

Tuesday 24 September 2013

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how underground coal gasification fits into its energy strategy.

Holding answer issued: 18 September 2013

(S4W-16787)

Fergus Ewing: In Scotland we need a diverse and balanced energy portfolio to provide us with secure and affordable heat and electricity for decades to come. Diversity of sources in our energy portfolio and reduced reliance on energy imports makes our energy system more resilient.

Clearly we are aware that the energy sector is a dynamic industry and that alternative energy sources and projects are constantly emerging including such technologies as underground coal gasification. The Scottish Government's view is energy sources should only be pursued as long as their development and use is consistent with environmental objectives.

Individual proposals for energy production projects in Scotland will be studied on their merits. Each proposal will be considered through the normal planning process and the appropriate regulatory regimes.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many trade delegations to Turkey have been promoted by (a) Scottish Enterprise and (b) Scottish Development International in each year since 2007.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16922)

Fergus Ewing: Since 2007 there have been a total of seven trade missions to Turkey, one each year.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support has been provided since 2007 by (a) Scottish Enterprise and (b) Scottish Development International to firms seeking to enter the Turkish energy sector.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16923)

Fergus Ewing: In 2007, Scottish Development International (SDI) commissioned reports into energy in key markets including Turkey. Parallel to this, SDI worked to raise interest in the Turkish energy market among Scottish companies.

Since 2007, most of SDI's annual trade missions to Turkey have been energy related and these have provided a mechanism to introduce a number of Scottish companies to relevant contacts in Turkey.

A senior Scottish Enterprise (SE) official has just completed a five week assignment in Turkey to enhance SE's knowledge of the market and understanding of the opportunities for Scotland. In addition SE's CEO has also just returned from a three day visit to Turkey where she met with a number of CEO's and senior executives of leading Turkish firms, including many energy related companies.

SE will now reflect on the learning from these in order to determine their future trade and investment activities in Turkey.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government on what dates the members of the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas were invited to join the commission.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16955)

Fergus Ewing: The members of the commission were finalised following the publication of *Maximising the return from Oil and Gas in an Independent Scotland* on 23 July 2013.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-16521 by John Swinney on 16 August 2013, whether the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas has been asked to consider the Lloyds Banking Group forecast from March 2013.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16956)

Fergus Ewing: The commission will consider all evidence and data which has relevance to its remit.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has agreed with the members of the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas that it will consider amendments to its plans for independence once it has received the conclusions from the commission's work.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16957)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government will consider the final report from the Independent Expert Commission in full.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will revise its white paper on independence after the publication of the final recommendations from the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16958)

Fergus Ewing: The white paper will be published in autumn 2013.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what the remit is of the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16959)

Fergus Ewing: The commission will consider options for the implementation of the key principles set out in the Scottish Government's paper *Maximising the return from Oil and Gas in an Independent Scotland* that was published on July 23, 2013.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it expects its officials to supply presentation slides containing possible conclusions to the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16960)

Fergus Ewing: No.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish the letters of appointment of the members of the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013 (S4W-16961)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government has no plans to publish letters of appointment.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas will publish minutes of its meetings.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16962)

Fergus Ewing: It will be for the commission to decide whether or not to publish minutes of its meetings.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether members of the Independent Budget Review Panel were considered for appointment to the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16963)

Fergus Ewing: Several representatives from industry, and academics, were considered to ensure the commission has a range of expertise available to it.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what the notice period will be for members of the Independent Expert Commission on Oil and Gas.

Holding answer issued: 17 September 2013

(S4W-16964)

Fergus Ewing: The Expert Commission will feed views directly into the white paper and will be concluded following the publication of their final report.

Finance

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it planned to introduce the Procurement Reform Bill as part of its 2012-13 legislative programme and, if so, for what reason it did not do so.

(S4W-17072)

Nicola Sturgeon: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-15200 on 23 May 2013. 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>

Governance and Communities

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of its anti-poverty strategy, what information it has on the number of widowers in Scotland affected by the 1988 contributions cut-off date in social security legislation.

(S4W-17084)

Margaret Burgess: Given that this legislation was implemented before devolution, and is a reserved matter, figures are not collected separately for Scotland by the Scottish Government.

The Department for Work and Pensions will be able to advise on the 1988 contributions cut-off in the social security legislation.

Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many civil servants it employs and what information it has on how many are members of a trade union.

(S4W-17201)

John Swinney: Figures on civil servant employment are already in the public domain. The information requested can be found on the Office for National Statistics website by searching for the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey. The latest version is available at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pse/public-sector-employment/q2-2013/stb-pse-2013q2.html>

The Scottish Government figure (excluding agencies) is contained in table 10. The most recent figure as at 30 June 2013 is 5,070 civil servants.

As at 30 June 2013, 1,985 civil servants had deductions direct from salary for trade union membership. The number of civil servants who pay for their membership directly is not known.

Health and Social Care

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many speech and language therapists there have been in each of the last five years, broken down by (a) NHS board and (b) local authority area.

(S4W-17025)

Alex Neil: Published information on headcount and whole time equivalent of all speech and language therapy staff, broken down by NHS board from September 2007 to June 2013, can be found on the workforce statistics via the Information Services Division (ISD) website at:

https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2013-08-27/Non-Medical_Trend_J2013.xls?67409260

Published information on headcount and whole time equivalent of speech and language therapy staff, broken down by NHS board, Agenda for Change (AfC) band, age, contract type and gender, and NHS region and board from June 2012 to June 2013, can be found on the workforce statistics via the ISD website at:

https://isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Workforce/publications/2013-08-27/AHP_Staff_J2013.xls?67409260

Published information on headcount and whole time equivalent of speech and language therapy staff, broken down by NHS board, AfC band, age, contract type and gender, and NHS region and board from September 2007 to September 2012, can be found on the workforce statistics via the ISD website at:

http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/publications/2012-11-27/AHP_Staff_S2012.xls?1158780

Numbers for speech and language therapists working in local authority areas are not centrally held.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides for children with communication difficulties.

(S4W-17026)

Alex Neil: Support for children with communication difficulties is provided through the provision of Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) services by local NHS boards and through the duties of education authorities and other agencies under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils.

The SLT input required is based on a comprehensive assessment and joint goal setting with the child and family.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what funding it provides for speech and language therapy.

(S4W-17027)

Alex Neil: Information about the funding provided for Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) services is not held centrally.

Funding for NHS Speech and Language services is provided through general NHS board funding; it is for each NHS board to determine locally what spend is needed in the provision of individual services.

Children's SLT services are funded partly through both NHS board funding and partly by local authorities via service level agreements between local authorities and NHS boards.

As independent corporate bodies, local authorities are responsible for managing their own budgets and deciding how best to allocate the total financial resources available to them on the basis of local needs and priorities having first fulfilled its statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities including the Scottish Government's key strategic objectives.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to improve the provision of speech and language therapy for children with neurological conditions.

(S4W-17028)

Alex Neil: All children access speech and language therapy services in the same way irrespective of whether they have been diagnosed with a neurological condition.

Action 4.1 of the Allied Health Professions National Delivery Plan, published in 2012, specifically focuses on the development of a transformational children and young people's service plan to meet the evolving needs of this care group. This plan will address the need for a national, sustainable model that reflects the early years agenda and the moves towards integration and will include services for children with neurological conditions.

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many nurses the NHS employed and at what cost in (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12 and (c) 2012-13.

(S4W-17058)

Alex Neil: Information on how many NHSScotland staff are employed in nursing and midwifery positions, and at what cost, in (a) 2010-11, (b) 2011-12 and (c) 2012-13 is shown in the following table:

Financial Year	Average WTE for Financial Year ¹	Gross Charge (£ million) ²
2010-11	56,707.6	2,119.2
2011-12	58,470.2	2,137.1
2012-13	58,871.1	2,164.7

Source: ISD Scotland, Scottish Workforce Standard System, as at 31st March 2013

Notes:

1. Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) represents the average WTE worked over the financial year. This will not match the published ISD national statistic, as this is an average over the year and the National Statistic is taken as a snapshot at a particular time.
2. Gross charge is defined as all payments received by the employee plus the additional employer costs (NI and Pension Contributions).

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the estimated cost has been of abolishing prescription charges since 1 April 2011.

(S4W-17061)

Alex Neil: The introduction of free prescriptions for all in Scotland has been fully funded by the Scottish Government, and has been achieved at no cost to the NHS.

