

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

Tuesday 12 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 12 May can be found on page 22 of this document.

Links to Topical Questions and an Urgent Question relating to COVID-19 on 12 May, are included at page 21

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 12 May)

Ministerial portfolio: Communities and Local Government

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how organisations apply for funding from the Supporting Communities Fund.

S5W-28798

Aileen Campbell: On 18 March, I announced an investment of £350 million to support local communities and households in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The investment comprises a range of funds to be delivered using a combination of approaches to ensure that resource is mobilised quickly to the places and people where it is needed. These approaches include funding delivered through Local Authorities and open bid funds such as the Community Wellbeing Fund and Third Sector Resilience Fund.

The Supporting Communities Fund, established with an initial £20m investment, is not an open bid fund. Instead it takes a targeted funding approach, providing funding to a range of community anchor organisations (CAO) who in turn can distribute funds to a wider network of community groups. CAOs are organisations that are or can work locally to connect activity and resources within the community and with statutory partners to help ensure funding reaches the people and places that need it. Many of these organisations have existing connections and networks in their communities and are already responding to the COVID crisis. The support from the funding is enabling CAOs to expand their networks to wider neighbourhoods and communities, partnering with other local community groups. Through this approach CAOs are helping to reach groups actively responding to COVID that would not otherwise directly be able to access funds themselves, and deliver support for the priorities identified by communities.

We are working with a range of national community development and community-led regeneration partners, to identify the initial group of anchor organisations, drawing on collective knowledge and experience of organisations that have track record in delivering services and responding to challenges.

A second phase of the funding has commenced, engaging with an extended group of partners including Third Sector Interfaces and Local Authorities to help address where there may be gaps in current provision and where there remains a need for support. Additional guidance to support these partners is being developed and provided as needed to support this next phase of the fund, which will include information to support signposting community organisations to the support available locally and through the fund.

Ministerial portfolio: Constitution, Europe and External Affairs

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many COBRA meetings have taken place in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 to which the First Minister was invited and (i) attended and (ii) did not attend and on what dates these took place.

S5W-28727

John Swinney: We have no record of invitations to any COBR meetings in 2019.

The Scottish Government can only comment on COBR meetings we are made aware of by the UK Government.

In 2020, as of 30 April, Scottish Government ministers have been invited to take part in 16 ministerial COBR meetings. The First Minister attended ten of these – from 2 March, and has attended every meeting held since 4 March. On other occasions, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and the Minister for Mental Health attended to represent the Scottish Government. I have also attended some of the meetings set out below.

COBR meetings we are aware of took place on:

Friday 24 January

Wednesday 29 January

Wednesday 5 February

Tuesday 18 February

Wednesday 26 February

Monday 2 March

Wednesday 4 March
Monday 9 March
Wednesday 11 March
Thursday 12 March
Monday 16 March
Wednesday 18 March
Friday 20 March
Monday 23 March
Thursday 9 April
Thursday 16 April

Ministerial portfolio: Finance

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to expand the rates relief programme to assist groups in the hospitality supply chain, including food and drink wholesalers, that have been impacted by the decision to close restaurants, pubs and other leisure venues during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28743

Kate Forbes: We are determined to help keep companies in business and our financial support now exceeds the £2.3 billion passed on from the UK Government. In designing the relief and grant system we had to balance helping as many businesses as possible against what was affordable.

The rates reliefs are set out in The Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus Reliefs) (Scotland) Regulations 2020. This includes a universal 1.6% relief available to all non-domestic properties, and a 100% relief for businesses in the Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Airport sectors. Non-domestic rates are administered by local authorities, and the interpretation of the relevant legislation and the awarding of reliefs is a matter for them.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it would cost to support multi-site businesses in the hospitality, leisure and retail sector with a rateable value between £18,000 and £51,000 to provide them with a £25,000 grant on a per-property basis during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28325

Kate Forbes: Businesses in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sectors, operating in a premises with a rateable value between £18,001 and £51,000, will be eligible for a £25,000 grant on their first eligible property.

Following my announcement of Phase 2 of the Business Grants Funding Scheme on 15 April, grants of £18,750 will be available on any additional qualifying properties that a ratepayer may have. The expanded scheme opened for applications on 5 May.

