

# PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 AND ANSWERS BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Wednesday 06 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 06 May can be found on page 18 of this document.

Links to First Minister's Questions on 06 May, many of which relate to COVID-19, are included at page 17.

## ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 06 May)

### Government initiated question answered on 06 May

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the go-live date for the transition from the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) to ScotEID in Summer 2020 will still be met.

(S5W-28872)

**Mairi Gougeon:** We have had discussions with the Bovine EID Industry Working Group on the transition from CTS to ScotEID. It was agreed that given the impact of Covid-19 on some third party software providers, as well as the wider farming community that we should delay the transition from Summer 2020 to the end of November.

### Ministerial portfolio: Communities and Local Government

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many volunteers have registered through the Ready Scotland website in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, also broken down by how many will be deployed to assist (a) the NHS and (b) other public services.

(S5W-28285)

**Aileen Campbell:** As at the week ending 1 May, there were 77,057 sign-ups to the Ready Scotland website, the breakdown is provided in the following table—

Date	NHS Health & Social Care	British Red Cross	Volunteer Scotland	Total
17-04-20	23,101	18,695	35,261	77,057

a) Following sign-up through the Ready Scotland website, the NHS Health and Social Care recruitment campaign involves both NHS Education for Scotland officials working with Health Boards, and the Scottish Social Services Council working with social care providers, to match applicants to placements. Offers of employment are being made across all Scottish Health and Social Care Partnerships

with nearly 700 applicants ready to be deployed and more than 3,600 NHS returners in the process of completing their pre-employment checks. Please note that these are all paid positions.

b) The new British Red Cross deployment recording process has confirmed that, since 13 April, 112 Community Reserve Volunteers have been deployed across the East, West and North Resilience Partnership areas. Volunteer Scotland do not currently track individual volunteer journeys from sign up through to formal volunteering roles, so those figures are not readily available.

The 'Scotland Cares' campaign connects British Red Cross and Volunteer Scotland schemes to local authority and third sector activity in communities, creating a pool of volunteers for local organisations to draw upon and deploy as required. Feedback from Local Authorities, Resilience Partnerships, and Third Sector Interface leads, confirms that local volunteering needs are currently being met. Although many of the volunteers who have signed up will not be needed immediately, they are likely to be critical in efforts to support and rebuild communities over the weeks and months to come. It should be noted that thousands of individuals were already volunteering in their communities before the launch of the 'Scotland Cares' campaign.

The response from the public has been incredible and the Scotland Cares recruitment campaign is being paused as we enter the next phase. The campaign will re-open should more volunteers be needed.

### Ministerial portfolio: Economy, Fair Work and Culture

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with banks to encourage them to charge their commercial borrowers the Bank of England base rate of 0.1% for three months, then month to month as it sees fit, in order to support businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28419)**

**Fiona Hyslop:** The regulation of financial services is reserved to the UK Government, meaning Scottish Ministers are unable to directly intervene in the commercial decisions made by financial services companies. However, Scottish Ministers are engaging closely with the banks and are pressing the industry to do all that it reasonably can to support people and businesses through the pandemic crisis. This includes fair interest rates and Ministers are happy to raise any individual cases with the banks concerned.

You may be aware that, on 9 April, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) provided firms the flexibility under their rules to provide temporary financial relief to those facing payment difficulties during the crisis. Firms are expected to:

- offer a temporary payment freeze on loans and credit cards for up to three months, for consumers negatively impacted by coronavirus;

- allow customers who are negatively impacted by coronavirus and who already have an arranged overdraft on their main personal current account, up to £500 charged at zero interest for three months;
- make sure that all overdraft customers are no worse off on price when compared to the prices they were charged before the recent overdraft pricing changes came into force; and
- ensure consumers using any of these temporary payment freeze measures will not have their credit file affected.

These are positive steps, but we continue to monitor the position closely and will not hesitate to raise any examples of poor practice with the industry.

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what help it is providing to people who do not have access to a bank account and cannot therefore comply with the recommended guidance to use cashless payment methods such as debit cards during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28656)**

**Fiona Hyslop:** While people are being encouraged to use contactless payments the Scottish Government recognises that this is not possible for everyone. In these circumstances the World Health Organisation (WHO) advise people to wash their hands thoroughly after touching any frequently touched surface or object, including coins and banknotes.

