SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
Communities

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will work with the UK Government to ensure that the rollout of UK-wide 5G technology compliments its ambitions for greater mobile coverage and faster connections.

Holding answer issued: 12 December 2016 (S5W-05076)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government is keen to work with UKG to ensure that the investment announced in last week’s Autumn Statement supports 5G trials and deployment in Scotland. On 25 October 2016 I wrote to Matt Hancock MP, Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, seeking a meeting to progress a range of digital issues, including 5G, to ensure UKG’s plans align with our ambitious digital agenda. I am awaiting a response from the Minister.

We are already working to ensure that Scotland possesses the underlying infrastructure needed to support the future evolution of digital technologies such as 5G. With our partners Scottish Futures Trust, we are already engaged with the 5G Innovation Centre at the University of Surrey and are working with Ofcom on a range of issues relating to mobile coverage to ensure Scotland’s needs are recognised and addressed by the regulator. This is a platform to build greater collaboration in future to ensure that Scotland is at the forefront of 5G development and deployment.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many projects Community Broadband Scotland has supported in each of the last five years.

(S5W-05300)

Fergus Ewing: As of 30 November 2016, Community Broadband Scotland has responded to 800 enquiries across Scotland. It is actively supporting over 100 community organisations through its three-stage project development process, and has approved grant funding - totalling over £2.5 million - to 82 of those projects, including over £400,000 for project planning. 16 of those projects are either completed or in build phase, covering over 4,200 premises.

The breakdown of project support per year is as follows:
2012-13: Nil
2013-14: 24 (includes 5 capital projects)
2014-15: 20 (includes 4 capital projects)
2015-16: 23 (includes 5 capital projects)
2016-17: 15 (includes 2 capital projects)

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has any plans to turn any Scottish cities into “smart cities” in the future.

(S5W-05407)

Fergus Ewing: In February 2015 I announced that £10 million had been allocated within the Scottish European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme for 2014-2020 for collaborative projects to make all of Scotland’s cities smarter. The £10 million in ERDF grant (which is matched with funding from the cities) is part of the ‘Scotland’s 8th City – the Smart City’ Strategic Intervention.

The Scottish Government is working with the cities via the Scottish Cities Alliance (the unique collaboration of Scotland’s seven cities and the Scottish Government) to deliver a number of projects funded via this intervention.

Our shared ambition is to make a step change in the use of smart technology for integrated city management across the seven cities, not just individually but collectively, so creating the 8th city.

The first phase of smart projects was announced by the Scottish Cities Alliance on 13 December 2016 see:
Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will review the standards set out in its (a) Domestic Handbook 2016 and (b) Non-domestic Handbook 2016 regarding the design of tapered staircase treads.  

(S5W-05443)

Kevin Stewart: There are no plans to review the standards set for tapered treads in either of the Technical Handbooks.

Economy

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding proposals to pay for access to the single market.  

(S5O-00486)

Michael Russell: The Scottish Government has not received any information of this sort from the UK Government. We have made clear in our engagement with the UK Government, including at the Joint Ministerial Committee on European Negotiations which met for the second time on 7 December 2016, that protecting our social and economic interests means staying in the single market. We will present a proposition for discussion with the UK Government shortly, which will be focused on keeping us in the single market even if the rest of the UK decides to leave. The next meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) will be January 2017.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what impact the establishment of a new national park would have on tourism and conservation.  

(S5O-00487)

Roseanna Cunningham: While the Scottish Government recognises the important contribution our existing National Parks make to tourism, conservation and the wider Scottish economy, any new national parks would incur significant costs. At a time of pressures on public finances, we do not believe that it is right to raise expectations regarding the designation of new national parks. We will therefore continue to focus our support on our existing Parks so that they can continue their track record of success.

Ash Denham (Edinburgh Eastern) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much the screen sector spends on production in Scotland.  

(S5O-00488)

Fiona Hyslop: As I announced on 8 December 2016, data collated by Creative Scotland tells us that the screen sector spent a record £52.7 million on film and television production in Scotland in 2015. This is an increase of almost £7 million on what was spent in 2014, and more than double the £23 million spent in 2007. With the additional backing that Scottish Government and Creative Scotland have been providing to the screen sector since 2015, we expect that spend to increase even further in 2016.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many reports have been made to the Food Standards Scotland Scottish Food Crime Hotline, also broken down by how many related to the suspected mislabelling of beef products.  