The estimated total cost of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant is £275 million - this includes an estimated £30 million to extend the support and provide grants of £18,750 to any additional qualifying Retail, Hospitality and Leisure properties that a ratepayer may have.

According to data from the valuation roll as at 1 January 2020, we estimate that the cost of providing a £25,000 Retail, Hospitality Leisure Grant, per property, for multiple properties would be an additional £10 million.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):

To ask the Scottish Government how many multi-site businesses there are in hospitality, leisure and retail sector with a rateable value between £18,000 and £51,000, and what the average number of premises per multi-site business is within this range.

S5W-28326

Kate Forbes: The valuation of all non-domestic property is a matter for the independent assessors, and local authorities are responsible for administering the system and the awarding of the grant schemes. Billing information is held by local authorities, and they provide this to the Scottish Government on a periodical basis for statistical purposes. This information, and property data extracted from the assessors portal, has been used to estimate the number of unique ratepayers. However, it is recognised that there are limitations in the analysis, and that individual property details may have changed since the data was provided or that different local authorities may have different contact details for the same multi-site businesses.

According to data from the valuation roll as at 1 January 2020, we estimate that there are up to 800 unique ratepayers eligible for more than one Retail, Hospitality Leisure Grant (RHL Grant). The average number of qualifying premises per multi-site business is estimated to be 3 with a maximum of 21. The grant scheme is subject to compliance with EU State Aid Rules.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):

To ask the Scottish Government how many enquiries it has received from businesses regarding the payment of support grants on a per-property basis during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28327

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has received a large volume of correspondence on a range of topics in relation to the package of support for business in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The correspondence system does not categorise individual cases in a way which would allow us to distinguish those 'regarding the payment of support grants on a per-property basis during the COVID-19 outbreak'. In addition, few correspondents write to the Scottish Government on a single issue and it would therefore not be possible to manually categorise them all.

The administration of the scheme, and the awarding of grants, is being managed by local authorities. Queries in relation to the eligibility of additional properties should be raised with them directly.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it has allocated the Barnett consequential that it has received for business relief, broken down by the (a) amount received for each initiative, (b) purpose of each grant and (c) number of businesses supported.

S5W-28357

Kate Forbes:

a) To date the consequential in respect of UK Government COVID-19 business support measures total £2,313 million and the estimated cost of the Scottish Government's COVID-19 business support measures totals £2,341 million, which includes the doubling of the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund from £45 million to £90 million, which was announced by the First Minister on 8 May 2020.

The balance is met from other Scottish Government funding, which is being generated by budget management processes reflecting revised cost estimates and reprioritisation elsewhere in the Scottish Budget. Details will be presented to Parliament at the next budget revision.

The following table sets out the estimated cost of each business support measure:

| Business support measure | Estimated cost (£m) |
|---|---------------------|
| 100% non-domestic rates relief for 2020-21 for retail, hospitality, leisure and airports | 824.1 |
| £10,000 grants for small businesses in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme or Rural Relief | 1,024.0 |
| £25,000 grants for hospitality, leisure and retail properties with a rateable value between £18,000 and £51,000 | 275.0 |
| 1.6% relief for all properties for 2020-21 (effectively freezing the poundage rate increase) | 51.2 |
| Newly Self-employed Hardship Fund | 34.0 |
| Pivotal Enterprises Resilience Fund | 90.0 |
| Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises and Hardship Fund | 20.0 |
| Grants provided to seafood processors (hardship fund) | 10.0 |
| Shellfish Growers and Trout Farmers Fund | 3.0 |
| Grants provided to fishermen | 6.0 |
| Fisheries vessels over 12m | 3.5 |
| Total | 2,340.8 |

b) The grants reflect the specific needs of the Scottish economy and are aimed at helping to keep small and medium-sized companies in business and keep productive capacity so that they can recover. Their intention is to, Protect jobs, Prevent business closure and Promote economic recovery.

c) As at close 5 May, Local Authorities have received over 71,000 applications for our two business grant schemes to help firms combat the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. From these applications, £621 million has been awarded to over 53,000 Scottish business ratepayers.

