

Friday 13 December 2013

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what centres are designated as suitable for the control of major accident hazards under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999.

(S4W-18600)

Paul Wheelhouse: The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 do not provide for the designation of centres. However, the Regulations, for which Health and Safety Executive and SEPA are the competent authority in Scotland, provide for the preparation of on-site emergency plans by operators and off-site emergency plans by local authorities, and for the review, testing and implementation of these plans. The information to be contained in these plans is set out in Schedule 5 to the Regulations.

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the claim by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas that there is an “abundance” of cod in the North Sea and what impact an increase in stocks will have on the prey of the species.

(S4W-18635)

Richard Lochhead: It is clear from the latest advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) for North Sea Cod that the stock is recovering. Fishing mortality is at its lowest level since assessments began in 1963, and the biomass of the stock has been building steadily since 2006, and is now above 70,000 tonnes. The Scottish Government’s approach is to accept scientific advice where available and seek to achieve higher stock biomass through the spatial avoidance of Cod, the use of selective fishing gears, and adopting sustainable fishing rates that allow the stock to rebuild while providing quota for our fleet that minimises discards.

The North Sea is a complex multi-species ecosystem, with many predator-prey interactions between many species. Modelling by ICES suggests that when the abundance of cod and saithe increases, that of haddock and whiting may fall due to a direct predation effect, but the biomass of herring, sandeel, Norway pout and sprat may rise. However, even the best models may be confounded by the real world. For example, when the cod stock was very large (around 250,000t) in the 1960s-1970s, the stock of haddock was also very large (sometimes as much as 500,000t). Observations such as this lead scientists to continually refine their models, and this is an integral part of the scientific process and the advancement of understanding. Predicting what changes in the relative abundance of one species may mean to another species, and the associated economic impacts, is therefore fraught with difficulty and underlines the importance of not drawing hasty conclusions from observations of changes in the abundance of various fish stocks.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government which companies have been found liable under the Environmental Liability (Scotland) Regulations 2009 of causing (a) land damage, (b) water damage and (c) damage to protected (i) habitats and (ii) species, and what penalty was imposed.

(S4W-18685)

Paul Wheelhouse: The competent authorities under the Environmental Liability (Scotland) Regulations 2009 are SEPA, Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland.

SEPA has not to date received any notifications of “environmental damage” (as defined in the Regulations) from operators. SEPA has received two requests for action and review from interested persons. Both of these cases were found to be not plausible in accordance with regulation 14. SEPA has reported one case of “environmental damage” (land damage) to the European Commission. This involved the spillage of a large volume of fuel to ground following a collision between two road tankers. In respect of this incident, SEPA worked with the operator and the insurers to develop and implement a remedial strategy for the site.

On a further 15 occasions, SEPA has itself considered whether it had reasonable grounds to believe that environmental damage had occurred. SEPA did not find reasonable grounds to believe that environmental damage had occurred in any of these cases. This was either because the activity that caused the pollution did not fall within the scope of the Regulations or because the pollution did not meet the thresholds for environmental damage. SEPA is currently investigating one further case which involves the release of a large volume of fuel.

SNH issued notices of imminent threat of environmental damage to multiple operators in one case. The operators took action to prevent damage reaching the threshold of actual environmental damage. SEPA also took enforcement action (under other legislation) which led to two operators being prosecuted. Any other cases that have been identified as meeting, or threatening to meet, the threshold of environmental damage have been found to be exempt from the scope of the regulations.

Marine Scotland has not dealt with any cases.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance it provides to farmers to minimise the risk to insect pollinators from the use of (a) thiacloprid and (b) acetamiprid foliar sprays.

(S4W-18766)

Richard Lochhead: Under a crop health activity, which monitors Scottish crops for the presence of pests, weeds and diseases, funded by the Scottish Government, staff at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) have provided advice to farmers on the safe use of pesticide products containing thiacloprid and acetamiprid, in line with label instructions.

SRUC's advice also included information on alternatives to neonicotinoids and on integrated pest management options which should help to reduce reliance on pesticides.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish all of the (a) official and (b) ministerial correspondence between it and the UK Government concerning the closure of the Renewables Obligation and the associated transitional arrangements.