Holding answer issued: 6 December 2016 (S5W-04843)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Food Crime Hotline, launched by Food Standards Scotland in partnership with Crimestoppers, is a free telephone number where members of the public or those working within the food and drink sector can contact Food Standards Scotland’s Scottish Food Crime and Incident Unit (SFCIU) anonymously if they have any information or suspicions about potential food-related crime. Information can also be submitted using a non-traceable online form. Food Standards Scotland and the SFCIU also receive information from a range of other sources.
The Scottish Food Crime Hotline is intended give members of the public and industry a trusted point of contact to report any concerns or suspicions of food crime in complete anonymity. Callers have an expectation that everything possible will be done to protect their identity, and releasing figures and details of reports could potentially compromise that protection. Therefore, in order to maintain trust in the confidentiality of the system, Food Standards Scotland does not publish a breakdown or detail of reports received from specific sources.

Since April 2016 to-date there have been 119 intelligence logs recorded on the SFCIU intelligence system from all sources.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many reports of the suspected mislabelling of beef products have been made to the Scottish Food Crimes and Incidents Unit, and how many have led to official investigations.

Holding answer issued: 6 December 2016  
(S5W-04845)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit is the investigations and intelligence gathering arm of Food Standards Scotland (FSS). The Unit has a dedicated intelligence office which analyses, develops and deals with information received from members of the public, food business operators and industry whistle-blowers. In order to maintain trust in the integrity of the intelligence gathering function, FSS does not publish a breakdown or detail of reports received.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many staff are employed by Scottish Development International in the (a) Dublin, (b) Brussels, (c) Berlin and (d) London hub, and how many will be employed in future as a result of the First Minister’s announcement to double staffing.

(S5W-05181)

Keith Brown: There are currently no Scottish Development International staff employed in the Dublin, Brussels or Berlin hubs. When our London Hub opens in 2017, the eight people working for Scottish Development International in London will transfer there. SDI is currently considering how the additional staff resources can be most effectively deployed across Europe according to market opportunities.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00370 by John Swinney on 23 November 2016 (Official Report, c. 6), whether Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) will retain its strengthening communities remit and, if so, what action it will take to ensure that HIE will continue to exercise this function.

(F5W-05194)

Fergus Ewing: This Government has made it clear that we will maintain the dedicated support including HIE’s strengthening communities remit which is locally based, managed and directed by HIE and protects the unique services that HIE delivers for our Highlands and Islands economy.

HIE will retain its Chief Executive based at its headquarters in Inverness, staff will also continue to operate from the Headquarters in Inverness and HIE’s area-based locations across the area from Lerwick to Lochgilphead.

Businesses and communities will continue to access services across the Highlands and Islands area. Similarly HIE will continue to engage with local authorities and Business Gateway to deliver effective support to businesses.

As part of the work being taken forward in Phase two of the Enterprise and Skills Review we will consider the formation, format and remit of the new Scotland-wide Statutory board. This will include what needs to be put in place in relation to budgets, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of a range of areas including performance measures of HIE and their operational plans to ensure that HIE continues to be able to deliver an excellent service to the Highlands and Islands.
In addition we will consider areas including remuneration, risk and assurance currently carried out by current Board committees.

HIE senior management will continue to work in the same way as they do now but will benefit from the coordination provided by the new Scotland-wide Statutory board.

This Government wants to see the strongest possible links between the work of HIE, Skills Development Scotland and the Funding Council to ensure that the support we are providing to train our young people, improve the skills of our workforce, support our businesses and communities is aligned with the economic needs of the Highlands and Islands and of Scotland.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00370 by John Swinney on 23 November 2016 (Official Report, c. 6), what impact the abolition of the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) will have on (a) businesses, (b) Business Gateway, (c) local authorities, (d) local HIE offices, (e) HIE staff, (f) social enterprises, (g) grant arrangements, (h) community leaders and (i) other stakeholders.

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05194 on 15 December 2016. 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.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00370 by John Swinney on 23 November 2016 (Official Report, c. 6), to what body the senior management of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) will report following the abolition of the HIE board.

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05194 on 15 December 2016. 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.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00370 by John Swinney on 23 November 2016 (Official Report, c. 6), how Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE) operating plan will be approved following the abolition of the HIE board.

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05194 on 15 December 2016. 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.
c. 6), who will be responsible for appraising, monitoring and evaluating a range of performance measures of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) following the abolition of the HIE board.

(F5W-05199)

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05194 on 15 December 2016. 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.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00370 by John Swinney on 23 November 2016 (Official Report, c. 6), what will happen to the functions of Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE) (a) Remuneration Committee and (b) Risk and Assurance Committee following the abolition of the HIE board.

(F5W-05200)

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05194 on 15 December 2016. 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.

Maree Todd (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how it is supporting the growth of Scotland’s renewable energy sector.

