

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

Wednesday 13 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 13 May can be found on page 22 of this document.

Links to First Minister's Questions on 13 May, many of which relate to COVID-19, are included at page 21.

Ministerial portfolio: Communities and Local Government

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many grocery boxes have been requested by people shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak in each local authority area, and how many have been delivered.

S5W-28378

John Swinney: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of differing advice in Scotland and England, whether Scottish manufacturers involved in the construction industry can continue to manufacture for contracts they have in England, even if they are non-essential, to avoid losing these contracts if they cannot fulfil the order.

S5W-28809

Kevin Stewart: We have been absolutely clear that all business workplaces should adopt a precautionary approach by closing to protect the lives of their workers and their families.

Specific guidance for the construction sector, published on 6 April and refreshed on 1 May, clearly states that all non-essential construction work should cease temporarily.

We are very aware that the longer lockdown continues the greater the impact on industry and over the past few weeks we have been continuing to work hard to address the concerns of the sector. I am continuing to chair a series of meetings of the Construction Leadership Forum and a weekly Restart Group. Through the Restart Group we are working closely with industry to develop plans to get back to work safely when the medical evidence suggests it is appropriate to do so, and to ensure we are well-prepared for the eventual re-opening of sites under safe operating procedures.

We are grateful for the continuing support of businesses in the construction sector.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what measures are in place to support home owners whose home reports expire during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

S5W-28831

Kevin Stewart: To enable prospective purchasers to make informed decisions, it is vital the Home Report provides accurate information about the condition and value of a property. If a property was placed on the market before the lockdown period and has not been withdrawn from the market for a period exceeding four weeks, the Home Report will remain valid until the property is sold.

Scottish Government is actively considering how it can best support the housing market when current movement restrictions are relaxed, and whether any additional measures are required to facilitate transactions, in liaison with industry and other stakeholders.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of differing advice in Scotland and England, whether Scottish manufacturers involved in the construction industry can continue to manufacture for contracts they have in England, even if they are non-essential, to avoid losing these contracts if they cannot fulfil the order.

S5W-28809

Kevin Stewart: We have been absolutely clear that all business workplaces should adopt a precautionary approach by closing to protect the lives of their workers and their families.

Specific guidance for the construction sector, published on 6 April and refreshed on 1 May, clearly states that all non-essential construction work should cease temporarily.

We are very aware that the longer lockdown continues the greater the impact on industry and over the past few weeks we have been continuing to work hard to address the concerns of the sector. I am continuing to chair a series of meetings of the Construction Leadership Forum and a weekly Restart Group. Through the Restart Group we are working closely with industry to develop plans to get back to work safely when the medical evidence suggests it is appropriate to do so, and to ensure we are well-prepared for the eventual re-opening of sites under safe operating procedures.

We are grateful for the continuing support of businesses in the construction sector.

Ministerial portfolio: Economy, Fair Work and Culture

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider discounting any periods of maternity leave in its assessments of self-employed women in each year since 2017 for COVID-19 self-employed business support, on the basis that the period of time away from work on maternity leave will reduce the average profits over the assessment period and consequently potentially reduce the amount of financial support that women receive.

S5W-28897

Jamie Hepburn: The Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is the primary business support scheme available to self-employed people. It is a UK Government scheme, and therefore the Scottish Government have no power to discount periods of maternity leave for the purpose of calculating support. The only scheme administered by the Scottish Government offering specific self-employed business support is the Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund (NSEHF) launched on 30 April, which is intended to provide support for people who have recently become self-employed and are experiencing hardship. The NSEHF is not based on profits as it pays out a flat-rate grant. Therefore, someone who had lower profits due to maternity leave would not be disadvantaged.

We recognise that the schemes and supports currently in place do not fully cover the circumstances of all workers and all businesses and we continue to work to identify gaps, to engage with the UK Government appropriately where these exist and to use what powers we do have to meet unmet needs. Maternity benefits (Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance) however, remain a reserved matter for the UK Government. For as long as employment law remains reserved, we will continue to press the UK Government for the devolution of full employment powers.

Ministerial portfolio: Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance it has issued to local authorities regarding waste uplift and recycling during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28334

Roseanna Cunningham: I shall reply to the member as soon as possible.

Ministerial portfolio: Finance

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the cost is of each business support scheme introduced in Scotland to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, broken down by funding (a) directly to businesses from the UK Government, (b) from the Scottish Government from additional Barnett consequential and (c) from existing Scottish Government budgets.