(S4W-18781)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government has published a letter from the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, Mr Ewing, to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Mr Davey, dated 1 November 2013 concerning the closure of the Renewables Obligation. This can be found at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/ElectricityMarketReform/Letter01-Nov-13>

We have no plans to publish any other correspondence.

Governance and Communities

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on how many children in Scotland have been adversely impacted by the so-called bedroom tax.

(S4W-18675)

Margaret Burgess: The latest statistics released by the Department for Work and Pensions show that as at August 2013, 12,090 households with children had their benefits reduced as a result of the removal of the spare room subsidy or so-called bedroom tax.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will uprate the applicable amounts and premiums set out in the Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and, if so, (a) when and (b) by how much.

(S4W-18699)

John Swinney: The Scottish Government laid the Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 and the Council Tax Reduction (State Pension Credit) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 in February of this year to uprate the applicable amounts and premiums set out in the Council Tax Reduction (Scotland) Regulations 2012 for the period 2013-14. Discussions with our Local Government partners regarding developments beyond this period are on-going, final decisions will be confirmed in due course.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it supports local authorities to provide emergency accommodation for homeless people.

(S4W-18736)

Margaret Burgess: Local authorities in Scotland have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for all homeless people. The Scottish Government is providing local government in Scotland with over £10.3 billion in 2013-14. It is the responsibility of each local authority to allocate the total financial resources available to it 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.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people are estimated to sleep rough due to a lack of emergency accommodation in each local authority area.

(S4W-18738)

Margaret Burgess: During 2012-13, 1,745 applications contained someone who had slept rough on the night immediately preceding the day they made their homelessness application. A further breakdown of the reasons for sleeping rough is not held centrally.

Local Authority	2012-13	
	All applications containing someone who had slept rough on the night immediately preceding the day they made their homelessness application	All Applications
Aberdeen City	64	1,369
Aberdeenshire	78	1,408
Angus	19	793
Argyll and Bute	29	465
Clackmannanshire	11	522
Dumfries and Galloway	43	951
Dundee City	96	1,471
East Ayrshire	9	471
East Dunbartonshire	6	488
East Lothian	18	674
East Renfrewshire	16	307
Edinburgh	367	4,316
Eilean Siar	5	168
Falkirk	0	1,087
Fife	156	2,829
Glasgow City	475	8,299
Highland	45	1,019
Inverclyde	11	320
Midlothian	9	754
Moray	31	552
North Ayrshire	10	661
North Lanarkshire	15	2,096

Local Authority	2012-13	
	All applications containing someone who had slept rough on the night immediately preceding the day they made their homelessness application	All Applications
Orkney	4	105
Perth and Kinross	28	910
Renfrewshire	58	1,103
Scottish Borders	18	638
Shetland	5	150
South Ayrshire	52	861
South Lanarkshire	0	2,112
Stirling	13	351
West Dunbartonshire	54	1,364
West Lothian	0	1,863
Scotland	1,745	40,477

Source: HL1 Dataset as at 21 October 2013.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many more social houses it estimates are needed to meet the demand for permanent accommodation.

(S4W-18739)

Margaret Burgess: The demand for permanent accommodation can be met through different types of housing tenures, of which social housing plays a vital role but it is distinct from housing need. Whilst specific assessments of housing need are made by local authorities, the supply of affordable housing remains a high priority for the Scottish Government, which has made clear its commitment to deliver at least 30,000 affordable homes during the lifetime of this Parliament. We recognise the vital role of social housing in providing people with an affordable home and a platform for getting on in life, which is why at least 20,000 of the 30,000 affordable homes will be for social rent, which will include at least 5,000 council houses.

Health and Social Care

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-18384 by Alex Neil on 28 November 2013, how many (a) medical and (b) clinical oncology specialists there are in the North of Scotland Planning Group, and how many positions have been vacant for over (i) three and (ii) six months, broken down by NHS board.