(F5W-05203)

Paul Wheelhouse: The Scottish Government’s consistently supportive approach to renewable energy has been a key factor in maintaining investor confidence and enabling the growth of the sector. This support is provided in a variety of ways, including ambitious renewable energy targets; funding to support renewable energy projects and technology development; a planning policy which strikes a careful balance between utilising Scotland's significant renewable energy resources whilst protecting our finest scenic landscapes, natural heritage and residential amenity; and a well-developed structure of partnership with the Scottish agencies, the private sector and academia.

The impact of this support can be seen in a number of ways. For example, provisional figures show that 56.7% of gross electricity consumption came from renewable sources in Scotland in 2015, and we reached our 2020 target for community and locally owned renewables five years early.

Offshore renewables represent a huge opportunity for Scotland, nowhere more so than in the Highlands and Islands where, for example, the development of the £2.6 billion Beatrice Offshore Wind farm by SSE and its partners will bring huge benefit to the Moray Firth and beyond. The project is expected to bring a total of £6 million in Community Benefits and secure around 100 direct and indirect jobs as well as associated supply chain opportunities.

Finally, in January the Scottish Government will publish a new Climate Change Plan, which together with our new Energy Strategy and forthcoming Climate Change Bill, will set out an ambitious long-term framework for a truly integrated approach to delivering Scotland’s future energy system and reaffirm our commitment to supplying clean energy from renewable sources.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the total value of output of the 23 licensed red meat abattoirs was in 2014.

(F5W-05207)

Fergus Ewing: This is not information that the Scottish Government holds. However this information can be found in the Quality Meat Scotland report ‘An Assessment of the Economic Contribution of Scotland’s Red Meat Supply Chain’ the information can be found at the following web page http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/news/report-highlights-economic-importance-scottish-red-meat-industry-0.
Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much the Scottish red meat industry contributes to Scotland's gross domestic product.

(F5W-05208)

Fergus Ewing: This information can be found in the Quality Meat Scotland report “An Assessment of the Economic Contribution of Scotland’s Red Meat Supply Chain”, the information can be found at the following web page: http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/news/report-highlights-economic-importance-scottish-red-meat-industry-0.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the total (a) livestock throughput and (b) turnover value was in livestock auction marts in (a) 2014 and (b) 2015.

(F5W-05209)

Fergus Ewing: This is not information that the Scottish Government hold centrally. However the information can be found for 2014 in the Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) report ‘An Assessment of the Economic Contribution of Scotland’s Red Meat Supply Chain’ the information can be found at the following web page: http://www.qmscotland.co.uk/news/report-highlights-economic-importance-scottish-red-meat-industry-0 QMS do not have the data for 2015.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what percentage of members of listed private sector boards have been women in each year since 2011.

(F5W-05211)

Keith Brown: The Scottish Government does not gather data on women’s representation on listed private sector boards in Scotland. However, since 1999, the Cranfield School of Management has published an annual female FTSE benchmarking report providing a regular measure of the number of women executive on the corporate boards of the UK’s top 100 companies.

The Cranfield School of Management’s Female FTSE Board Report 2016 provides statistics on women’s representation on the boards of FTSE 100, FTSE 250 and FTSE 350 boards in the UK. The report shows that in 2016 women held 26% of directorships on FTSE 100 boards, an increase of 11% since 2012. In March 2016, women held 20.4% of directorships on FTSE 250 boards and 22.4% on FTSE 350 boards.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it is investigating the awarding of planning permission on the Altnaharra estate, in light of a petition backed by people outwith Sutherland.

(F5W-05342)

Paul Wheelhouse: Scottish Ministers granted consent for the Creag Riabhach Wind Farm located on Altnaharra Estate on 17 October 2016. Consents granted by Scottish Ministers on applications submitted under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 are subject only to challenge in the courts. The decision letter sets out in full the grounds for this decision and while I recognise the strongly held views of others, I believe the decision taken was correct, in light of the evidence presented to me on the nature of points made in support or objection to the project and based on my own visit to the site. The decision letter also includes a summary of consultation responses and representations by members of the public and highlights that the Highland Council raised no objection and strong support was received from Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra Community Council, Durness Community Council and Kinlochbervie Community Council. A copy of the decision letter and associated documents can be viewed on the Scottish Government’s Energy Consents website.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many businesses eligible for payments through the National Basic Payment Support Scheme did not (a) apply and (b) receive loans.
Fergus Ewing: As of 12 December, 4,814 eligible businesses who have been made an offer under the 2016 National BPS Support Scheme are yet to apply. Any eligible business that applies by 14 December 2016 will receive payment by the end of 2016 and we would encourage those yet to apply to do so as soon as possible.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many applications it received for its National Basic Payment Support Scheme, and how many of these were successful.

