ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 28 August)

Ministerial portfolio: Communities and Local Government

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider permitting extended household bubbles as part of local lockdown measures in situations where cities and towns experience an outbreak of COVID-19.

S5W-31246

John Swinney: If local restrictions are required in response to an outbreak of COVID-19 these will be implemented with regard to the nature and extent of the public health risk. The circumstances for each outbreak will be different and the response will be tailored accordingly.

Scottish Government recognises the impact these measures can have on communities and every decision is taken carefully with due consideration of the four harms set out in our COVID-19: Framework for Decision Making.

The recent local restrictions in Aberdeen allowed extended household arrangements to continue, individuals were also allowed to meet friends and family outdoors providing guidance on travel and physical distancing was followed.

Ministerial portfolio: Economy, Fair Work and Culture

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what specific steps it will take as part of its Economic Recovery Implementation Plan to strengthen Scotland’s brand value across the UK internal market to support both inward investment and exports to the rest of the UK.

S5W-31256

Ivan McKee: The Brand Scotland collaboration supports the Scottish Government and key partners in presenting Scotland as the best place to live/work, study, visit and do business. The collaboration builds Scotland’s brand value by promoting our strengths with a clear, consistent narrative and suite of marketing collateral.

Brand Scotland’s business pillar partners use the marketing collateral to support both inward investment and international exports, particularly to our top 15 priority
markets as outlined in A Trading Nation, including our trade with the rest of the UK. Business pillar partners are currently developing fresh campaign material and a toolkit of sector specific collateral that will give our network of offices outside of Scotland access to the materials they need to promote Scotland’s trade and investment capacity. This campaign and toolkit will be launched to further help promote Scotland’s key business sectors as part of the Economic Recovery. This is aimed at building brand value internationally and across the rest of the UK.

The Scottish Government’s enterprise agencies are implementing economic recovery plans with significant programmes of support aimed at supporting Scottish exporters and attracting inward investment from across the UK. This includes ensuring optimal coordination of support, working with external stakeholders and partners (including Department of International Trade, CBI, Business Gateway, Scottish Chambers and Scottish Universities) both nationally, regionally and globally. This helps ensure the export support available to businesses in Scotland is co-ordinated with each stakeholder and partner playing a clear and well-defined role.

**Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government when (a) voice tuition and (b) professional and recreational activities involving singing will be allowed to recommence.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Scottish Government guidance for the safe re-opening of performing arts was published on 21 August and is available at [https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-performing-arts-and-venues-sector/pages/overview/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-performing-arts-and-venues-sector/pages/overview/). Although venues remain closed to the public for the time being, the guidance - including important steps to take on physical distancing and hygiene - can now be used by professionals, and by people training for associated professional careers, for a range of activities so long as they do not involve a public audience indoors. Non-professional singers should only sing in groups outdoors, not indoors. Outdoor activities, including rehearsals and seated live events, have been allowed to re-commence from 24 August in accordance with physical distancing and hygiene guidance for events – available at [https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/). The remaining restrictions on groups’ indoor singing will be kept under review as the scientific evidence about the risks of virus transmission from singing is developed.

**Ministerial portfolio: Education and Skills**

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government, in the light of its advice that “In indoor places and where physical distancing is difficult and where there is a risk of contact within [two metres] with people who are not members of your household, you are expected to wear a face covering”, for what reason the use of face coverings in schools has not been made compulsory.

**S5W-31323**
John Swinney: In the light of the latest scientific and public health advice, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, the Scottish Government has, after discussion with the Education Recovery Group, updated the advice on the use of face coverings in secondary schools and on school transport. Unless specific exemptions apply, face coverings should now be worn in secondary schools by adults and pupils in corridors and confined communal areas where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Face coverings should also be worn by all children aged 5 and over on dedicated school transport, in line with the guidance for public transport. The advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues, and updated guidance on school reopening were published on 25 August to reflect the latest position.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance is being provided to schools on social distancing during transfers between classrooms in order to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

John Swinney: The published Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 contains a section on minimising contact between individuals and groups (paragraphs 40 to 60). This section notes that within specific school settings, risk assessments should consider the ways in which busy corridors, entrances and exits could be avoided, with mitigations that could include one way and/or external circulation routes.