(S4W-18593)

Alex Neil: The North of Scotland Planning Group comprise NHS Highland, Grampian, Tayside, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. The Group facilitates collaborative work across the three north of Scotland cancer centres, in NHS Highland, Grampian and Tayside via the North of Scotland Cancer Network. (NOSCAN)

Information on how many consultants in (a) medical and (b) clinical oncology in the north of Scotland region can be found in the following tables.

The number of vacancies in the north region, including positions vacant for more than six months, is also shown in the tables. Information on the number of positions vacant for over three months is not held centrally.

Table 1. The headcount of medical oncologist consultant staff in post (SIP) in NHS Scotland, north region from Sep-2008 to Sep-2013

	Sep-08			Sep-09			Sep-10			Sep-11			Sep-12			Sep-13		
	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+
NHS Grampian	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1
NHS Highland	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
NHS Tayside	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-

Source: SWISS

Table 2. The headcount of clinical oncologist consultant staff in post (SIP) in NHS Scotland, north region from Sep-2008 to Sep-2013

	Sep-08			Sep-09			Sep-10			Sep-11			Sep-12			Sep-13		
	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+	Head count SIP	Total vacs	Vac for 6 mth+
NHS Grampian	7	-	-	8	-	-	8	2	2	7	-	-	8	1	-	6	2	1
NHS Highland	4	1	-	4	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	3	1	-
NHS Tayside	7	-	-	9	1	1	9	-	-	9	1	1	9	-	-	9	1	1

Source: SWISS

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has carried out of avoidable mortality and morbidity arising from the configuration of accident and emergency services.

(S4W-18599)

Alex Neil: Health boards review morbidity and mortality constantly and various local and national means are used to assure and improve the safety and quality of hospital care. NHS boards are responsible for assuring the quality and safety of specific services.

Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it takes to support trainee GPs in (a) deprived, (b) remote and (c) rural areas.

(S4W-18622)

Alex Neil: The training of, and support provided to, General Practitioner (GP) trainees is co-ordinated and shared between NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and individual employers, in the following ways.

a. Deprived areas

There are training practices in the East, South East and West Deaneries that are in areas of deprivation. Health inequalities are also taught in the educational day release programmes for GP trainees.

NES is working with NHS Health Scotland and the Deep End group to develop learning on working in areas of deprivation for GP trainees, trained GPs and other primary care professionals.

b. and c. Remote and Rural areas

There are remote and rural training practices across the North of Scotland, and also rural training practices in the West of Scotland in Ayrshire and Dumfries and in the South East in the Borders.

In the North of Scotland NES has a new and innovative Rural Track GP training programme. This programme is offered in addition to existing programmes and is designed to offer an attractive rurally based option around each of the Rural General Hospital systems to achieve not only the competencies required by the RCGP/GMC but also the competencies to live and work in a rural area. In the 2013-14 recruitment six of ten posts have been filled.

NES and the territorial health boards co-fund rural fellowships and in the 2013-14 recruitment all ten posts have been filled.

Learning and Justice

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government as part of its making justice work programme, how many meetings it has had with stakeholders about the siting of a justice centre in the Borders and on what dates.

(S4W-18346)

Kenny MacAskill: The Scottish Government has not met with Stakeholders about the siting of a justice centre in the Borders as part of the Making Justice Work Programme.

Responsibility for Scotland's courts is a matter for the judicially led and independent Scottish Court Service (SCS) and not the Scottish Government. As part of their long term vision for the court estate, SCS has outlined to the Justice Committee that they intend to consider the possibility of integrated justice centres in four areas. The first of these feasibility studies is underway in the Borders and SCS and Scottish Borders Council are jointly undertaking the study, along with other justice partners.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether, as part of its making justice work programme, it will consider the closure of Selkirk and Jedburgh sheriff courts if a justice centre is located in the Borders.

(S4W-18347)

Kenny MacAskill: Responsibility for Scotland's courts is a matter for the judicially led and independent Scottish Court Service (SCS) and not the Scottish Government. Neither Selkirk or Jedburgh Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts formed part of the court closures recently approved by the Scottish Parliament. If SCS were to present any future plans to close courts, these would need to go through the relevant processes, including Parliament.

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it would close Jedburgh and Selkirk sheriff courts as part of its making justice work programme.