Fergus Ewing: As of 12 December 2016, 13,008 applications have been received for the 2016 National Basic Payment Support Scheme, of which only 11 were unsuccessful. Eligible businesses that apply by 14 December 2016 will receive a payment by the end of 2016.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how much has been paid out in loans through its National Basic Payment Support Scheme, and how much funding set aside for the scheme remains unused.

Fergus Ewing: On 13 September 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity announced that up to £300 million would be made available for the 2016 National Basic Payment Support Scheme. As of 12 December 2016, loans valued at circa £256 million have been paid.

Health and Social Care

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to figures published by the National Records of Scotland, which show that life expectancy in Scotland is two years lower for males and 1.7 years lower for females than the UK average.

Shona Robison: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05220 on 15 December 2016. 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

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to figures published by the National Records of Scotland, which show that life expectancy at birth in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde board area is 75.3 years for males and 80.1 years for females, which for both sexes is the lowest of any NHS board in Scotland.

Shona Robison: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-05220 on 15 December 2016. 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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when it met with the Scottish Health Council to discuss whether the proposals from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde regarding the maternity units at the Vale of Leven and Inverclyde Royal hospitals, the Centre for Integrative Care and Lightburn Hospital should be designated as major service changes.

Shona Robison: The SHC come to their own view as to whether Health board proposals are major or not. Ministers make the final determination on designation where necessary (Health boards often decide that proposals are major themselves and follow the appropriate process without the need to ask Ministers), as informed by the views of the particular Health board and SHC.
Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the criteria are for designating proposals as major service changes that are determined by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing.

(S5W-05216)

Shona Robison: In such cases I take full account of the views of the Scottish Health Council and Health board before coming to a final decision.

The Scottish Health Council published guidance entitled ‘identifying major service change’ (February 2010) to help inform the Health board view. This poses questions about the proposals under nine key areas: impact on patients and carers, changes in the accessibility of services, whether emergency or unscheduled care is involved, the level of public and political concern, any conflict with national policy, the level of change in the method of service delivery, related change in recent years, the financial implications, and consequences for other services.

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the impact has been of its investment to reduce IVF waiting times.

(S5W-05219)

Shona Robison: The Scottish Government’s target that by March 2015 eligible patients will start IVF treatment at one of Scotland’s four NHS IVF facilities within 12 months of referral was delivered ahead of time.

To support the IVF target, the Scottish Government has invested nearly £18 million over four financial years to 2015-16, specifically to reduce and maintain waiting times, with further investment during 2016-17. The funding has had a dramatic effect with figures from the recently published Information Service Division IVF publication: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Waiting-Times/IVF-Waiting-Times/Publications/2016-11-29/ showing that 100% of eligible patients were screened for IVF treatment within 365 days across Scotland within 12 months of being referred, during the quarter ending September 2016.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take in light of the recent report by National Records of Scotland, Life Expectancy in Scottish Areas, which found that life expectancy in Scotland is lower than anywhere else in the UK, and that Glasgow has the lowest life expectancy rate of the whole UK.

(S5W-05220)

Shona Robison: Life expectancy in Scotland is increasing. The gap between life expectancy for men and for women is Scotland is continuing to narrow.

Reducing health inequalities is one of the biggest challenges we face. To tackle this we recognise that the root of health inequalities can be found in income inequalities. We’re taking action focused on addressing the underlying causes of ending poverty, fair wages, supporting families, and improving our physical and social environments.

In Glasgow, the Scottish Government is funding the pilot Links Worker pilot programmes, which is right on the front line of the battle against health inequalities. The Link Worker programme sees a dedicated individual working in GP surgeries, helping patients on a one-to-one basis with non-medical problems that are making them feel unwell. We are committed to increasing the number of community Links Workers in disadvantaged areas to 250 over the next five years, with 40 to be recruited by September 2017.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionists Party): To ask the Scottish Government how it will support NHS boards during the winter months, in light of (a) reports that there has been a reduction in the number of hospital beds and (b) Information Services Division (ISD) figures that suggest that the number of delayed discharges has been rising since April 2016.
Shona Robison: The Scottish Government will support NHS boards and their partners throughout the winter.

Winter Guidance was issued to NHS boards early, to ensure early action is taken to minimise disruption to patients during the winter period. In line with the guidance, NHS boards and their partners are working to increase the number of patients being discharged earlier in day, increase the number of discharges at weekends and public holidays, and strengthen community capacity to reduce delayed discharges.