Banks have also introduced a number of measures help vulnerable members of the community through this crisis. For example, RBS have arranged a

facility to have up to £500 delivered securely to a person's home in partnership with Travelex, preventing people having to travel to a central location to access cash.

Help is also available to support people to open a bank account. Even if people are turned down for the most common accounts, there is an option to apply for a fee-free basic bank account. This type of account offers basic facilities for receiving money and settling bills, without overdraft facilities.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress is being made by the working group that is being chaired by the Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which is seeking to mobilise the manufacturing base to support the NHS in dealing with any shortages of key products.

**(S5W-28303)**

**Ivan McKee:** The working group established under direct Ministerial control

has helped to mobilise business support for NHS Scotland and co-ordinate supply chains through a cross-government team including the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, NHS Scotland and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland.

A broad range of Scottish manufacturing businesses have repurposed and increased production to address shortages of hand sanitiser, personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical devices. This effort is reshoring economic activity to Scotland, building and strengthening Scottish supply chains for the future.

CalaChem in Grangemouth for example have already produced 20,000 litres of hand sanitiser using alcohol supplied by distillers Whyte and Mackay and have accepted an order from NHS Scotland to produce a further 560,000 litres. This order alone more than matches NHS Scotland's immediate demand for hand sanitiser. Stonehaven manufacturing firm Macphie has started bottling the initial CalaChem product and will deliver the order into the national supply chain.

We are supporting the PPE supply chain through a pipeline of NHS Scotland orders and through investment in capacity. Annan-based PPE manufacturers Alpha Solway are currently producing 20,000 face visors per day for NHS Scotland as part of an order of 1.1 million visors. The business has also invested in new mask-making machinery with capacity to produce 15 million respirator masks per annum.

To address critical global shortages of the key raw material used in the manufacture of respirator masks, the Scottish Government has provided a £3.6 million repayable grant to Forfar-based textiles company Don and Low. This will go towards the purchase, import and installation of a new £4.5 million machine capable of both meeting and exceeding our domestic demand for the fine filter material required in high performance masks.

Don and Low are also supplying an initial order of 1.4 million square metres of fabric for the production of gowns for NHS Scotland. The fabric will be distributed among garment manufacturers in Scotland and England to achieve the fastest possible conversion to the final gowns product.

Berry BPI with factories in Greenock and Dumfries have invested in new machinery to produce aprons and apron-style gowns for the NHS. By early May BPI will be manufacturing around 200,000 special fluid-resistant, long-sleeve apron-style gowns and over six million standard disposable aprons every week.

Scottish engineering businesses are at the vanguard of efforts to manufacture more ventilators to support increased critical care capacity across the UK. Two companies with facilities in Scotland are part of an effort led by Babcock International Group to design and produce more ventilators. As part of this effort Plexus and Raytheon will both be supporting the production of ventilators from their Kelso, Livingston and Glenrothes manufacturing

facilities. Plexus and Raytheon have been supported by Scottish Enterprise to facilitate their involvement in vital efforts to increase ventilator capacity for the NHS and Scottish Enterprise remains in contact to provide any operational support they require.

Our excellent Scottish life science businesses are working to support the Test, Trace and Isolate approach and testing supply chain, from manufacture and supply of test kits, testing equipment and reagents and the provision of lab services and technical support.

Where necessary to meet exceptionally high demand resulting from Covid-19 the Scottish Government has also supported NHS Scotland in sourcing PPE, testing materials and equipment from global producers. Three charter flights containing globally-sourced supplies have arrived at Prestwick between 18 April and 4 May 2020. In total, from the three charter flights NHS Scotland has received: 27 million Type IIR face masks, 849 infusion pumps and 120,000 VTM (Virus collection and Transport Medium) testing kits. While these stocks are being distributed to the front-line further flights with more vital supplies are being scheduled.

### Ministerial Portfolio: Education and Skills

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, what its position is on university summer schools that are due to take place in summer 2020, and what guidance it is considering on the matter.