Our analysis estimates that around 105,000 properties are eligible for a Small Business Grant with the equivalent figure for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant being around 11,000. These estimates are inevitably subject to a degree of uncertainty as the analysis is based on property data available to us at this time which is from the Assessors Valuation Roll and information provided by local authorities regarding the NDR reliefs claimed by properties as at June 2019.

These estimates do not account for, for example, any potential changes in relief eligibility between June 2019 and the 17 March 2020, the impact of additional income restrictions for self-catering properties nor do they reflect the impact of

council discretion being applied to properties that are otherwise ineligible according to the grant guidance. They also do not fully reflect the fact that empty properties are currently eligible for SBBS (prior to the recent NDR Bill provisions on active occupation being commenced and implemented by councils) but the property must have been in active occupation on 17 March to be eligible for grant support. Finally, please note the grant schemes are application-based and the modelling based on these numbers assumes 100% take-up.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much of its resources it has used to supplement relief for businesses beyond the support provided by the UK Government, broken down by the (a) measures supported and (b) level of funding provided.

S5W-28358

Kate Forbes: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28357 on 12 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>.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government in what areas it has diverged from the UK Government in the provision of business relief for responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, and for what reason.

S5W-28360

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has always been explicit that we are passing on every penny of the UK Government's consequential funding that has come for business support to Scotland. We have delivered a package of financial support to help as many businesses as possible, while also reflecting that Scotland's economy is different to the rest of the UK. For example, we have a higher share of non-domestic properties with low rateable values in Scotland than England, as well as a higher proportion of hospitality properties.

We have taken the right decisions for the Scottish economy and have sought to balance the needs of the broader economy with those of the retail, hospitality and leisure (RHL) sectors.

The Scottish Government has provided a 100% non-domestic rates relief for airport properties, as well those in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. We have also introduced a 1.6% rates relief, effectively freezing the poundage, which is available for all non-domestic properties across Scotland.

In addition, we have provided the Small Business Grant Scheme and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) Grant Scheme, which are both being administered by

local authorities. The grant scheme in Scotland will now provide a 75% grant for each subsequent eligible properties. We estimate that around 5,500 properties in the broader economy will benefit from a £7,500 grant in Scotland, but would receive nothing in England. Meanwhile, around 3,500 RHL properties would receive £7,500 in Scotland compared with £10,000 in England. These figures demonstrate that, on balance, more properties will gain more in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has also delivered a £100 million fund to help micro and SME businesses and the newly self-employed not eligible for other schemes and with immediate cash flow issues so they may be of relevance. Information about the fund can be found at the following link, <https://www.gov.scot/news/lifeline-support-for-business-confirmed/>.

We continue to engage with businesses on a regular basis to understand their needs, and we remain in dialogue with the UK Government to consider where further support is needed.

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, whether it has given Tesco in Scotland additional rates relief other than the 1.5 pence non-domestic rates increase due in April 2020-21 but not implemented.

S5W-28761

Kate Forbes: We are determined to help keep companies in business and our financial support now exceeds the £2.3 billion passed on from the UK Government.

This includes a universal 1.6% relief available to all non-domestic properties, and a 100% relief for businesses in the Retail, Hospitality, Leisure and Airport sectors.

The Scottish Government does not comment on the eligibility of specific ratepayers. Local authorities administer the system and award reliefs, and the interpretation of the relevant legislation is a matter for them.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the First Minister's comments regarding a phased exit from the lockdown that is in place to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, and reports that hospitality and leisure businesses might be among the last to re-open, what financial support it will offer to the hospitality supply chain, including food and drink wholesalers, so that they can remain in business.

S5W-28744

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has committed to a four-step economic plan, comprising response, reset, restart and recover. The package of support so far has focused on the response stage, including the delivery of business support measures. We are regularly reviewing the physical distancing restrictions and, as we move from the immediate response phase of the crisis, through the stages of reset, restart, recover, we will be working with businesses, on a sector by sector basis, to establish the best way that businesses can reopen, taking account of the very real ongoing public health priorities.

The package of support we have delivered includes a fund to provide grants for businesses experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19. A £10,000 grant is available to small businesses in receipt of Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) or Rural Relief on 17 March 2020; or properties eligible for SBBS and in receipt of either Nursery Relief, Business Growth Accelerator, Fresh Start or Disabled Relief on 17 March 2020. Retail, Leisure and Hospitality properties with a rateable value from £18,001 and up to and including £51,000 may apply for a £25,000 grant.