The Scottish Government has invested an additional £3 million in 2016 to support unscheduled care over the winter. Funding of £9 million for unscheduled care essential actions was also announced by the First Minister in September.

In addition, we are investing £30 million a year to help health and social care partnerships tackle delayed discharges. This money has been used to open intermediate care beds, assess people in more appropriate settings and to focus on caring for people at home by investing in home care, reablement and new technology.

Integration is introducing new ways of working which will drive longer term improvements, with single accountability and joint budgets making better use of resources and improve outcomes for people by reducing unnecessary stays in hospital beds.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionists Party): To ask the Scottish Government how it will support NHS boards to manage anticipated high levels of staff absences resulting from sickness during the winter months.

Shona Robison: The Scottish Government will support NHS boards and their partners throughout the winter.

Winter Guidance was issued to NHS boards early, to ensure early action is taken to minimise disruption to patients during the winter period. In line with the guidance, NHS boards and their partners are working to increase the number of patients being discharged earlier in day, increase the number of discharges at weekends and public holidays, and strengthen community capacity to reduce delayed discharges. All Health boards have robust business continuity plans and processes in place to ensure that they can continue to provide services in the event of major disruptions.

The Chief Medical Officer for Scotland strongly recommends that all health and social care staff consider the flu vaccine. Vaccination of health and social care staff remains voluntary, although NHS employers are encouraged to offer the vaccine to staff, and to make it easy for those who wish to take up the offer of the vaccine to do so.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5O-00393 by Shona Robison on 24 November 2016, whether the cabinet secretary will meet local councillors and hospital campaigners in West Dunbartonshire following the conclusion of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde’s engagement period on 9 December 2016 and, if so, whether this will take place before her decision on the designation of proposed service changes at the Vale of Leven Hospital.

Shona Robison: It is important not to pre-judge the outcome of the current engagement process as the proposals may change or not be pursued at all.

Should NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde decide to proceed with their proposals, I will carefully consider their view and that of the independent Scottish Health Council in coming to a determination on whether the proposals should be designated major. If that is case then the proposals would be subject to formal public consultation and, ultimately, Ministerial approval.
I have been consistently clear that I’d be happy to meet with local campaigners and their representatives to help inform my final decision on any major service change proposals, once the engagements and formal consultation period has concluded.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what engagement it has with the Farr Institute of Health Informatics Research and whether this includes collaborative work regarding the use of “big data” and “machine learning”.

(S5W-05230)

Shona Robison: The Scottish Government engages with the UK Farr Institute of Health Informatics Research through the Innovative Healthcare Delivery Programme and the Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration and to utilise the Institute’s infrastructure in Scotland in support of research and analyses using large administrative datasets (“big data”). There are several hundred projects that use the infrastructure. These include several using methods such as machine learning. The Scottish Government’s Chief Scientist Office is one of the ten funders of the UK-wide Institute.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on reports that there are no education opportunities in Scotland to become a practitioner in applied behavioural analysis to assist children who have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder.

(S5W-05235)

Maureen Watt: Universities are autonomous bodies and as such they have responsibility for their own staffing, admission, subject provision, curriculum, degree awarding and research. Course provision is therefore a matter for each individual institution.

The Scottish Government expects each agency (health, education and social care) to consider their staff training and competence. It is important that services maintain staff competences in line with the SIGN Guidance and evidence. The published Autism Training Framework allows services to target their training to the needs of the individuals they are supporting.

The framework is available from the following link: http://elearning.scot.nhs.uk:8080/intralibrary/open_virtual_file_path/i1923n4027869t/NESD0350ASDTrainingFramework-WEB.pdf

Edward Mountain (Highland and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government who is entitled to travel allowance in the NHS Highland area when receiving treatment, and how much can be claimed per mile.

(S5W-05241)

Shona Robison: The Highlands and Islands Patient Travel Scheme reimburses reasonable travel costs for all patients in the Highlands and Islands area that are required to travel 30 miles or more to a hospital for treatment, less the first £10, with the exception of those in receipt of qualifying benefits, or who hold an NHS low income certificate.

NHS Highland sets its mileage payments according to HMRC advisory rates. The current paid by NHS Highland is 13 pence per mile.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-04933 by Maureen Watt on 5 December 2016, when it will publish (a) the Mental Welfare Commission’s review of the process for investigating homicides by individuals who had previous contact with mental health services and its proposal for a revised process and (b) its response to this review.

(S5W-05318)

Maureen Watt: The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland submitted a final version of its review report to the Scottish Government in November 2016. The report includes a review of the existing
process of investigation of homicides by people who are users of mental health services, as well as a proposal for changes to the existing system. Ministers are currently considering the report and it will be published in early 2017 as part of a consultation exercise on the proposal for changes to the current system.

