

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

Thursday 7 May 2020

A link to Members' Virtual Question Time on Rural Economy and Tourism and Health and Sport, where oral questions and answers relating to COVID-19 can be found, is included at page 11.

Written questions lodged on 7 May 2020 can be found on page 12 of this document.

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 7 May)

Government Initiated Question lodged and answered on 7 May

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish further details on Scotland's approach to reviewing the COVID-19 restrictions currently in place.

S5W-28946

John Swinney: The First Minister has today announced that, in light of the best available evidence, the Government has concluded that the regulations and guidance which underpin the current lockdown must remain in place for now.

The Government is today publishing COVID-19: Framework for Decision Making Further Information - Supporting Evidence Paper. This paper provides an analytical overview of key analysis and evidence in support of COVID-19: Framework for Decision Making - Further Information, published on 5 May 2020. We are making this information available as part of our commitment to bring transparency to our work and decisions on the crisis and to support understanding and public engagement with some of the very difficult issues that we face.

Ministerial portfolio: Constitution, Europe and External Affairs

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment has been carried out to determine the impact on communities in the south of Scotland of a different strategy and timescale between Scotland and England for easing or exiting the COVID-19 lock-down measures.

S5W-28693

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28694 on 7 May 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on

the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at-
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government to achieve the correct UK-wide strategy and timescale for easing or exiting the COVID-19 lock-down measures.

S5W-28694

John Swinney: The Scottish Government supports the Four Nations approach where this aligns with the science as part of our commitment to aligning decision making with evidence and expert advice. Where the evidence supports the case for different approaches, we will make decisions which reflect our top priority of minimising the harm in Scotland.

The Scottish Government updated its assessment framework "COVID 19 - A Framework for Decision Making" on 5 May. The framework makes clear that we will consider the case for different approaches to meet the needs of specific geographic areas where such options can be implemented safely and communicated effectively – and are supported by the available evidence. No decisions have been made about this yet and we are committed to listening to the views of local people, business and organisations most affected by these decisions as we develop our approach.

A new digital platform was launched on 5 May to give people most affected by decisions about transitioning from the lockdown the opportunity to engage with the issues and evidence we are setting out through publications such as the framework document so that their views and ideas can help inform our decision-making process.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding the potential impact on communities in the south of Scotland of the UK Government easing or exiting the COVID-19 lock-down measures in the north of England.

S5W-28695

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28694 on 7 May 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at-
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

Ministerial portfolio: Education and Skills

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the planned frequency of COVID-19 testing is for (a) staff working and (b) young people residing in secure care centres.

S5W-28315

Maree Todd: The Scottish Government does not directly provide COVID-19 testing for these cohorts of people. This is a matter for each Secure Service (4 of which are independent and 1 local authority-run) and the relevant local Health and Social Care Partnership.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) staff working and (b) young people residing in secure care centres have been tested for COVID-19.

S5W-28318

Maree Todd: The Scottish Government does not gather data on how many staff and how many young people in secure care have been tested for COVID-19.

Scottish Government officials are in daily contact with secure homes and host a weekly tele conference with all 5 secure care providers, Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate (Scotland's care regulator) and the Contract Manager. This is an opportunity to monitor Covid 19 cases, raise concerns, discuss new guidance and share good operating practice.

These calls began on 20 March - officials and secure services have discussed testing for young people and staff each week. At 28 April 2020, at least 6 young people had been tested, and all have been negative for COVID-19. One member of staff has tested positive following hospital admission.

All positive tests for Covid-19 must be reported to the Care Inspectorate.

The Care Inspectorate monitor absence levels in secure services to ensure there are sufficient care staff ratios to provide care for the young people. They request weekly information on staff absences related to Covid-19 from all care settings across Scotland, including secure care centres. This includes:

How many staff are not working due to:

- Confirmed (by testing) as having COVID-19 - currently in hospital
- Confirmed (by testing) as having COVID-19 - currently at home
- With symptoms of COVID-19 - currently in hospital
- With symptoms of COVID-19 - currently at home
- Having to self-isolate due to living with someone who has symptoms of or is confirmed as having COVID-19
- Shielding - those staff members who are not able to work because they are in the vulnerable group

- Stress / mental health / emotional conditions related to COVID-19

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it is considering removing or lowering the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme fee, in light of the need for volunteers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28661

Maree Todd: We announced on 2 April that Ministers had decided to suspend disclosure fees until at least 11 May where the application was from an individual or an organisation recruiting individuals as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fees are suspended regardless of whether the appointment is being made to a position or role that is voluntary work or paid employment. We are currently reviewing whether the suspension of the fees should continue.