On 15 April, the Scottish Government announced a Phase 2 of the Business Grants Funding Scheme, which commenced on 5 May.

This is specifically aimed at ratepayers with more than one property. In addition to a 100% grant on their first eligible property, ratepayers with additional qualifying properties will be eligible to apply for a 75% grant on each additional property. This will make available Small Business Grants of £7,500 and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants of £18,750 on any additional qualifying properties that a ratepayer may have, subject to compliance with EU State Aid Rules.

The announcement also extended the eligibility for the £10,000 Small Business Grant to additional ratepayers that hold one or more properties within retail, hospitality or leisure, with individual rateable values not exceeding £18,000, and a cumulative rateable value between £35,001 and £51,000.

The Scottish Government recently announced that it will double the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund from £45 million to £90 million. The fund will be managed by the Enterprise Agencies and will support vulnerable SME firms who are vital to the local or national economic foundations of Scotland.

Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support it routinely provides to unpaid carers, and whether it plans to increase this during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28700

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 how it is utilising the veterinary science sector to increase COVID-19 testing capacity.

S5W-28701

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 discharged from hospital to care homes since 1 February 2020, and how many have subsequently died.

S5W-28707

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 is on the National Clinical Director's comment, reported on 13 March 2020, that he was "comfortable" with a Celtic v Rangers football match going ahead.

S5W-28708

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 is on the National Clinical Director's comment on 16 March 2020 that, for "public health reasons", it was fine that people, including his wife, had recently been to a music concert.

S5W-28709

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 is on the National Clinical Director's comments, reported on 16 March 2020, that "we will almost certainly, as a four-country UK, we will move to a position in the next few weeks where we will ask those groups (the over-70s and those with pre-existing conditions) to not stay at home in the social isolation way that we are telling the symptomatic to do so, but to reduce their social contact", and that "it might be mosques, it might be churches, it might be bingo... and pubs. What we are not suggesting, unlike those with symptoms, is that those people would cut off family contact and not be able to receive visitors. In fact, quite the opposite, we expect family contact to increase in that group so that those people will be looked after. The last thing that we want is four months of loneliness."

S5W-28710

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 is on the National Clinical Director's comments, reported on 16 March 2020, that "schools don't help us much with the spread of the virus. It seems counter-intuitive I know", and that it might be appealing to close schools and colleges and "shut the border, hunker down...and reopen in two weeks' time" but that "doesn't work" and "the science suggests the virus will be there. So when you reopen, the vulnerable will be hit again and your spike will just be later."

S5W-28711

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 is on the National Clinical Director's comments on Channel 4 News on 16 March 2020 that he is "not so sure" he likes the phrase, herd immunity, but that "what we're trying to do is manage the spread of the virus safely over time in the population", and how these comments can be reconciled with the statement in its publication, Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making, that "while it is obvious that government cannot guarantee that no-one will become infected with this virus in future, we are clear that an assumption that there is a proportion or section of the population that it is safe or acceptable to allow to be infected forms no part of the Scottish Government's policy or approach."

S5W-28712

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 is on the National Clinical Director's reported comment on BBC Breakfast on 22 March 2020 that he knew there was enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28714

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 is on the National Clinical Director's reported comment on Channel 4 News on 16 March 2020 that Scotland would begin testing 1.2 million people for COVID-19; how many of the 1.2 million people have since been tested, and, at the current rate, when testing of all 1.2 million will be completed.

S5W-28715

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact of COVID-19 on black and minority ethnic (BAME) people.

S5W-28718

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact of COVID-19 by area of deprivation.

S5W-28719

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made in Scotland in the development of (a) an anti-body test and (b) a vaccine for COVID-19.

S5W-28720

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made with the development of a contact tracing strategy in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28722

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what action will be taken to reschedule the elective operations cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28723

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will waive the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration fee for all care workers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28726

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been discharged from hospital to a care home in (a) March and (b) April 2020 and, of that number, how many were tested for COVID-19.

S5W-28728

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance has been issued to (a) GPs and (b) care homes about do not resuscitate (DNR) notices, and when this was issued.