**Learning and Justice**

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what funding Dumfries and Galloway has received from the Schools for the Future programme.

(S5W-05205)

John Swinney: Through the Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme, the Scottish Government has awarded Dumfries and Galloway Council with funding of £24.5 million towards three school projects.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many schools in Dumfries and Galloway have received assistance from the Schools for the Future programme.

(S5W-05206)

John Swinney: Through the Scotland's Schools for the Future Programme, Dumfries and Galloway Council have been awarded with funding towards three school projects. The schools to be redeveloped are: Dalbeattie High School, Maxwelltown High School and St Joseph's College.

Ross Thomson (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the number of police hours that are spent handling offences by people under the age of 18 that involve (a) antisocial behaviour, (b) vandalism, (c) violence, (d) alcohol or (e) other domestic issues.

(S5W-05248)

Michael Matheson: This information is not held by the Scottish Government. The deployment of police officers is the responsibility of the Chief Constable of Police Scotland.

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government in light of the report, Five Years On: Royal College of Nursing Scotland Review of the Transfer of Prison Health Care from the Scottish Prison Service to NHS Scotland, what action it will take to amend or improve the escort/transport contract with G4S to ensure that more prisoners are able to keep hospital appointments.

(S5W-05322)

Michael Matheson: I have asked Colin McConnell, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service, to respond. His response is as follows:

SPS does not find acceptable the late arrival of any prisoner at, or cancellation of, any appointment, and is very conscious of the potential impact on both the prisoner and partners. The contract has in place a rigorous contract monitoring regime undertaken by a team of Escort Monitors whose role it is to keep the services under review, and challenge the contractor when a failure in meeting performance measure has arisen. Where relevant, contractual remedies such as improvement plans or direct monetary reductions are applied to failures to provide the required level of service.

The escort contract contains a varied specification and there are a number of different service requirements, with an escort to a hospital appointment, being classed as a non-core service movement. In 2016, to 31 October, 29 out of 14,603 non-core movements (which include 7,884 hospital appointments) have had a performance measure applied because of the late arrival to scheduled appointments, and 40 appointments have been cancelled. There has however been a service improvement from the period referred to and this level of service is currently being sustained.
The escort contract is currently due for renewal and SPS and partners will ensure that any lessons learned are considered and reflected in the drafting of any new contract.

**Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-22551 by Kenny MacAskill on 2 October 2014, for what reason the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) stated in the answer that “SPS does not recognise that LDDs [learning difficulties and disabilities] are a significant issue amongst the prisoner population and is committed to improving our assessment process and provision of services. We are currently testing a number of approaches including piloting. This is a comprehensive screening tool providing a ‘red flag’ indicator across the spectrum of LDD conditions…” but, according to the report, Five Years On; Royal College of Nursing Scotland Review of the Transfer of Prison Health Care from the Scottish Prison Service to NHS Scotland, there is still no routine screening in prisons for LDDs.

(S5W-05324)

**Michael Matheson:** I have asked Colin McConnell, Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service, to respond. His response is as follows:

The previous response to question S4W-22551 clearly stated SPS’s recognition that LDD was a significant issue within the prison population. The reference within current question S5W-05324 stating that “SPS does not recognise that LDDs are a significant issue” is a typographical error.

It is still the case that there is no routine screening for learning difficulties/disabilities (LDD) for those entering custody or who are part of the Scottish prison population. However, SPS has now concluded an LDD screening pilot project initiated at three prisons in partnership with Forth Valley NHS, New College Lanarkshire and Fife College.

An evaluation of the project was subsequently undertaken and the key findings of this will be considered in 2017, which will determine the way forward for SPS in this area of intervention.

(S5W-05325)

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many buildings within the justice estate are not in use on a day-to-day basis, broken down by (a) police stations, (b) courts, (c) young offenders institutions and (d) offices.

(S5W-05368)

**Michael Matheson:** This information is not held centrally.

(S5W-05369)

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what the value of property is within the justice estate that is not in use on a day-to-day basis.

(S5W-05369)

**Michael Matheson:** This information is not held centrally.

(S5W-05381)

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-04911 by Mark McDonald on 1 December 2016, what the compliance rates are for mandatory staff to child ratios in nursery schools, broken down by local authority.

(S5W-05381)

**Mark McDonald:** Scottish Government does not collect information on rates of compliance for mandatory staff: child ratios in early learning and childcare settings.