S5W-28696

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>.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide a detailed summary of all expenditure aimed at supporting business during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28425

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>.

Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the announcement by the UK Government of a £750 million fund for frontline charities across the UK, whether Barnett consequential of £60 million will be directed towards hospices in Scotland, and, if so, how much will be allocated directly to them.

S5W-28388

Kate Forbes: The consequential arising from the UK Government announcement do not include £60 million in consequential for hospices. HM Treasury has indicated Scotland will receive an estimated £19 million in consequential in respect of the £200 million for hospices included in the UK Government's announcement of £750 million for charities.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport wrote to Scottish Hospices on 28 April to confirm that we are committed to providing funding support to hospices and will work with them to understand their needs.

The Scottish Government has already announced its own support for charities. On 18 March, the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Communities announced a £350 million package of funding to support organisations helping people and communities across Scotland – of which £125 million is supporting the charitable sector.

Ministerial Portfolio: Health and Sport

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the total COVID-19 testing capacity was on (a) 6, (b) 7, (c) 8 and (d) 9 April 2020, also broken down by the reasons for full capacity not being used.

S5W-28321

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 care home residents were tested for COVID-19 during the delay phase, and how many tested positive.

S5W-28332

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

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish data held by the Care Inspectorate on the number of (a) suspected cases of and (b) confirmed or presumed deaths due to COVID-19 in care homes.

S5W-28333

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

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans are in place to reinstate social care packages that have been withdrawn as a result of COVID-19.

S5W-28339

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 people have had their personal care withdrawn during the COVID-19 outbreak, broken down by either local authority or integration joint board.

S5W-28341

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 discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding participation in the EU procurement of therapies for COVID-19.

S5W-28343

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 whether it will provide an update on its action to extend death-in-service benefits for all people working in the NHS.

S5W-28344

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether NHS staff can use in-house laundry facilities to wash uniforms to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

S5W-28349

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether the guidance issued to NHS boards allows for laundry to be done on site where in-house laundry facilities exist.

S5W-28350

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) NHS staff, (b) social care staff, (c) NHS patients and (d) families of health and social care staff were tested for COVID-19 by (i) 30 March, (ii) 6 April and (iii) 13 April 2020.

S5W-28351

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government which laboratories are being used for COVID-19 testing, and whether it can increase capacity for this by using existing facilities in universities and industry.

S5W-28355

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many ventilators there will be per million people to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak at full capacity; how this compares with the number of such equipment (a) on 1 January 2020, (b) when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed and (c) on 13 April 2020, and what information it has regarding the figures for (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland.

S5W-28361

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many intensive care beds there will be per million people to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak at full capacity; how this compares with the number of such beds (a) on 1 January 2020, (b) when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed and (c) on 13 April 2020, and what information it has regarding the figures for (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland.

S5W-28366

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, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, whether it will reconsider the closure of any NHS laundry facilities.

S5W-28381

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

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it did not initiate a national communications strategy to inform the public that they may be contacted by their GP practice regarding matters including (a) Do Not Resuscitate Orders and (b) Power of Attorney.

S5W-28382

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 publish the advice it received from the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Officer and National Clinical Director that supports its policy not to carry out widespread community testing for COVID-19.

S5W-28385

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 advice it has issued in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak with regard to the (a) frailty assessment of patients with autism and learning difficulties being treated for the condition and (b) rationing of ventilators if intensive care units are overwhelmed.

S5W-28386

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 care home residents with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 have been transferred to hospital.

S5W-28398

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 the staff absence rate has been in the care home sector since the COVID-19 outbreak began, and what information it has regarding how many have been absent because they (a) are suspected of having and (b) have the virus.

S5W-28399

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, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, whether it will provide an update on efforts to reduce delayed discharge, and what the latest figures are for the number of delays.

S5W-28400

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 care home staff in each NHS board area have been tested for COVID-19, also broken down by how many can access drive-through testing facilities.

S5W-28401

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

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many non-COVID-19-related deaths there were in week (a) 14 and (b) 15 in 2020, broken down by cause, and how each figure compares with the five-year average.