S5W-28729

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether relatives with power of attorney should be consulted about do not resuscitate (DNR) notices when a patient lacks capacity.

S5W-28730

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many residents of older people's care homes were admitted to hospital with suspected COVID-19 in (a) March 2020 and (b) April 2020.

S5W-28731

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, of the patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have died in hospital, how many were residents of older people's care homes.

S5W-28732

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, of the confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 that are in intensive care to date, how many are residents of older people's care homes.

S5W-28733

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, of the patients currently in hospital with either confirmed or suspected COVID-19, how many are residents of older people's care homes.

S5W-28734

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the intensive care unit bed (a) capacity and (b) occupancy rate has been on each day since 1 March 2020.

S5W-28735

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what risk assessment was made of the likely impact of COVID-19 on care homes for older people; who carried out this assessment, and when.

S5W-28736

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance has been issued to (a) local authorities and (b) care homes regarding the care of older people during the COVID-19 outbreak; when this was issued, and what each piece of guidance covered.

S5W-28737

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many older people discharged from hospital to care homes have died of (a) suspected and (b) confirmed COVID-19.

S5W-28738

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 from (a) confirmed and (b) suspected COVID-19 there have

been in care homes that had a Care Inspectorate report score of (i) adequate and (ii) weak, and how this compares with the total number of deaths.

S5W-28739

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, what action has been taken by the Care Inspectorate to advise care homes of (a) infection control measures, (b) the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) and (c) admission protocols, and when.

S5W-28740

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 what plans it is making to allow the safe reopening of independent podiatry services.

S5W-28750

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

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the drug being tested as a possible treatment for COVID-19, what steps it is taking to ensure that there are adequate supplies of hydroxychloroquine to treat people with rheumatoid disease, and whether it can offer a similar assurance to that given by NHS England that it will maintain supplies for its service users.

S5W-28751

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 what resources it is making available for (a) community pharmacy teams and (b) GP practice-based pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to help support their mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28424

Clare Haughey: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28198 on 27 April 2020.

I am leading work to ensure a range of mental health and wellbeing support is in place for NHS and social care staff, complementing the work being taken forward by NHS Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships at a local level. The work I am leading will cover the whole health and social care workforce whatever the setting or contractual arrangements.

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>.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide a breakdown by group of the 97,000 children who have been classified in its report on the impact of COVID-19, Supporting Vulnerable Children and Young People, as "vulnerable".

S5W-28892

John Swinney: It has always been made clear that the figure of 97,000 vulnerable children is an estimate, based on the number of children who are believed to have multi-agency plans. We do not have an exact number, because local partnerships have not maintained central data bases of all children with child's plans.

Those plans co-ordinated by a lead professional in education are recorded in SEEMIS, and we know this accounts for around 6% of the school-aged population. Given the number of looked after children, children on child protection registers and other children with social work led plans, we estimate this at a further 2% of the child population. Health and 3rd sector led plans are estimated at around the same level. These various figures lead to the overall estimate of 97,000 children.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assurances it can provide on the level of NHS preparedness for a worst-case scenario coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak, and whether this could involve, like some other countries, having to prioritise which patients receive treatment due to a lack of availability of equipment, such as ventilators and oxygen.

S5W-27880

Jeane Freeman: The international standard for an appropriate pandemic response is to double ICU capacity. NHS Scotland has more than trebled its adult ICU capacity, from a base of 173 beds to a surge capacity of 585. These beds will be brought into use as needs dictate, on a daily basis. Given the scale of the current emergency, we have asked Health Boards to go further by preparing to quadruple the base ICU capacity, bringing the total number of adult beds to over 700.

We are working with Health Boards and partnerships to ensure robust plans are in place to strengthen capacity and capability to minimise the impact of COVID-19 across the health system and to ensure we have capacity in equipment, consumables and staffing.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how long it takes for symptoms of COVID-19 to be displayed.

S5W-27948

Jeane Freeman: As Covid-19 is a new virus, we do not know enough to have a precise incubation period. The World Health Organisation states most estimates of the incubation period for COVID-19 range from 1-14 days, most commonly around five days. These estimates will be updated as more data become available.