Ministerial portfolio: Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak are for public rights of access to farmland.

S5W-28248

Roseanna Cunningham: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28236 on 6 May 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it is making to allow the safe reopening of dog and other pet grooming facilities, in light of animal welfare concerns regarding them being closed in response to COVID-19.

S5W-28749

Mairi Gougeon: The Scottish Government recognises that the lack of access to professional pet grooming services has the potential to impact on the welfare of certain breeds of animal, particularly those requiring regular grooming to maintain their wellbeing.

Despite the ongoing restrictions on journeys and access to workplaces not considered essential, we acknowledge that professional pet groomers may provide a service for those animals whose welfare is at risk.

Where an animal's welfare is not at risk, professional groomers should not be providing routine grooming services. Routine grooming is deemed a non-essential business activity and is liable to the penalties in The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

Where essential professional grooming on welfare grounds is undertaken it must be conducted in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on social distancing.

Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on the timetable for the introduction of (a) new legislation regarding pet selling and (b) the modern licensing system for dog, cat and rabbit breeders and pet sellers, which was set out in its Programme for Government.

S5W-28825

Mairi Gougeon: Despite the significant impact of Covid-19 on Scottish Government business, we remain fully committed to introducing new regulations covering dog, cat and rabbit breeders, pet sellers, animal sanctuaries and rehoming activities in this Parliamentary session.

The work to deliver this legislation continues to progress and we will lay a draft of these regulations before the Scottish Parliament for its approval as soon as possible.

Ministerial portfolio: Finance

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many applications to the COVID-19 Business Support Fund (a) have been received and (b) are currently outstanding in each local authority area.

S5W-28458

Ben Macpherson: The number of applications to the COVID-19 Business Support Fund which have been received in each local authority area is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-fund-grant-statistics/>. We understand councils are dealing with a large volume of invalid applications, which for example omit vital information such as bank details or addresses. As such, councils cannot robustly report the number of outstanding applications at this stage.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many businesses have received a COVID-19 Business Support Fund award, and how much has been awarded, broken down by local authority area.

S5W-28459

Michael Matheson: The number of COVID-19 Business Support Fund grants which have been paid, and their value, by local authority area, is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-fund-grant-statistics/>.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has asked the UK Government not to provide COVID-19 business support to companies that (a) pay out dividends, (b) buy back shares and (c) are registered in tax havens.

S5W-28558

Kate Forbes: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28536 on 5 May 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether, as part of the economic recovery phase from the COVID-19 outbreak, it will consider an approach similar to that being planned by Bavaria regarding the temporary re-purposing of some public sector jobs, in consultation with the trade unions, and the creation of new job opportunities arising from contact tracing or other similar initiatives.

S5W-28671

Ben Macpherson: The Scottish Government and other public bodies, in consultation with the trade unions, have already temporarily repurposed many public sector jobs to address the issues arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

Health Boards are currently looking at where they can use existing staff to undertake contact tracing, which will provide an indication of how many additional staff require to be recruited to undertake that role. As set out in our Test, Trace, Isolate, Support Strategy, published on 4 May 2020, we anticipate that up to an additional 2,000 staff will be required to support contact tracing across Scotland.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what specific financial support (a) Highlands and Islands Enterprise and (b) South of Scotland Enterprise has provided to businesses to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28692

Kate Forbes: A collaborative multi-agency response to COVID-19 is being delivered by the enterprise and skills agencies. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise are reviewing and reprioritising their spending plans for 20/21, so that existing funds can be used to address the impacts of Coronavirus on businesses and the economy. The agencies are working closely with communities in some of the most rural and fragile areas to ensure that they are accessing the support they need.

To date, measures with an estimated cost of over £2.3 billion have been committed to business support and the £100 million package of additional grant support for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) and newly self-employed people announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture for Finance, opened for applications on 30 April:

- £45 million Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies providing bespoke grants and wrap around business support to viable but vulnerable SMEs who are vital to the local or national economic foundations of Scotland.
- £20 million Creative, Tourism & Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies in partnership with Creative Scotland and VisitScotland for small and micro creative, tourism and hospitality companies not in receipt of business rates relief with grants of up to £25K.

The Scottish Government is also providing £1 million to top up Creative Scotland's Bridging Bursaries in the not-for-profit sector.

Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of reports of relatives visiting a Fife care home being asked to sign forms agreeing to nil resuscitation and being advised that older residents may not be taken to hospital in the event of suspected COVID-19 but would only be given antibiotics, what its policy is regarding care homes and do-not-resuscitate (DNR) orders.

S5W-28291

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many contact tracers there were in each NHS board at the point of transition from the containment to the delay phase for COVID-19, and how many there are currently.