The Care Inspectorate regulates and inspects care services in Scotland to make sure that they meet the right standards. They expect day care of children services to comply with the staff: child ratios in the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. In addition, the Care Inspectorate would expect there to be enough skilled, knowledgeable and qualified staff to meet the needs of the children.
Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answers to questions S4W-27438, S4W-29576 and S5W-00415 by Michael Matheson on 22 September 2015, 10 February 2016 and 14 June 2016 respectively, whether it will provide an update on the progress of developing guidance on the use of restorative justice, and when the guidance will be published.

(S5W-05388)

Michael Matheson: The Scottish Government is committed to publishing guidance relating to restorative justice as soon as possible. We are developing this guidance in collaboration with restorative justice experts and those with expertise in dealing with victims issues to ensure that the interests of all those participating in the restorative justice process are reflected.

A revised draft of the guidance was circulated to the Scottish Restorative Justice Forum (whose membership includes Sacro, Rape Crisis Scotland, Victim Support Scotland and Scottish Women's Aid) prior to its recent meeting in December 2016. The latest comments from that meeting are currently being considered.

Douglas Ross (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it considers that the Scottish Police Authority and its committees carry out their functions in ways that are proportionate, accountable and transparent and consistent with principles of good governance, as required by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, and what the reasons are for its position on this matter.

(S5W-05403)

Michael Matheson: The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (‘the 2012 Act’) requires the SPA to ‘try to carry out its functions in a way which is proportionate, accountable and transparent and which is consistent with any principle of good governance which appears to it to constitute best practice’ (Section 2(2)(3) of the 2012 Act). It is for the SPA to regulate its own procedures and to demonstrate compliance with the principles and requirements set out in the 2012 Act.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-01773 by Mark McDonald on 22 August 2016, whether it will provide an update on what (a) progress it is making in identifying the items that will be included in the baby boxes and (b) discussions it has had with (i) parents’ groups, (ii) women’s groups and (iii) other stakeholders regarding what items should be included.

(S5W-05420)

Mark McDonald: Collaboration is a key part of this policy. We have been working closely with a range of stakeholders including midwives, health visitors, other health professionals and our third sector partners. We have also commissioned research with parents themselves to better understand what they would find most useful about the Baby Box and which items they’d like to see included. This research will allow us to provide an update following the pilot phase which will be completed in March 2017.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-01773 by Mark McDonald on 22 August 2016, what its position is on the baby box containing (a) sanitary pads and (b) maternity pads.

(S5W-05421)

Mark McDonald: The Scottish Baby Box will contain essentials for babies and for parents. We have engaged with health professionals, third sector stakeholders and parents to discuss the development of the policy and the contents of the Box. Parents have told us that maternity pads are essential items and these will be included in the Box. Sanitary pads will not be included.
Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-01773 by Mark McDonald on 22 August 2016, what its position is on the baby box containing aids to support breastfeeding, including breast pads and pumps. (S5W-05422)

Mark McDonald: The Baby Box will include materials which promote attachment and which help parents prepare for the arrival of their baby. There will also be a strong focus on joining up core public health messages around things like safe-sleep. At present we do not plan to include direct aids to support breastfeeding, but we will signpost parents to the new feedgood.scot website so that they can access up-to-date information which will help them make the right feeding choices for their babies.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to ensure that school pupils with learning difficulties receive adequate support. (S5W-05432)

Mark McDonald: The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 was put in place to ensure that all children and young people with additional support needs receive the support they require to achieve their potential.

The Act places strict duties on local authorities to meet the additional support needs for all children for whose school education they are responsible, and to tailor provision according to their individual needs. The "Supporting Children's Learning" code of practice explains these duties, providing guidance to local authorities on the Act's provisions as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation.

In addition, the Scottish Government is currently reviewing the guidance on the presumption of mainstream education. The review is being undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders and will be published for consultation early in 2017.

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body how many staff it has employed on agency contracts in each of the last five years. (S5W-05257)

David Stewart: The SPCB does not contract directly with agency workers, but goes through employment agencies, who then place workers on assignment with the SPCB. IT and non-IT agency staffing arrangements are managed separately, and the information is therefore split into the two categories below.

Non-IT Agency Workers
Information about non-IT agency assignments is only held for current and previous calendar years, and therefore no detailed data on agency staffing prior to 2015 is available. The average number of non-IT agency workers on assignment has, however, been published in the SPCB annual accounts since 2013-14:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FY 2013-14</th>
<th>FY 2014-15</th>
<th>FY 2015-16</th>
<th>FY 2016-17 (to end November)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Average of full time equivalent agency staff on assignment at the end of each month in the reporting period.)