Further information can be found at [NHS inform](https://www.nhs.uk/inform).

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it determines how many people are affected by COVID-19.

S5W-27950

Jeane Freeman: Health Protection Scotland (HPS) is taking forward Covid-19 surveillance through a range of measures with key partners to identify and monitor the spread of Covid-19 across the population.

These include:

Community testing through community pathways - This is new information on those people presenting with mild to moderate symptoms provides information about the population that we have not had before and widens our understanding Covid-19 within the community;

and

Antibody testing at a population level through participating health boards – This testing indicates if a person has, or has not, yet had the infection and looks at the antibodies people produce in response to infection, which help to fight the virus.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what percentage of the population will require to be infected with COVID-19 for there to be herd immunity.

S5W-27956

Jeane Freeman: For any infection, the percentage of the population required to achieve herd immunity is generally very high and often well above 90%. However, we do not yet know enough about the new Coronavirus infection to be able to estimate accurately what percentage would be necessary to achieve and to sustain

herd immunity in the long term. Herd immunity is likely to occur as more people are infected with the disease or are vaccinated against it. As there is no current vaccine for covid-19, herd immunity is not part of our strategy for combatting the disease.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has ordered additional hospital ventilation machines in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and, if so, (a) how many and (b) when are they expected to be available.

S5W-27959

Jeane Freeman: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28268 on 4 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>.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that people requiring psychological therapies are able to access them remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28402

Clare Haughey: We have recently announced an additional £4.8 million in funding to increase the scope and availability of telephone and digital services in psychological therapies. This will fund extensions to existing services such as the NHS 24 Mental Health Hub, increase the number of advisers for the Breathing Space initiative and to adapt on-line and self help resources provided by NHS Inform.

The funding will also help in the development of digital self-help tools such as computerised Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and internet enabled Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for the Health & Social Care workforce and their families, as well as to the wider population and in the roll out of the Near Me service into mental health services. We will also expand the existing Distress Brief Intervention service to provide a national service to people in distress arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Ministerial portfolio: Rural Affairs and Tourism](#)

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what financial support it has given to the food and drink wholesale sector during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28742

Fergus Ewing: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28745 on 12 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>.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support it is providing during the COVID-19 outbreak to food wholesalers that have procurement contracts to supply schools.

S5W-28745

Fergus Ewing: We recognise that wholesalers service the needs of public sector procurement contracts with schools, care homes, hospitals and prison service.

Ms Campbell announced a £350 million package of support for vulnerable families on Wed 18 March. This included a £70 million Food Fund to support households worried about accessing food. We have provided our local authority partners with £30 million of new investment from the SG Food Fund to support families unable to access food as a result of COVID-19. As part of the £30 million investment we agreed a distribution to local authorities of £15 million specifically for free school meals, however local authorities have flexibility to use the overall additional £30 million resource in ways that best meet emerging local needs and circumstances.

Many local authorities offer a range of approaches with around half offering food delivery or food collection. Whilst the level of procurement is substantially lower than before Covid-19, there is still some activity in this area with Local Authorities tending to work with existing suppliers.

The Scottish Government is going to great lengths to support businesses and have offered a package of support worth £2.2 billion for businesses. As part of this £2.2 billion there is the £45 million allocated to the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund, managed by the Enterprise Agencies for vulnerable SME firms who are vital to the local or national economic foundations of Scotland. Eligible wholesalers are encouraged to apply to the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund which opened on the 30th of April.

In addition to the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund the wholesale sector have been able to make use of the Job Retention Scheme and can furlough staff which covers 80% of staff salary for a period of up to four months from the 1st of March 2020.

All non-domestic properties in Scotland, including wholesalers, will qualify for the 1.6% discount on 2020-21 rates bills.

Aside from financial support Ministers and Officials have engaged with the industry and as a result I wrote to over 60 manufacturers to call on them to ensure equity of supply across customer bases including the wholesale sector.

We continue to engage with businesses on a regular basis to understand their needs.

Ministerial portfolio: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-28265 by Fiona Hyslop on 21 April 2020, whether a person can register for support with access to IT, and if so, how.