**Richard Lochhead:** I am aware that, because it is generally accepted that it will not be possible for summer schools to go ahead this year, some institutions where students held conditional offers of a place in 20-21, with the condition being that they attend a summer school in Summer 2020, are converting these offers to unconditionals. However, others are asking the students to complete online activities instead of attending summer school. As autonomous institutions, universities do not have to follow the same pattern, although I do know that there is considerable engagement across the sector as institutions try to work together in these challenging times. I have written to all University Principals seeking their support to ensure our sector continues to act in a way which maintains the stability of the university admissions system and ensures students' best interests are safeguarded. They are already working with SQA and my officials to ensure that the admissions process works for this year's applicants.

I also issued a statement to all university and college applicants reassuring them that this government, and partners, are doing all that we can to ensure the best outcome for learners. We have a website ( [Student Information Scotland](#) ) which is constantly updated with information for students and also has a dedicated COVID-19 section to help students during this time.

## Ministerial portfolio: Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to reduce the reportedly increased number of people roaming through livestock farms during the COVID-19 outbreak, and whether it will consider temporarily revoking the right to roam, particularly during lambing season.

(S5W-28236)

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The Scottish Government is in regular dialogue with key stakeholders to understand the impact of reported increases in people exercising their access rights during the Covid-19 pandemic and to develop an agreed position. Officials have engaged and consulted with the National Farmers' Union Scotland, Scottish Land and Estates, the Ramblers Association and Scotways, as well as with Scottish Natural Heritage.

As a result, on 9 April 2020 I released a statement - endorsed by all of the stakeholders mentioned above - setting out what 'responsible access' means in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The statement makes it clear that while access rights will continue to apply, exercising those rights responsibly means respecting the needs of other people, and emphasises that people will need to adapt their behaviour in the national effort to contain the disease's spread. It stresses that farmers must be allowed to go about their business without interference or fear of unnecessary exposure to Covid-19. It also notes that land managers should respect access rights, which are particularly important at this difficult time, and if necessary should use helpful signs to indicate where access may be problematic and suggest reasonable alternative routes.

The full statement, setting out what exercising rights of responsible access under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 means during the coronavirus emergency is available on the Scottish Government website:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ministerial-statement-on-access-rights-during-covid-19/>.

This statement has been supplemented by further, more detailed guidance and signage, produced by Scottish Natural Heritage, which is available on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code website:

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/access-outdoors-during-current-coronavirus-outbreak-guidance-public-and-land-managers>.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of several local authorities suspending or delaying recycling collection, what support it will be providing to ensure that all local authorities can protect workers while maintaining recycling services, to prevent recyclable materials ending up in landfill.

(S5W-28478)

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The Scottish Government is in ongoing dialogue with COSLA and local authorities regarding plans for the reinstatement of waste and recycling services. It is absolutely right that the personal health and wellbeing of waste workers is safeguarded at all times. Councils have made a number of adjustments to the way services operate in order to safeguard the wellbeing of waste workers during this time.

The Scottish Government has developed guidance for essential workers, to complement UK wide waste industry guidance, on safe practice during the pandemic. This provides practical information on matters including physical distancing and the use of personal protective equipment.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact the suspension of the plastic bag levy might have on charitable donations.

**(S5W-28501)**

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The Scottish Government has introduced a sixmonth exemption from the single use carrier bag charge solely for bags used for the collection and delivery of groceries and takeaway food. This is to help limit the spread of Covid-19 and ensure customers receive deliveries as quickly as possible.

I have written to trade bodies to ask their members to make voluntary donations where income from carrier bag charges is reduced as a result of this measure.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will review the full business and regulatory impact assessment for the deposit return scheme in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28705)**

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The final Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) for Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), published alongside the final DRS Regulations, sets out the strong economic case for proceeding with DRS. We do not intend to review the BRIA at this stage of the COVID-19 outbreak. However, we will continue to monitor closely the impact of COVID-19 on industry's ability to progress the steps that are needed to bring the scheme into operation.

**Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact the COVID-19 outbreak could have on the design and implementation of the proposed deposit return scheme, and what its position is on whether there is now a case for greater flexibility in its design.

**(S5W-28706)**

**Roseanna Cunningham:** We recognise the significant pressures COVID-19 is placing on industry, including the businesses which will be responsible for implementing Scotland's Deposit Return Scheme (DRS). We will continue to monitor closely the impact of COVID-19 on industry's ability to progress the steps that are needed to bring the scheme into operation.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when the Scottish Water strategic review of charges will be completed and presented to ministers.