IT Agency Staff
The information we hold on IT agency staff is based on the number of assignments worked, rather than the number of workers. Information on the number of assignments worked between 2011 and 2016 is shown below. This includes assignments which began before 2011 but continued into, or ended in, later years; assignments that started and ended during years (reflecting the higher turnover...
of agency staff); assignments by workers who had more than one assignment in a year or over the period; and part time assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016 (to date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of assignments undertaken during year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body how many contracts for agency staff that it employed in the last five years were for (a) less than one month, (b) one to six months, (c) between six months and two years and (d) over two years.

**David Stewart:**

**Non-IT Agency Staff**

Information about non-IT agency assignments is only held for current and previous calendar years, and therefore no detailed data on agency staffing prior to 2015 is available. Since the beginning of 2015, the lengths of assignment undertaken were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015 – 2016 (to date)</th>
<th>As at 7 December 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) less than one month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) one to six months</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) between six months and two years</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) over two years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IT Agency Staff**

Since the beginning of 2011, the lengths of assignment undertaken were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 – 2016 (to date)</th>
<th>As at 7 December 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) less than one month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) one to six months</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) between six months and two years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) over two years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body under what circumstances it employs staff on agency contracts rather than fixed-term or permanent contracts.

**David Stewart:** Permanent or fixed term contract opportunities with the SPCB are, with very limited exceptions, advertised through fair and open competition, either internally or externally. Subject to the SPCB’s normal approval process for filling vacancies, the majority of permanent vacancies are recruited to on a permanent basis as they arise. For temporary requirements the decision on how they are filled is made on a case by case basis depending on the following factors:

The predicted length of assignment, with longer term vacancies being more suited to a fixed term recruitment exercise
How urgently the vacancy needs to be filled, and whether there is time to carry out a fixed term recruitment exercise
The skills and experience required for the post, and whether the requirement would best met by engaging specialist agencies or through an SPCB recruitment exercise
The need to cover vacancies whilst permanent or fixed term recruitment exercises are undertaken

(S5W-05258)

(S5W-05259)
The need to increase capability quickly by bringing in experienced practitioners whilst our own staff are developed
A requirement to flex capacity in response to demand
Where there is a requirement specialist skills that cannot be accommodated in the SPCB’s pay and grading structure, for instance where the market value is higher
Whether the requirement is foreseen to be long term and predictable or more irregular
Whether the requirement can be met internally
Whether there are any organisational factors that need to be taken into account, for instance an office or service review that makes committing to an SPCB contract undesirable

From 2016 staff on the SPCB’s Apprenticeship Programme have filled temporary vacancies upon qualification, prior to them securing permanent employment with the SPCB, as an alternative to using agency staff. In addition as part of the SPCB’s temporary resourcing strategy, the organisation is reducing its use of agency workers through a variety of measures, including advertising fixed term appointments which would previously have been filled on an agency basis, the creation of an SPCB temporary resourcing pool of candidates who may be offered fixed term contracts, internal staff transfers and more use of interchange and secondments with other organisations.

Provision has also been made for investment in our in-house IT capacity, the cost of which will be partially offset by a reduction in the use of IT agency staff within projects. A number of these new posts have been filled on a permanent basis in the current financial year, with further posts proposed (subject to approval on the basis of a robust business case).

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body how much it has paid to employment agencies to provide staff in each of the last five years.

(S5W-05260)

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not-IT staff: charges excluding VAT</td>
<td>1,002,428</td>
<td>886,377</td>
<td>895,122</td>
<td>1,109,348</td>
<td>1,217,312</td>
<td>414,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IT staff: non-recoverable VAT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>214,410</td>
<td>229,429</td>
<td>78,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT staff: charges excluding VAT</td>
<td>386,867</td>
<td>292,241</td>
<td>438,590</td>
<td>1,111,898</td>
<td>1,157,378</td>
<td>622,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT staff: non-recoverable VAT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>222,380</td>
<td>231,476</td>
<td>124,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total charges excluding VAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,389,295</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,178,618</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,333,712</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,221,246</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,374,690</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,037,563</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-recoverable VAT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>436,790</strong></td>
<td><strong>460,905</strong></td>
<td><strong>203,193</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,389,295</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,178,618</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,333,712</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,658,036</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,835,595</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,240,756</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Until 31 March 2014, VAT was recovered on agency invoices. From 1 April 2014 VAT has only been recovered on agency invoices by exception (charges for £37,299 in 2014-15, £70,167 in 2015-16 and £21,598 in 2016-17 were VAT recoverable). Projected outturn for 2016-17 is based on actual costs to end November and projected spend to year end.