progress.

The Scottish Government has a strong record on colleges, investing more than Labour ever did, exceeding our commitment to maintain 116,000 full time equivalent places, providing record levels of student support, and investing over £530 million in college estates – £230 million more than under Labour's time in office.

Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how it encourages the teaching of Mandarin in schools.

(S4O-04323)

Alasdair Allan: The Scottish Government provides annual funding to the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS) at the University of Strathclyde to encourage young people to learn Mandarin, as well as about Chinese culture and history. CISS also provides language immersion visits for young people and head teachers from Scottish schools to visit China to establish and foster links.

Since 2008 we have launched 14 Confucius Classroom Hubs serving eight local authorities across Scotland, with a further three to follow later in 2015. Each of these classrooms hosts at least one visiting teacher from their partner schools in Tianjin to facilitate the teaching of Chinese language and culture in primary and secondary schools. We have also supported the development and implementation of qualifications in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to review the levels of support for living costs available to Scottish domiciled students who study elsewhere in the UK.

(S4W-25399)

Angela Constance: As already indicated, I intend to consider the issue more fully, including the numbers of Scottish domiciled students affected and the costs involved, and am happy to bring the issue back to the Chamber and to Mr Macintosh in due course. If Mr Macintosh has a particular constituent concern I would be happy to discuss it with him.

Transport Scotland

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Independent): To ask the Scottish Government when the extra commuter trains between Inverness and Elgin, which were discussed at the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership board meeting of 10 April 2015, will become operational; what times of day they will operate, and how it will ensure that there will be sufficient (a) train sets available and (b) spare capacity retained at Inverness as contingency cover for breakdowns.

(S4W-25421)

Derek Mackay: Transport Scotland is currently working with Abellio, Scotrail and Network Rail, progressing the development work that will ensure that the opportunities presented by investment in the Aberdeen-Inverness line for passengers and freight are realised as early as possible.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Independent): To ask the Scottish Government how much double-tracking between Inverness and Nairn, as set in August 2014 in the document, *Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvements Project GRIP 3 – Phase 1 Enhancements*, is to be provided; where it will be laid, and what the timescale is for the work.

(S4W-25422)

Derek Mackay: Infrastructure improvements for the Aberdeen to Inverness Improvements project, including some double tracking between Inverness and Nairn, will be prioritised for delivery in the next phase of the project (during Control Period 6 2019-24). I can confirm that the Scottish Government is absolutely committed to delivering significant journey time improvements and greater connectivity on the Inverness to Aberdeen corridor, including enhancing services between Inverness and Elgin.