**(S5W-28724)**

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The current timetable for the Strategic Review of Charges process is detailed in our recent consultation "Investing in and paying for your water services from 2021: final consultation". This states that the Water Industry Commission for Scotland expects to publish its draft determination of charges in May 2020 and following consideration of this document I expect to publish the final Objectives and Principles of Charging in June 2020. However, this is subject to review and may be adjusted to allow more consideration of the impacts of the current pandemic.

### Ministerial Portfolio: Health and Sport

**Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when NHS Lothian will receive confirmation that its COVID-19 plans will be funded.

**(S5W-28281)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Joan McAlpine (SouthScotland) (ScottishNationalParty):** To ask the Scottish Government how much influence it considers the need to control resources had in the four nations' personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance that it has signed up to in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28614)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Joan McAlpine (SouthScotland) (ScottishNationalParty):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will depart from the four nations' personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and instruct that all carers wear surgical masks whenever they administer care to vulnerable people, whether in the community, supported accommodation, care homes or clinical settings.

**(S5W-28621)**



**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Monica Lennon (CentralScotland) (ScottishLabour):** To ask the Scottish Government what improvements and changes were made to community and national influenza pandemic preparedness between the completion of its training exercise, Silver Swan, in 2015 and January 2020, and on what dates pandemic response plans were (a) reviewed and (b) updated during this period to ensure that the lessons learned during the exercise were incorporated.

**(S5W-28632)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Monica Lennon (CentralScotland) (ScottishLabour):** To ask the Scottish Government what assumptions and modelling were made and reviewed regarding the distribution of the national influenza pandemic stockpiles between the completion of its training exercise, Silver Swan, in 2015 and January 2020, and how often it reviewed its frameworks in pandemic preparedness during this period to ensure that the lessons learned during the exercise were incorporated.

**(S5W-28636)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many people have died on each day since 1 February 2020, and how this compares with each of the last five years.

**(S5W-28641)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who died on each day since 1 February 2020 and who tested positive for COVID-19 (a) had and (b) had not been hospitalised on the suspicion that they had the virus.

**(S5W-28643)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many excess deaths there have been on each day since 1 February 2020, and how this compares with what would normally have been expected based on the last 20 years of data.

**(S5W-28644)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government where each test centre in its COVID-19 community hub model is located, also broken down by the number of tests carried out.

**(S5W-28649)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government where each COVID-19 drive-through testing site is located, and which are operational, also broken down by the (a) total testing capacity of and (b) number of tests carried out by the operational centres.

**(S5W-28650)**

**Jeane Freeman:** A holding answer was provided.

**Ministerial portfolio: Justice and the Law Officers**

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what items of personal protective equipment (PPE) are being procured by the Scottish Prison Service in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, broken down by (a) quantity and (b) deadline, and, in light of reports that the agency already has sufficient stock, for what reason it is carrying out this exercise.

**(S5W-28287)**

**Humza Yousaf:** I have asked Teresa Medhurst, Interim Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), to respond. Her response is as follows:

Table 1 provides a breakdown of all PPE items and quantities ordered by SPS, by date.

Date PPE Orders placed (Week Commencing)	02-Mar-20	09-Mar-20	16-Mar-20	23-Mar-20	30-Mar-20	06-Apr-20	Total
PPE Item							
Reusable Mask FFP3	1,600	2,000	1,500				5,100
Disposable Mask FFP2	2,000			80,000	7,500		89,500

Disposable Apron	14,000	35,000	25,000	70,000			144,000
Disposable Gloves	50,000	100,000	100,000				250,000
Goggles	2,389	33,517	25,000				60,906
Antibacterial wipes (packs of 1,500)	2,000						2,000
Antibacterial wipes (packs of 130)		4,950					4,950
Hand Sanitiser various sizes	15,000		18,480	4,008	4,008	1,700	43,196

Table 2 provides a breakdown of all PPE items and quantities received by SPS, by date.