£57 million was added to the baseline budgets of territorial NHS boards in 2011-12 to meet the costs of abolishing this tax on ill-health, and is therefore subject to annual uplifts in line with the overall budget for the NHS in Scotland.

Prescription charges impose costs on people with chronic conditions for the medicines that keeps them well, or even alive, not to mention the additional costs if their illnesses flare-up. This was a key message in a report by the Prescription Charges Coalition in England (March 2013), *Paying the Price, Prescription Charges and People with Long-Term Conditions*.

In its survey of over 3,700 people with long-term conditions, the report highlights that over a third of respondents who pay for each prescription had not collected at least one item due to cost, with three quarters of this group reporting that their health got worse as a result, and 10% reporting that they ended up in hospital as a direct consequence of not taking their medication.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many NHS managers are being offered an improved pay deal in autumn 2013.

(S4W-17066)

Alex Neil: There are 916 whole time equivalent staff in the executive and senior management cohorts. These employees have been subject to a complete pay freeze of up to four years. Details of the 2013-14 pay settlement covering this group will be announced in a forthcoming pay circular.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what average percentage pay increase is being offered to NHS managers.

(S4W-17067)

Alex Neil: Details of the 2013-14 pay settlement for NHS executive and senior managers will be announced in a forthcoming pay circular. This will be entirely consistent with Scottish Government Pay Policy for 2013-14.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government which elements of the NHS management pay arrangements it plans to review.

(S4W-17068)

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government has no plans to review elements of the current NHS executive and senior management pay arrangements. I have indicated that I would be interested in hearing views on how these arrangements might evolve in the future as we move towards our 2020 vision for an integrated health workforce.

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what advice it has taken from (a) doctors and (b) dentists since 2010 when considering pay review body recommendations.

(S4W-17095)

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government works in partnership with the professional organisations that represent both doctors and dentists.

We meet with representatives from the British Medical Association and the British Dental Association on a regular basis to discuss various issues including the evidence provided to and the recommendations made by the Doctors' and Dentists' Pay Review Body.

Learning and Justice

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether there have been discussions regarding Skills Development Scotland formally merging with DWP Job Centre Plus and, if so, what the outcomes were.

Holding answer issued: 19 September 2013

(S4W-16809)

Angela Constance: No formal discussions regarding Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and DWP Jobcentre Plus merging have taken place. The Scottish Government is however engaging with a range of stakeholders on how employment services might be delivered under constitutional reform. The roles of SDS and DWP will be considered as part of this work.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on formalising links between Skills Development Scotland and DWP Job Centre Plus.

Holding answer issued: 19 September 2013

(S4W-16811)

Angela Constance: Partnership agreements are in place between Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and DWP Job Centre Plus at both national and regional/district levels. SDS and DWP have also collaborated in a number of areas, including PACE local partnerships, the Integrated Employment and Skills project and the Local Employability Partnerships. SDS also receives data from DWP through the SDS-led Opportunities for All Data Hub. The Government welcomes such collaboration and is engaging with a range of stakeholders on how employment services might be delivered under constitutional reform. The role of SDS and DWP will be considered as part of this work.

Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance is issued to individual colleges regarding eligibility criteria for college bursaries.

(S4W-16864)

Michael Russell: The Scottish Funding Council issue the further education student support policy to colleges annually.

Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether colleges may specify private sector halls of residence as required accommodation for the receipt of a college bursary.

(S4W-16865)

Michael Russell: The Scottish Funding Council rules for further education student support set no eligibility requirements relating to accommodation at specific halls of residence.

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many serving police officers there are, broken down by (a) division and (b) local authority area.

(S4W-17022)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government does not hold this information centrally. Police Scotland is currently completing work to standardise data and HR systems across the former eight forces. Although this means that a further geographical breakdown of police officers is not available at this time, Police Scotland is currently developing this.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides for students aged 16 to 24 with (a) cancer and (b) serious and complex long-term health conditions other than cancer to (i) access and (ii) maintain further and higher education opportunities.

(S4W-17035)

Michael Russell: The Scottish Government is determined to support all students, and in particular, those who are battling serious and complex long-term health conditions, including cancer.

