Submission from People, Communications and Inclusion Directorate, Scottish Parliament

10 November 2026

Background

1. The Committee has sought various pieces of data from officials across the People, Communications and Inclusion Directorate in relation to the impact on public engagement of moving to two First Minister's Questions sessions per week. For ease, this data has been collated into a single submission. It largely covers the period from the start of June (when 2 FMQs began) until the end of October.

Public Attendance

2. With two FMQs a week, visitors now have twice as many opportunities to see FMQs during a visit to Parliament, regardless of whether watching business was the purpose of their visit. Seeing scrutiny in action at such a high-profile session is an opportunity the public value.

3. Schools have taken up the new opportunity well, and secondary schools are positive about the changes.

    - **Value:** Schools see scrutiny in action as a real benefit to their visit and are prepared to stay later to secure this access.
    - **Demand:** From Sept to end of January, all our FMQ sessions are booked for schools. February and March are always slower to fill as schools balance exam preparations with external visits. One school has specifically requested an FMQ on a Tuesday. Secondary school Chamber attendance on Wednesdays has also increased as they take up the opportunity to see Portfolio Questions at 2pm.
    - **Geography:** Attendance has diversified since June. More schools are now coming from the North East, South, and Highlands and Islands. We don't yet know why and will research this further.

4. Total public attendance at FMQs is higher but not yet double the previous year's level when only one FMQ took place. Excluding seats reserved for Schools via the Education Service, bookings can be made directly via the public (up to 58 seats) or via an MSP (up to 177, 75% of the overall public capacity).

5. Demand from the public who book directly with the Parliament is steady. MSP bookings have dipped significantly since the election. This is not unexpected, as new offices need time to establish working practices and organise constituent visits.

6. FMQ gallery bookings are rising through the year on both days:
    - **Tuesdays:** 31% full (peak 40%)

- **Thursdays:** 58% full (peak 93%)

7. We will continue to observe the trends and seek out feedback to understand them.

8. British Sign Language outputs have also increased. 60 minutes of live business is now broadcast, and our total output of BSL interpreted feed is up by 17%. This is broadcast live into the Chamber, as well as via Parliament TV and Facebook.

Social Media Engagement

9. The Parliament uses a number of metrics to gauge the performance of its' social media content. The main ones we record are:

    Total Engagements
    The sum of all individual interactions a piece of content receives from an audience.

    Engagement rate
    This measures how actively the audience interacts with our content relative to how many people see it or follow our accounts. It shows whether people are stopping to like, comment, share, save, or click our posts.

    Impressions
    This is the total number of times a social media post appears on a user's screen. This helps show how broadly the algorithm is distributing our content and building our visibility.

    Reach
    Reach counts *unique* people who see our content. Impressions count the *total number of times* your content is displayed on a screen, even if the same person sees it multiple times.

    3 second video views
    This counts the number of times a video is played continuously for at least 3 seconds. It acts as a "thumb-stop" indicator, showing whether your video's opening hook was strong enough to make a user stop scrolling and pay attention rather than skipping past immediately.

    30 second video views
    This tracks how many times a video has been actively watched for a continuous duration of at least 30 seconds. A 30-second threshold indicates that the viewer stopped, stayed, and engaged with the core messaging.

    Total video hours watched
    The sum of all social media video content watched.

10. The summary table below takes a snapshot of the first 11 weeks of the new First Minister's Questions schedule and compares it with the same data from 2025. The figures show that in all key metrics, content associated with FMQs is performing strongly. In the case of 30 second views and total hours watched, figures have more than doubled. Engagement rates are lower in 2026, but this is as expected and in line with higher headline figures. Engagements do not scale the same way as views – the higher the headline figures, the proportionately lower the engagement rates are.

11 weeks of FMQs June - October 2025 and 2026

Period	No of FMQs	Video views (3 seconds)	Video views (30 seconds)	Total video watched (hours)	Total engagements	Engagement rate
2026	22	106957	14399	1721.2	1634	1.18%
2025	11	58858	5838	811.9	1058	2.51%

11. Reviewing the total FMQs data for each week from January 2025 to end October 2026:

- The top 12 weeks by FMQs impressions are all from the new 2-FMQs session format
- For video views of 3 seconds plus, 7 of the top 10 weeks are 2-FMQs-weeks
- When it comes to video views that last longer than 30 seconds, the 7 top weeks all feature 2 FMQs.
- When it comes to total minutes watched by the public, the top 6 are weeks with 2 FMQs, and 2 FMQs weeks are 8 of the top 10.
- In terms of total reactions, top 4 are weeks with 2 FMQs.
- Similar for total comments: 4 of the top 6 are from 2-FMQs weeks.

Scottish Parliament TV

12. The following figures show traffic to parliament.tv on FMQ days in both September 2025 and 2026. They include number of visitors and page views for the home page of parliament.tv on the days themselves, as well as the next 6 days traffic on the archive page. It should be noted that these figures are derived from the URLs of the SPTV pages that host the videos and are not an indication of actual viewing figures or average view times. This data is not currently available.

13. While there are other factors at play here, such as general levels of interest in parliamentary business being higher at the start of a session

than towards the end of one, the figures show a significant increase in both visitor numbers and page views in 2026 compared to September 2025.

- Visitor numbers are up by 260%
- Page views are up by 134%

Unique visitors

	Live (12pm)	Live BSL (2pm)	VOD (+6 days)	VOD BSL (+6 days)	Total
2025 (Thursdays)					
04-Sep	673	n/a	676	21	1370
11-Sep	562	n/a	476	11	487
18-Sep	584	n/a	479	31	510
25-Sep	482	n/a	210	38	248
					2615
	Live (2pm)	**Live BSL (2pm)**	**VOD (+6 days)**	**VOD BSL (+6 days)**	**Total**
2026 (Tuesdays)					
01-Sep	2027	612	154	52	2845
08-Sep	406	57	240	18	721
15-Sep	395	136	220	18	769
22-Sep	558	61	229	11	859
29-Sep	386	38	235	29	688
					5882
	Live (2pm)	**Live BSL (2pm)**	**VOD (+6 days)**	**VOD BSL (+6 days)**	**Total**
2026 (Thursdays)					
03-Sep	384	126	332	74	916
10-Sep	423	50	445	54	972
17-Sep	393	50	402	17	862
24-Sep	414	60	251	64	789
					3539

Page views

	Live (12pm)	Live BSL	VOD (+6 days)	VOD BSL (+6 days)	Total
2025 (Thursdays)					
04-Sep	924	n/a	822	22	1768
11-Sep	804	n/a	582	11	1397
18-Sep	785	n/a	571	35	1391
25-Sep	652	n/a	252	42	946
					5502
	Live (2pm)	**Live BSL (2pm)**	**VOD (+6 days)**	**VOD BSL (+6 days)**	**Total**
2026 (Tuesdays)					
01-Sep	2866	793	198	66	3923
08-Sep	611	76	309	28	1024
15-Sep	620	209	273	21	1123
22-Sep	815	72	278	13	1178
29-Sep	576	48	272	35	931
					8179
	Live (2pm)	**Live BSL (2pm)**	**VOD (+6 days)**	**VOD BSL (+6 days)**	**Total**
2026 (Thursdays)					
03-Sep	538	172	389	85	1184
10-Sep	592	76	520	71	1259
17-Sep	570	62	475	21	1128
24-Sep	655	80	304	74	1113
					4684