Date PPE Orders Received (Week Commencing)	02-Mar-20	09-Mar-20	16-Mar-20	23-Mar-20	30-Mar-20	06-Apr-20	Total
PPE Item							
Reusable Mask FFP3	1,600						1,600
Disposable Mask FFP2			2,000		80,000		82,000
Disposable Apron	9,000				70,000	35,000	114,000
Disposable Gloves	50,000	100,000					150,000
Goggles	2,389	2,218		203			4,810
Antibacterial wipes (packs of 1,500)			1,000	1,000			2,000
Antibacterial wipes (packs of 130)			4,950				4,950
Hand Sanitiser various sizes					4,008	4,008	8,016

SPS do not place deadlines on PPE orders, delivery timescales are determined by the respective suppliers.

All establishments are required to record and report their PPE usage on a weekly basis. Stock levels are centrally monitored on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that adequate levels are maintained.

SPS currently has sufficient stock levels of PPE however these levels will deplete with use during this uncertain time. SPS continues to work with suppliers to ensure that sufficient quantities of PPE are maintained and available in line with the latest government and public health advice.

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what items of personal protective equipment (PPE) are being procured by Police Scotland in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, broken down by (a) quantity and (b) deadline.

**Humza Yousaf:** Police Scotland advises that officers can risk assess whether or not to use a surgical mask for routine policing activities where there are no symptoms or other indications of Covid-19 but where it may be difficult to apply social distancing measures. If there is a requirement for police support at an incident of suspected or confirmed COVID-19, wherever possible trained officers in full PPE kit will be deployed to attend. This kit comprises of:

- FFP3 Face Masks
- Disposable Suit EN14126 Standard
- Full Knee Length Boot Covers
- Indirect Vent Goggles
- Long cuff Nitrile Gloves
- Surgical masks

Procurement and distribution of PPE is an operational matter for the Chief Constable; however, Police Scotland has advised that 6,470 officers have been trained and face fitted in the use of PPE at 20 April 2020. All officers have to be 'face fitted' in the FFP3 to ensure manufacture compliance and health and safety principles.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether (a) it and (b) Police Scotland was aware at the time of the Duke of Rothesay travelling to and from Scotland after it instructed people to avoid unnecessary travel due to COVID-19; when it was informed, and what its response was.

**(S5W-28648)**

**Humza Yousaf:** The Scottish Government are not routinely informed of visits which members of the Royal Family make to Scotland, particularly when they are undertaken privately without a public engagement aspect. Police Scotland have advised that they were informed of HRH The Duke and Duchess of Rothesay's residence in Scotland was to be commenced earlier than had initially been planned.

Their residence commenced prior to both the First Minister's direction and, the implementation of The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

### [Ministerial Portfolio: Social Security and Older People](#)

**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will increase Carer's Allowance to take account of any

additional financial pressures that unpaid carers experience during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28342)**

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** We value the support provided by Scotland's unpaid carers. They are dealing with pressures that are already great and will be experiencing added pressure at this time.

Through the Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill 2, we propose to make an extra payment of £230.10 to Carer's Allowance recipients in Scotland this June, on top of Carer's Allowance Supplement.

The proposed Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement payment would provide much needed extra support to some of Scotland's lowest income carers with the most intensive caring roles. If the provisions are passed, this would be an investment of £19.2 million to support around 83,000 carers with the additional costs of caring during the pandemic, helping protect their health and wellbeing.

We are also committed to ensuring that the coronavirus outbreak does not prevent unpaid carers from receiving the financial assistance they are entitled to and have made emergency changes to the Carer's Allowance regulations to protect access to this support.

**Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what the rate of staff absence has been in (a) Social Security Scotland and (b) the Social Security Directorate during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**(S5W-28687)**

**Shirley-Anne Somerville:** In March 2020 there were an average of 19 Social Security Directorate absences (both sickness and special leave), and 21 Social Security Scotland absences per day, representing 4.1% and 3.5% of staff respectively. This compares to a Core Scottish Government figure of 4.3% for the same period.

Source: Management Information from Scottish Government eHR system absences recorded by 28 April, directly employed staff in post as at the start of each month.

eHR absence data is reliant on timely recording on the system by the relevant employee and/or their line manager. Fewer than 30% of absences are recorded on the first day of absence and it takes up to two weeks to record 90% of absences on the system. Therefore, data up to end April will not be available until after mid-May.