In general, access to further and higher education in Scotland is a competitive process where applicants need to be able to demonstrate that they have the potential to benefit from the opportunities that are on offer. In that context, there is a need to give due consideration to circumstances that may have affected a student's attainment. Universities and colleges will make allowances when deciding admissions if prior performance has been impeded due to illness or a long-term health condition. Beyond that, and in terms of support once a student has been accepted, please refer to the response to S4W-17036 on 24 September 2013.

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>.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has for future support for students aged 16 to 24 with (a) cancer and (b) serious and complex long-term health conditions other than cancer in further and higher education.

(S4W-17036)

Michael Russell: The Scottish Government is determined to support all students, and in particular, those who are battling serious and complex long-term health conditions including cancer.

From 2013-14, all students are eligible to apply for a maintenance support package worth up to £7250 if they are studying a course of higher education (HE) and to receive help from the Scottish Government's £97 million investment in bursary funds if they are studying a course of further education (FE).

Further help is available related to the nature of any serious and complex long-term health condition and the additional study costs that arise. This is provided across HE and FE in the form of one or more of the Disabled Students Allowance, the Disabled Students Premium, Extended Learning Support and funding for Dominant Programme Group 18. Beyond that, and as set out in Partnership Matters, colleges and universities work with health and social services to agree support packages where the responsibility for meeting all the needs of a student with an underlying medical condition is shared.

The Student Awards Agency for Scotland can extend the number of years whereby a student qualifies for support if study is interrupted due to an underlying medical condition. Universities and colleges will also review their expectations around course progression where such a condition prevents a student from fully engaging with their studies, and will also consider what impact any such condition might have had on attainment leading up to application.

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide details of the meetings that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has had with local authority (a) education conveners and (b) directors of education since January 2013.

(S4W-17045)

Michael Russell: The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has had the following meetings which have included both local authority education conveners and directors of education since January 2013:

Angus Council meeting regarding schools capital project: 28 February 2013

East Ayrshire Council meeting regarding Phase 3 school within the Schools for the Future Programme: 8 May 2013

ADES Conference on Curriculum for Excellence: 13 May 2013

Official opening of Dreghorn Primary School in North Ayrshire: 15 May 2013

Official opening of Spittal primary, Rutherglen: 9 September 2013

The Second Education Round-table event co-hosted by Cosla and the Scottish Government (education conveners and directors of education in attendance) 11 September 2013

Official opening of Haddington Infants and St Mary's primary: 12 September 2013

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has also met with education conveners and directors of education during school visits and summer cabinet.

Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether the right to independent advocacy for looked-after children and young people will be included in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill and what the reasons are for its position on this matter.

(S4W-17177)

Aileen Campbell: The right to independent advocacy for looked after children and young people will not be included in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill.

The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach to improving wellbeing of all children and young people recognises the central importance of involving them in decisions which affect their lives. It also recognises that sometimes children and young people will require support if their views and opinions are to be shared, including through the provision of advocacy. Work is on-going to implement GIRFEC in every community planning partnership across Scotland and we have been consulting on principles and standards which should apply whenever children required advocacy support.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation's finding that the number of Scotland-domiciled students from the most deprived quintile who attended university increased by 122 between 2007 and 2012, and what action it is taking to address this issue.

(S4W-17178)

Michael Russell: This administration was elected on a manifesto commitment to do more to widen access. In making this commitment, the government recognised that while there had been progress around bringing students from non-traditional backgrounds into higher education, the rate of increase was too slow.

The government has now included statutory widening access agreements in the Post-16 Education Act. This will place a statutory duty on our universities to do more to widen access, a duty that we have supported through our announcement in December 2012 to fund an extra 2089 places this year, including 727 places specifically for widening access students and 1020 for students articulating from college to university (a traditional widening access route).

Transport Scotland

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made regarding improvement works on the Inveramsay bridge.

(S4W-17085)

Keith Brown: Draft Road Orders were published for the A96 Inveramsay bridge scheme in April 2013 which signalled the start of the formal consultation period. A number of objections were received and it was recently confirmed that the last outstanding objection has been withdrawn. This clears the way for the Made Orders which will be published in the coming months. Construction is due to commence in late 2014 subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory process.

The following questions received holding answers:

S4W-17054

S4W-17057

S4W-17071