The guidance has been updated to note that face coverings should (unless exemptions apply) be worn by adults and young people in secondary schools when moving about the school in corridors and communal areas, where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish the evidence on which it based its decision not to advise that secondary school students should wear face coverings in schools.

John Swinney: The evidence was set out in the guidance on physical distancing in schools by the Covid-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s issues, which was published on 16 July. However, in the light of the latest scientific and public health advice, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, the Scottish Government has, after discussion with the Education Recovery Group, updated the advice on the use of face coverings in secondary schools and on school transport. Unless specific exemptions apply, face coverings should now be worn in secondary schools by adults and pupils in corridors and confined communal areas where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Face coverings should also be worn by all children aged 5 and over on dedicated school transport, in line with the
guidance for public transport. The advice from the Advisory Sub-Group, and updated guidance on school reopening were published on 25 August to reflect the latest position.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):**
To ask the Scottish Government whether specific COVID-19 guidance for home educators will be published.

S5W-31331

**John Swinney:** As announced on 20 August, indoor activities for children and young people (unregulated) can begin from Monday, 31 August, subject to adhering to the guidance for these activities. This guidance, for activities that are voluntary, third sector, parent or peer led, is currently being developed and its principles will apply to home educators.

The guidance on re-opening school age childcare services, small and micro businesses guidance and Phase 3: staying safe and protecting others is also applicable for home educators.

**Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport**

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government whether its current COVID-19 guidelines preclude all professional football teams below the SPFL Premiership-level, including full-time clubs such as Heart of Midlothian, from participating in training and playing and, if so, (a) for what reason, (b) what discussions it has had with the (i) SPFL, (ii) SFA and (iii) other football governing bodies regarding this, (c) by what date these activities will be allowed to resume and (d) what its response is to reports of Scottish training facilities being used by teams from outwith the country while these restrictions are in place.

S5W-31336

**Joe FitzPatrick:** From 24 August 2020, organised full contact outdoor sport for all ages was permitted in Scotland.

We have discussed the resumption of this activity with the Scottish FA and the SPFL on a number of occasions.

This will – subject to Scottish FA guidance – allow teams at all levels to train and play. However, SPFL Premiership clubs – and some English clubs – have already been undertaking activity as they were subject to additional public health measures. We have no role in where any of these clubs choose to train.
Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government when driving tests will be allowed to (a) be booked and (b) resume.

Michael Matheson: The First Minister announced that driving lessons would resume on 24 August. Driving tests are the responsibility of the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency. We understand that car driving tests will resume in mid-September, with priority given to those who have had tests cancelled.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it is using conditionality in grant awards to the aviation sector to drive up (a) environmental and (b) employment standards.

Michael Matheson: We have not made any COVID-19 related grant awards to the aviation sector. The Scottish Government's joint statement between key partners from the public, private and third sectors and the STUC on fair work expectations during the transition out of lockdown clearly sets out the standards that we expect all businesses, including in the aviation sector, to follow. Similarly, Scotland has shown global leadership by being the first country to include international aviation and shipping emissions in its statutory climate targets.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what practical and immediate support it is providing to the aviation sector to prevent job losses.

Michael Matheson: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-31286 on 28 August 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on how many jobs in Scotland rely on Edinburgh Airport, including in the supply chain.

Michael Matheson: According to Edinburgh Airport, pre-COVID 19, they directly employed 750 people and over 5,000 people worked on their site. In 2016 Edinburgh Airport commissioned their own analysis of supply chain impacts, which estimated...
2,200 to 3,300 jobs were supported within the direct supply chain of the airport. The report of the analysis commissioned by Edinburgh airport can be found at:


Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its sector-specific plan is to support aviation.

S5W-31288

Michael Matheson: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-31286 on 28 August 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament’s website, the search facility for which can be found at http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to prevent job losses at (a) Edinburgh Airport and (b) other Scottish airports.

