

# **HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 12 June 2001  
*(Morning)*

Session 1

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## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CARE COMMITTEE 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2001, Session 1

### CONVENER

\*Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD)

### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP)  
\*Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
\*Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab)  
\*Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
\*Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
\*Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab)  
\*Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP)

\*attended

### WITNESSES

Malcolm Chisholm (Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care)  
Lydia Wilkie (Food Standards Agency Scotland)

### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Jennifer Smart

### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERKS

Irene Fleming  
Peter McGrath

### ASSISTANT CLERK

Joanna Hardy

### LOCATION

Committee Room 1



## Scottish Parliament

### Health and Community Care Committee

Tuesday 12 June 2001

(Morning)

[THE CONVENER opened the meeting at 09:32]

### Items in Private

**The Convener (Mrs Margaret Smith):** Good morning and welcome to this morning's meeting of the Health and Community Care Committee.

The first item is to ask the committee whether it is happy to discuss items 5 to 8 in private, for the following reasons: item 5 is to discuss the next steps we wish to take on influenza vaccination; item 6 is to discuss the approach that we will take following publication of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine report; item 7 is to take further steps on the road to drafting a report on haemophilia and hepatitis C; and item 8 is to plan the future work of the committee.

Is it agreed that we take those items in private?

**Members indicated agreement.**

### Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) (Orkney) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/195)

**The Convener:** Members were asked to indicate whether they wished to debate the affirmative instrument that is before us, which was originally circulated to members on 15 May. No comments have been lodged, so I suggest that we do not debate the instrument. Is that acceptable to the committee or does the committee want a debate with a time limit of 15 minutes?

Does anyone wish to debate the matter?

**Members indicated disagreement.**

**The Convener:** The Subordinate Legislation Committee has nothing to report on the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) (Orkney) (Scotland) Order 2001, which is an emergency affirmative instrument. The minister is here, in case members have questions or points of clarification. The committee has indicated that it does not wish to debate the instrument, but there may be some points of clarification. Do members have any questions?

Over the past two years, we have met our friends the paralytic and amnesic shellfish on a few occasions; the committee is well aware of the issues and understands that emergency affirmative measures need to be taken on occasion.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Given that we have such a high-powered top table, it would be a shame not to ask a question.

As we have not discussed this issue for some time, I would like an update. The discussion was always on whether we gold-plated the recommendations and on the fact that the Irish somehow did not have to close down their waters and were able to continue fishing. I think I am right in saying that some cleaning-up was done before the prawns entered the food process. It was recommended that we learn from the Irish, but that recommendation seems to have been left high and dry. Have we learned anything from the Irish? Are we over-examining the problem and gold-plating procedures?

**The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm):** There are issues about amnesic shellfish poisoning that could perhaps be reported. You have a letter on that subject and one of the officials could update you on it. There are discussions about whether there can be changes there. As I was going to say in my speech, paralytic shellfish poisoning is even

more of a health hazard than amnesic shellfish poisoning. There are no proposals to change the regulations on PSP.

**Lydia Wilkie (Food Standards Agency Scotland):** In Europe, we have been making advances on the possibility of a tiered system for ASP rather than one for paralytic shellfish poisoning. We are waiting for the draft of the text of a Commission decision, which will show the detail of how the science of any system will work. The situation for the Republic of Ireland, as a member state, is exactly the same as it is for Scotland at the moment.

We had a useful meeting last Friday with the Scottish industry and some of the major enforcement authorities to thrash out the final text of a consultation letter on an enforcement regime in relation to a tiered system for Scotland. However, that is for ASP. To develop matters, we aim to put that letter out on Friday. We have not yet had any ASP-related closures on the west coast, but they are expected over the next few weeks. We cannot have a tiered system for PSP—it is a different toxin.

**Mary Scanlon:** Are you saying that the Irish will adhere to the standards that are set in Scotland?

**Lydia Wilkie:** The Irish already have to adhere to the levels that are set in relation to closures in exactly the same way that Scotland has to. We have asked the Commission to allow us to have a tiered system, under which any part of the scallop that is deemed to be safe can be marketed. However, to do that we must have a robust enforcement regime, which must suit the Scottish industry rather than the industry in Ireland or other member states. Each member state's industry is different, but Scotland's is possibly the most complex.

**Mary Scanlon:** So can we look forward to fewer closures throughout Scotland as a result of the new system? Will the new system give fishermen the opportunity to fish for longer periods of the year?

**Lydia Wilkie:** If we manage to get a system that the Food Standards Agency can recommend as continuing to protect consumer health, there might be parts of the scallop that could be marketed, where at the moment there would be a closure.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament's Health and Community Care Committee in consideration of the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning) (Orkney) (Scotland) Order 2001 (SSI 2001/195) recommend that the order be approved.—[*Malcolm Chisholm.*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Convener:** Thank you for your attendance—that was one of your easier visits.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** You know that I like making speeches—it is terrible that you would not let me do that. [*Laughter.*]

## Equal Opportunities

**The Convener:** Item 4 concerns mainstreaming equal opportunities in committees. Members have a report on that. The Equal Opportunities Committee has proposed that members of all committees should be involved in research workshops to ensure mainstreaming techniques are relevant and applicable for the committees. We aim to nominate one member of the committee to attend a workshop, which will be held on the evening of Wednesday 20 June. We probably all agree that it is a good idea to find a way of ensuring that equal opportunities are reflected in the work of all the committees.

Does anyone volunteer to be involved on behalf of the committee? Various people are averting their eyes.

**Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP):** I volunteer.

**The Convener:** Good for you. If you had not volunteered, it would have had to be me.

Dorothy-Grace Elder will no doubt report back on that matter—verbally will be good enough.

09:40

*Meeting continued in private until 10:31.*





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