**[Ministerial portfolio: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity](#)**

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-27933 by Fiona Hyslop on 20 March 2020, when the Oil & Gas Energy Transition Strategic Leadership group met and what was discussed.

**(S5W-28445)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The Oil and Gas Energy Transition Strategic Leadership Group last met on 2nd April. I chaired an extraordinary meeting of this Group, convened virtually, and which heard directly from the sector and supply chain on the immediate impact and response to COVID-19, and the predicted medium to longer term challenges caused by a sharp drop in oil and gas prices due to a global oversupply and falling global demand as a consequence of COVID-19 related lockdowns in major economies across the Globe. This Group comprises key stakeholders including senior representation from the Oil and Gas Authority, Oil and Gas UK, the STUC and offshore trade unions, offshore operators and the wider supply chain.

A further meeting of the Strategic Leadership Group is scheduled for 7 May, where SLG members will seek to take a task force approach, to reflect the severity of challenges faced by the sector. It is expected that subsequent meetings of the SLG will be held on a monthly basis to ensure regular opportunities for senior-level engagement on measures to support the sector at this most challenging time.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact on the economy of the (a) fall in oil prices in the last quarter and (b) effect of COVID-19 on the oil and gas sector.

**(S5W-28446)**

**Paul Wheelhouse:** The Scottish Government has published analysis of the economic impact of COVID-19 in the State of the Economy report in April. It includes analysis on how COVID-19 is affecting sectors of the economy in different ways. The publication can be found via <https://www.gov.scot/publications/state-economy-april-2020/>

COVID-19 associated lockdowns have seen global demand for oil fall by around a third, while gas demand has also declined, resulting in sharp falls in the price of oil and gas and concerns over storage capacity. The oil and gas industry has also faced significant operational issues as a result of COVID-19 given the nature of its offshore working environment, and has responded by reducing offshore operations to minimum levels.

Oil and Gas UK estimate that capital expenditure across the UK Continental Shelf could decrease by between 30-40% in 2020 from original plans, while operational expenditure is anticipated to be reduced by between 10-20%. Deferrals and cancellations of new projects is expected to put further pressure on the fragile supply chain, with sectors most exposed to capital projects such

as drilling and well contractors most impacted. Direct and indirect jobs in the UK supported by industry could decline by between 25,000-30,000 over the next 12-18 months according to Oil and Gas UK.

Ministers, officials and Scotland's enterprise agencies continue to engage closely with counterparts in the UK Government, industry, unions, and academia to monitor developments and their impacts and consider appropriate support mechanisms.

## **First Minister's Questions**

Questions to the First Minister and oral answers provided can be found in the Official Report of proceedings [here](#).



## Written questions lodged on 06 May 2020

(Expected answer date: 21 May 2020)

**S5W-28893 Annie Wells:** To ask the Scottish Government what the process is for families to receive payment from its recently-announced COVID-19-related death in service benefit for NHS staff, including for families of staff who were not covered by the existing schemes; when this benefit will be operational, and how quickly the money will be distributed.

**S5W-28898 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides to people who are diagnosed with ME, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on access to this.

**S5W-28899 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government what advice it offers on the prescribing of graded exercise therapy to people who are diagnosed with ME, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on access to this.

**S5W-28900 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government what consideration it is giving to possible increases in post-viral fatigue as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**S5W-28901 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government who the members are of its COVID-19-related scientific advisory group; when the minutes of the group's meetings will be published, and whether special advisers attend its meetings in an official or informal basis.

**S5W-28902 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government what support it is providing to (a) pregnant women and (b) new mothers in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and how services are linking up to ensure that (i) perinatal mental health is being prioritised and (ii) a message is relayed to mothers regarding how to seek any help that they might require.

**S5W-28903 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) men and (b) women with blood cancer in each age group have (i) contracted and (ii) died from COVID-19, also broken down by how many had received intensive care support.

**S5W-28904 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government what procedure is used by the NHS to review the criteria by which it decides who should receive letters asking them to shield at home because of COVID-19.

**S5W-28905 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many two-week urgent referrals there were in April (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 for suspected (i) breast, (ii) bowel, (iii) lung, (iv) blood and (v) prostate cancer, and what impact it considers the COVID-19 outbreak had on any variation in the figures.