S5W-31286

Michael Matheson: The global downturn in aviation caused by COVID-19 has had a significant impact on airports around the world, including here in Scotland. As passenger numbers are not expected to return to pre-COVID for up to 5 years, airports, airlines and various ancillary companies are having to re-size to meet that lower demand.

Where we can, we have provided support to the Scottish aviation sector. Airports have been granted 100% non-domestic rates relief for a year and we have written to the UK Government urging them to extend the Job Retention Scheme for the aviation industry. The Scottish Government is also working with airports on route recovery, as part of our well established partnership involving Transport Scotland, VisitScotland and Scottish Development International, to help rebuild connectivity for business and tourism and win back routes and employment opportunities.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that there are no cycle repair services in the Renfrewshire Council area participating in the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme, which has been introduced in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and whether it will provide a breakdown of how many cycle repair service providers in each constituency in that area have been approached by it and/or Transport Scotland to participate.

S5W-31071

Michael Matheson: The Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme launched on 3 August with over 100 participating retailers registered. Cycling UK, the organisation which
Manages the scheme, has been working hard to add more shops. There are now over 200 participating retailers including 9 either approved or awaiting approval in the Renfrewshire Council area, as set out in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renfrewshire Council Constituency</th>
<th>Approved</th>
<th>Awaiting Approval</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paisley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire North and West</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire South</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) large- and (b) small or medium-sized businesses and organisations in each constituency in the Renfrewshire Council area have approached it and/or Transport Scotland to take part in the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme, which has been introduced in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Michael Matheson: No such businesses have contacted the Scottish Government or Transport Scotland directly to take part in the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme. The following table sets out the data for the businesses that have contacted Cycling UK, who manage the scheme with Scottish Government funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renfrewshire Council Constituency</th>
<th>Large sized businesses</th>
<th>Small or Medium Sized Businesses</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paisley</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire North and West</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renfrewshire South</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government when (a) HGV and (b) other vocational driving tests will resume.

Michael Matheson: The First Minister announced on 20 August that driving lessons could resume from 24 August. The Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA) is responsible for the administration of driving tests. They are planning on a resumption of vocational driving tests from 31 August.
Written questions lodged on 28 August 2020

**S5W-31451** **Beatrice Wishart:** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-31291 by John Swinney on 26 August 2020, how much funding was allocated to each local authority, and how this was calculated.

**S5W-31452** **Alison Johnstone:** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding the impact of the NHS Scotland Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme on reserved social security benefit entitlement.

**S5W-31453** **Alison Johnstone:** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has called on the UK Government to exempt the NHS Scotland Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme from the capital rules for reserved social security benefit entitlement.

**S5W-31461** **Neil Findlay:** To ask the Scottish Government on which date the First Minister was made aware that patients were being transferred from hospitals to care homes without being tested for COVID-19.

**S5W-31462** **Neil Findlay:** To ask the Scottish Government on which date the First Minister was made aware that patients were being transferred from hospitals to care homes after having tested positive for COVID-19.

**S5W-31463** **Jackie Baillie:** To ask the Scottish Government whether there is any funding remaining from the (a) Small Business Grant and (b) Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme since its closure to new applications on 10 July 2020 and, if so, where it plans to spend any remaining funding.

**S5W-31464** **Iain Gray:** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the figures for the number of hospital patients with COVID-19 on 25 August 2020, which state that there were 767 such patients in the UK, and 257 patients in Scotland, for what reason the figure for Scotland is disproportionately high for its population.

**S5W-31465** **Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to concerns that some people are ignoring the mandatory requirement to wear a face covering in shops, and how it is monitoring and enforcing this requirement.
Searching for questions and motions

While this report contains only questions and answers relating to COVID-19, answers to all parliamentary questions can be found in daily written answer reports, which are published here.

All parliamentary questions and answers can also be searched for by keyword, MSP asking, Scottish Government Minister answering, as well as by date and other filters, through the advanced search function on the Parliament’s website here.