S5W-28292

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many requests for personal protective equipment (PPE) in response to the COVID-19 outbreak have been sent to its dedicated PPE email address.

S5W-28301

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many of the 1,000 ventilators that have been ordered in response to the COVID-19 outbreak have been delivered.

S5W-28302

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on all-cause mortality due to reduced numbers of people presenting at health services.

S5W-28323

Jeane Freeman: National Records of Scotland (NRS) publish weekly deaths statistics. Since 8 April, these statistics include deaths where COVID-19 (included suspected cases) was mentioned on the death certificate. The statistics published on 22nd April showed the following:

The NRS weekly report shows mortality for week 16 in 2020 (13-19 April) being much higher than the equivalent week across the last 5 five years (NRS compare this using a 5 year rolling average).

The overall number of deaths in week 16 of 2020 (13–19 April) was 1,911, which is much higher than in previous years, a difference of 844. The average number of (all) deaths registered in the corresponding week over the previous five years was 1,067.

Of these 844 excess deaths: Three quarters (75%, 637) were deaths where COVID-19 was the underlying cause of death; 10% (83) came from an increase in dementia and Alzheimer's disease deaths; 5% (38) came from an increase in cancer deaths and the remaining deaths were a combination of other causes.

The issue of excess mortality is being investigated further by Public Health Scotland to understand what is behind the excess deaths not coded as COVID-19.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when it was advised by (a) its and (b) the UK advisory group on COVID-19 that there should be a lockdown in response to the outbreak, and whether it will publish the advice that was provided.

S5W-28658

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when it decided to introduce a lockdown in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and whether it will publish the advice that it received that led to this decision.

S5W-28660

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been contacted through contact tracing following a patient testing positive for COVID-19 on each day since 1 February 2020.

S5W-28663

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position was up until 21 April 2020 on discharging patients from hospitals to care homes without first testing them for COVID-19; what its position has been since then, and for what reason there has been any change in its position.

S5W-28664

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on the (a) status and (b) location of patients who were in hospitals waiting on care packages (delayed discharge cases) and who have been discharged to increase capacity for COVID-19 patients on each day since 1 February 2020.

S5W-28665

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide transport to test centres for social care staff with suspected COVID-19, in line with what is offered to healthcare workers.

S5W-28674

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many deaths there have been in care homes in each local

authority area since 1 March 2020, also expressed per head of the population for each council.

S5W-28675

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that all personal protective equipment (PPE) being used by female health and social care staff fits properly, in light of concerns that some PPE may be designed for male sizes only.

S5W-28680

Jeane Freeman: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

ORAL QUESTIONS ON 7 MAY 2020

Members' Virtual Question Time Portfolios: Rural Economy and Tourism and Health and Sport

Questions and answers can be found in the Official Report of proceedings [here](#)

Written questions lodged on 7 May 2020

(Expected answer date: 26 May)

[S5W-28842](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether non face-to-face communications should be excluded from the Lobbying Register (a) during the COVID-19 outbreak and (b) at any other time, and what action it will take to amend the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 in light of COVID-19.

[S5W-28933](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government how many NHS patients have received treatment in the independent sector during the period of the COVID-19 lockdown.

[S5W-28935](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government how many cases of hospital-acquired COVID-19 have been reported in each NHS board.

[S5W-28937](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government how many local authority care home residents have been tested for COVID-19.

[S5W-28938](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government how many independent care home residents have been tested for COVID-19.

[S5W-28940](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government when it will be making the first payments from the £19 million that it announced on 28 April to support hospices.

[S5W-28941](#) Oliver Mundell: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, whether people can still access regular vitamin B12 injections.

[S5W-28942](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government what statements, comments, announcements and news releases about her policy remit have been issued by the Minister for Older People and Equalities since the COVID-19 lockdown began.

[S5W-28943](#) Donald Cameron: To ask the Scottish Government how many incidents were recorded in April 2020 by Police Scotland of members of the public breaking the social distancing guidelines imposed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and how many resulted in the issue of a (a) warning with no fine and (b) on-the-spot fine, broken down by police division.

[S5W-28945](#) Mark Griffin: To ask the Scottish Government how many times the Cabinet has met since the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March 2020; on what dates these meetings took place, and how many were held in a (a) partly- and (b) fully-remote manner.

[S5W-28948](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government what risk assessments have been carried out by the NHS regarding the potential impact of COVID-19 on the care home sector, and whether the results have been shared with care home residents and/or their relatives.

[S5W-28949](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government whether it was given specific scientific advice regarding COVID-19 testing prior to 1 February 2020.

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](#).