S5W-28844

Fiona Hyslop: The Connecting Scotland Programme will connect 9,000 more people who are considered at clinically high risk themselves so they can access services and support and connect with friends and family during the pandemic. Local authorities and the third sector will lead on identifying people to receive devices, distributing them and providing training and support. Currently individuals cannot register for this Programme directly.

We are continuing to work in partnership across all sectors to identify fresh opportunities where we can build sustainable programs that will support even more people to gain or improve their digital skills. As more organisations become involved we will signpost opportunities to funding, support and access as they arise. Organisations can register an interest at: <https://connecting.scot/for-organisations>.

ORAL QUESTIONS ON 12 MAY 2020

Topical Questions

The following questions were asked:

- 1. Rona Mackay:** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it had with the UK Government regarding the change of guidance being issued to the public in England. ([S5T-02172](#))
- 2. Alexander Stewart:** To ask the Scottish Government what urgent action it will take in light of reports of COVID-19-related attacks on police officers. ([S5T-02152](#))
- 3. Monica Lennon:** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide clarification on the current COVID-19 testing policy for people being discharged from hospital to care homes, and what clinical guidance is currently in place for care homes. ([S5T-02171](#))

Answers to all of the above questions can be found in the Official Report of proceedings [here](#).

Urgent Question

The following question was asked:

Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government for what reason COVID-19 cases identified in Edinburgh on 2 March 2020 were not made public.

The answer to the above question can be found in the Official Report of proceedings [here](#).

Written questions lodged on 12 May 2020

[S5W-28986](#) Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government what meetings, discussions or correspondence there have been between the (a) Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, (b) Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing and (c) Minister for Mental Health and the Care Inspectorate in 2020, and what was discussed.

[S5W-28992](#) Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government how many COVID-19-related deaths in each NHS board area have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences regulations.

[S5W-29009](#) Finlay Carson: To ask the Scottish Government what the monthly expenditure has been by publishing companies acting on its behalf on COVID-19 advertising since March 2020 in each Parliamentary region, also broken down by (a) newspaper advertising and (b) broadcasting outlets, including (i) radio and (ii) television.

[S5W-29010](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government whether it, any of its agencies or the NHS has contracted with Amazon to deliver and/or collect COVID-19 tests.

[S5W-29011](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government whether it has contracted with a private laboratory in Northern Ireland to have COVID-19 tests processed.

[S5W-29012](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government how long it takes for the current COVID-19 testing process to process and communicate results to the testee.

[S5W-29013](#) Alexander Burnett: To ask the Scottish Government what support will be available to keyworkers with children who have partners that return to work as a result of a lift of COVID-19 restrictions but are not able to look after the children.

[S5W-29014](#) Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government how many care homes there are in (a) Aberdeenshire and (b) Aberdeen City; how many of these have reported at least one case of COVID-19 among either staff or residents, and, for each of those care homes, how many residents have died with COVID-19 being either the cause or present in the person.

[S5W-29015](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government when it was first informed of a case of COVID-19 in Scotland; what it did to alert the public to the case, and what public health message it put out following the case.

[S5W-29017](#) Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on public bodies or agencies in receipt of public funds requiring non-essential staff to take a placement with another public body or agency for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak, without prior consultation and agreement with the staff concerned or relevant trade union representatives.

S5W-29018 Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government what guidance will be issued to healthcare workers with severe asthma and other respiratory conditions in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and when will this become available.

S5W-29019 Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to ensure a robust supply of hydroxychloroquine to people reliant on that medication to manage (a) lupus, (b) scleroderma, (c) rheumatoid arthritis and (d) other serious autoimmune rheumatic conditions during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-29023 John Finnie: To ask the Scottish Government whether it anticipates any delays in capital works relating to motorways and trunk roads in 2020-21 as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and, if so, what the projected impact is on the budget for any works in the current financial year.

S5W-29024 Alex Neil: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will, at an appropriate time, hold national remembrance events for those who have lost their lives as a result of COVID-19.

S5W-29025 Pauline McNeill: To ask the Scottish Government whether there are plans to extend 100% rates relief to estate agents, to match that given to letting agents in March 2020.

S5W-29026 Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government whether formal guidance or direction has been issued to sheriffs to avoid sentencing offenders to prison terms during the COVID-19 lockdown.

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](#).