**S5W-28906 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people received chemotherapy in April (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 for the treatment of (i)

breast, (ii) bowel, (iii) lung, (iv) blood and (v) prostate cancer, and what impact it considers the COVID-19 outbreak had on any variation in the figures.

**S5W-28907 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak are undergoing (a) chemotherapy, (b) radical radiotherapy for lung cancer, (c) treatment for blood or bone marrow cancer, (d) immunotherapy or other antibody treatments for cancer and (e) other cancer treatments that might affect the immune system.

**S5W-28908 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to establish COVID-19-free hospitals specifically dedicated to cancer treatment.

**S5W-28909 James Kelly:** To ask the Scottish Government, whether the Lord Advocate plans to hold a fatal accident inquiry (FAI) into the death of the prisoners from COVID-19, and, if so, what steps he will take to prioritise the holding of such an inquiry in the public interest.

**S5W-28910 James Kelly:** To ask the Scottish Government whether the Lord Advocate will confirm whether he will be instructing a fatal accident inquiry (FAI) into the circumstances of the deaths of NHS staff and other health and care workers from COVID-19, and, if so, what steps he will take to prioritise the holding of such an inquiry in light of the reported public interest in such matters being investigated at the earliest opportunity.

**S5W-28912 James Kelly:** To ask the Scottish Government what steps the Lord Advocate will take to deal with the backlog of both mandatory and discretionary fatal accident inquiries (FAI) that have been delayed due to court closures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

**S5W-28913 James Kelly:** To ask the Scottish Government how many fatal accident inquiries (FAI) were under way at the time of the court closures as a result of COVID-19 and which have been subsequently adjourned.

**S5W-28915 Anas Sarwar:** To ask the Scottish Government whether the recently-announced COVID-19-related death in service payment for the families of NHS staff will be funded by it directly and not from the NHS superannuation scheme.

**S5W-28916 David Stewart:** To ask the Scottish Government how many excess deaths have been attributed by each NHS board for non-COVID-19-related conditions since the start of the outbreak, broken down by the cause of death.

**S5W-28917 David Stewart:** To ask the Scottish Government what the estimated rate of infection (R number) is for COVID-19 (a) nationally and (b) broken down by each NHS board.

**S5W-28918 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak have (a) had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the last six months and (b) are taking immunosuppression drugs following a bone marrow or stem cell transplant carried out more than six months ago.

**S5W-28919 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak have severe respiratory conditions, broken down by type.

**S5W-28920 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak have rare diseases, broken down by type.

**S5W-28921 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak have inborn errors of metabolism that might significantly increase the risk of infection, broken down by type.

**S5W-28922 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have been asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak are receiving immunosuppression therapies that might significantly increase their risk of infection.

**S5W-28923 Miles Briggs:** To ask the Scottish Government how many pregnant women are being asked to shield at home from the COVID-19 outbreak, also broken down by how many have (a) (i) congenital and (ii) acquired heart conditions and (b) other underlying health conditions, broken down by type.

**S5W-28925 Claudia Beamish:** To ask the Scottish Government whether the remit for the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, which has been set up in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, includes advising on biodiversity.

**S5W-28926 Claudia Beamish:** To ask the Scottish Government how its economic recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will gather input on issues related to biodiversity.

**S5W-28927 Neil Bibby:** To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides to NHS boards to ensure that people with epilepsy can access specialist neurological practitioners, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on this.

**S5W-28928 Neil Bibby:** To ask the Scottish Government how many specialist epilepsy consultants there are in each NHS board area, and what its position on whether this is sufficient to meet demand.

**S5W-28929 Neil Bibby:** To ask the Scottish Government what the (a) referral and (b) treatment waiting times are in each NHS board area for people with epilepsy, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on this.

**S5W-28930 Neil Bibby:** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking, alongside the Neurological Conditions National Action Plan, to improve the lives of people with epilepsy, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on this.

**S5W-28932 Fulton MacGregor:** To ask the Scottish Government when guidelines for reporting on the use of emergency powers under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 and the Coronavirus Act 2020 will be published, and whether they will recommend that data is collected and disaggregated by protected characteristics wherever appropriate and possible.

## **Searching for questions and motions**

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

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