(S4W-18348)

Kenny MacAskill: Responsibility for Scotland's courts is a matter for the judicially led and independent Scottish Court Service (SCS) and not the Scottish Government. Neither Selkirk or Jedburgh Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts formed part of the court closures recently approved by the Scottish Parliament. If SCS were to present any future plans to close courts, these would need to go through the relevant processes, including Parliament.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many attacks on emergency service staff have been reported in each year since 1999, broken down by NHS board area.

Holding answer issued: 3 December 2013

(S4W-18459)

Kenny MacAskill: The police recorded crime statistics collected centrally are based on an aggregate return at local authority level, and as such, do not distinguish the circumstances of the crime, such as the occupation of the victim. In addition, as local authority areas do not nest into NHS health board areas, it is not possible to produce a breakdown of recorded crime data by NHS board areas.

Following the introduction of the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005, a new crime code (Common Assault of an Emergency Worker) was created. This crime code also includes offences under the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 and the Police Act 1996. Prior to this, a common assault on an emergency worker would have been recorded and classified as a Common assault and as the dataset cannot be interrogated on the basis of occupation of the victim, it is not possible to identify emergency workers prior to 2005-06. Where an emergency worker is the victim of a serious assault, these will be

included within the serious assault crime code. However it is not possible to identify emergency workers separately.

The following table shows the number of offences of Common assault of an emergency worker for Scotland since the introduction of the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005.

Financial Year	Common assault of an emergency worker ¹
2005-06 ²	518
2006-07	723
2007-08	753
2008-09	1,150
2009-10	5,320
2010-11	6,456
2011-12	7,107
2012-13	6,514

Notes:

1. In 2010, an inconsistency in the classification of assaults on police officers was identified. Some police forces had continued to classify assaults on police officers as an offence of Common Assault rather than the new offence of Common assault of an emergency worker. As a result, 2009-10 is the first year in which all police forces were consistently classifying common assaults on police officers under this new offence.

2. The Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 came into force on 9 May 2005.

In June 2010, Justice Analytical Services in the Scottish Government produced a short paper which reports on the results of a special exercise to investigate these classification issues. This paper is publicly available via the following web link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/JusticeOccasional>.

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted for attacks on emergency service staff in each year since 1999.

Holding answer issued: 3 December 2013

(S4W-18460)

Kenny MacAskill: The available information is given in the following tables.

The Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Police (Scotland) Act 1967, have provisions for a person who assaults, resists, obstructs, molests or hinders emergency workers. Offences which specifically involve an assault on emergency workers cannot generally be identified separately from other section offences in the data held centrally.

The Police Act 1996 Section 89(1) provides for any person who assaults a constable in the execution of his duty, or a person assisting a constable in the execution of his duty, shall be guilty of an offence.

Other assaults on emergency workers which may result in other charges such as serious assault or attempted homicide cannot be identified separately in the available statistics and so are not included.

People prosecuted in Scottish Courts for offences against emergency workers¹, 1998-99 to 2012-13

	Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005	Police (Scotland) Act 1967	Police Act 1996	All
1998-99	0	3,351	0	3,351
1999-00	0	2,882	0	2,882
2000-01	0	2,725	0	2,725

2001-02	0	3,033	0	3,033
2002-03	0	3,164	0	3,164
2003-04	0	3,515	0	3,515
2004-05	0	3,603	0	3,603
2005-06	57	3,683	0	3,740
2006-07	212	4,071	0	4,283
2007-08	287	4,127	0	4,414
2008-09	309	3,989	0	4,298
2009-10	290	3,599	0	3,889
2010-11	336	3,329	0	3,665
2011-12	411	4,081	0	4,492
2012-13	391	3,915	3	4,309

People with a charge proved in Scottish Courts for offences against emergency workers¹, 1998-99 to 2012-13

	Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005	Police (Scotland) Act 1967	Police Act 1996	All
1998-99	0	2,715	0	2,715
1999-00	0	2,274	0	2,274
2000-01	0	2,149	0	2,149
2001-02	0	2,452	0	2,452
2002-03	0	2,880	0	2,880
2003-04	0	3,124	0	3,124
2004-05	0	3,200	0	3,200
2005-06	54	3,286	0	3,340
2006-07	200	3,644	0	3,844
2007-08	275	3,703	0	3,978
2008-09	301	3,574	0	3,875
2009-10	281	3,184	0	3,465
2010-11	323	2,989	0	3,312
2011-12	356	3,364	0	3,720
2012-13	330	3,137	2	3,469

Source: Scottish Government Criminal Proceedings data.

Note: 1. Where main charge.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many pupils sat Higher German in each of the last 10 years for which information is available.

(S4W-18579)

Alasdair Allan: The number of pupils who were presented for a Higher in German in Local Authority schools in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table:

Academic Year	Number of Presentations for Higher German in Local Authority schools
2002-03	1,631
2003-04	1,535
2004-05	1,443
2005-06	1,143
2006-07	1,375
2007-08	1,276
2008-09	1,088

Academic Year	Number of Presentations for Higher German in Local Authority schools
2009-10	970
2010-11	898
2011-12	920
2012-13	890

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many pupils have sat a national qualification in German in each of the last 10 years.

(S4W-18580)

Alasdair Allan: The number of pupils who were presented for a national qualification in German in Local Authority schools in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table:

Academic Year	Number of Presentations for a national qualification in German in Local Authority schools
2002-03	15,681
2003-04	14,466
2004-05	13,445
2005-06	13,117
2006-07	12,345
2007-08	10,991
2008-09	9,352
2009-10	8,463
2010-11	8,076
2011-12	7,300
2012-13	6,470

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many state schools have presented pupils for examination for a national qualification in German in each of the last 10 years.

(S4W-18581)

Alasdair Allan: The number of local authority school centres which presented pupils for examinations for a national qualification in German in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table:

Year	Number of Local Authority school centres presenting pupils for national qualifications in German
2003	276
2004	271
2005	265
2006	251
2007	240
2008	230
2009	214
2010	205
2011	198

Year	Number of Local Authority school centres presenting pupils for national qualifications in German
2012	197
2013	191

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many German-speaking foreign language assistants there have been in schools in each of the last 10 years.

(S4W-18582)

Alasdair Allan: The number of German-speaking foreign language assistants in Scottish schools in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

Scottish Government is encouraged to see that the overall number of Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs) has stabilised and increased (from 59 in 2011-12, to 70 in 2012-13 and 73 in 2013-14).

Year	Number of German Foreign Language Assistants in Scottish schools
2003-2004	68
2004-2005	58
2005-2006	55
2006-2007	53
2007-2008	52
2008-2009	45
2009-2010	26
2010-2011	19
2011-2012	11
2012-2013	10
2013-2014	9

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government which of the arm's-length foundations established by the regional boards of colleges have yet to identify their initial trustees.

(S4W-18689)

Michael Russell: This information is not held centrally. I have asked the interim chief executive of the Scottish Funding Council to respond directly to the member.

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many children and families it believes would benefit from the proposals in the (a) Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill and the (b) white paper on independence, and what the economic impact would be.

(S4W-18696)

Aileen Campbell: The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill contains provisions that will offer a range of benefits to children and families. For example the move to increase the early learning and childcare entitlement from 475 hours to 600 hours for 3 and 4 year olds and our most vulnerable two year olds will benefit around 121,000 children, saving families up to £707 per child per year.

The Bill will also ensure better permanence planning for looked after children and ensure there is a single planning approach for children who need additional support from services.

Independence would benefit children and families in a number of ways as set out in Scotland's Future. For example 240,000 children and 212,000 families will benefit from the expansion to 1,140 hours of childcare a year for all children from age one to starting school. This will save families up to £4,600 per child per year, the equivalent of £770 million each year overall.

As well as increasing the number women who are able to work, it will create up to 35,000 jobs in the childcare sector, doubling the current workforce. An increase in female labour market participation would significantly boost tax revenues, for example if participation reached Swedish levels, an increase of 6%, tax revenues could increase by £700 million (1.5%).

The following questions received holding answers:

S4W-18576

S4W-18577

S4W-18578