S5W-28625

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

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to protect pregnant NHS employees during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28753

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

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government at what point in their pregnancy should women not work in a public-facing role during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28754

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

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its advice is to pregnant women regarding work during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28755

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

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people with (a) chronic lymphocytic leukaemia, (b) myeloproliferative neoplasms and (c) other blood cancers have received a letter from (i) the Chief Medical Officer and (ii) their local clinical care team asking them to shield at home for 12 weeks from the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28757

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

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask Scottish Government how many people with blood cancer have had (a) CAR-T cell therapy and (b) a stem cell transplant in each of the last six months for which data is available, and what impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on access to this.

S5W-28758

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

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether volunteers who have been recruited for the NHS and care sectors in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will be among those providing telephone support to the extremely vulnerable group of people being asked to shield at home.

S5W-28760

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans are in place to ensure that every residential care home is provided with adequate personal protective equipment so that staff can continue to provide care to their vulnerable and at-risk residents.

S5W-28077

Jeane Freeman: The safety of our health and social care workforce is an absolute priority, and we are continuously looking to improve the distribution

of the protective equipment that is so vital in the fight against COVID-19. All care home owners have a responsibility to meet the requirements of their Care Inspectorate Registration. This includes providing the relevant PPE and training to their staff members.

In the context of COVID-19, whilst care homes have their own supply routes we took early steps to ensure PPE requirements could be met should these "normal business" routes fail.

We know have two national routes to support normal procurement of PPE by Health and Social Care Partnerships and providers for social care – a dedicated PPE triage helpline, and deliveries of PPE to local cluster points for onward distribution or collection by social care providers. Care Inspectorate registered service providers are required to call the triage helpline if they are working with COVID-19 suspected or confirmed cases and cannot get PPE through their normal routes.

We have also ensured a direct delivery of PPE to care homes across Scotland where needed, to help meet the increased demand caused by this pandemic. These direct deliveries of PPE started on Sunday 19 April and prioritised those care homes with known outbreaks of the virus. This will be reviewed on information supplied by care homes on their own supply of PPE stock. Stock will also continue to be provided to the local hubs which supply PPE to the social care workforce.

We continue to closely monitor the supply and distribution of PPE to those working in social care and will take action where necessary to ensure safety and well being of the social care workforce.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it will support the World Health Organization's anti-viral testing programme, Solidarity.

S5W-28097

Jeane Freeman: Scottish sites are actively enrolling patients into trials of drugs to treat COVID-19, principally through the RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of COVID Therapy) Trial. As part of international efforts to co-ordinate and accelerate COVID-19 research, data between international studies will be combined.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the (a) timeline and (b) criteria will be for resuming cancer screening programmes following the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28859

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government advised Parliament on 30 March that the pause to the breast, bowel and cervical screening programmes is temporary and would be reviewed after 12 weeks, or earlier if indicated by the evidence. Each screening programme has a programme board which is meeting virtually during this time to urgently commence planning for the restarting of screening.

This planning is based on consideration of:

- participant and population safety, which must be the overriding consideration;
- the clinical prioritisation of people at highest risk;
- the operation of the whole screening pathway, from screening through to diagnostics and treatment;
- clinical safety and person centred standards; and
- system capacity and the control measures that require to be in place as part of the wider management of Covid-19.

We continue to advise the public that it is important for those in between screening appointments or awaiting a rescheduled appointment to be aware of any symptoms or signs of the conditions screened for. More information is available at <http://www.nhsinform.scot/screening>. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should contact their GP practice immediately.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason travellers were reportedly not tested for COVID-19 at points of entry to the country.

S5W-27967

Joe FitzPatrick: In order to make best use of available testing capacity we have identified three priorities for testing, these are: to direct our testing capacity effectively to save lives and protect the vulnerable; to ensure that critical staff can return to work as soon as possible and to monitor and report on the spread and prevalence of the virus in the population and the impact of public health measures. Testing is therefore prioritised in hospitals and to enable essential workers in health and social care to return to work.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason there are reportedly no posters at points of entry to the country explaining the need for self-isolation as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-27968

Joe FitzPatrick: Officials are in regular contact with all Scottish airports and sea-ports throughout COVID-19 outbreak.

I can confirm that at the time this question was issued (16 March) all airports were displaying the latest posters as agreed with Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland.

Guidance at that time related to international points of entry only, so UK passenger sea-ports such as Stranraer-Larne or Scottish Island services were not required to exhibit guidance.

We will continue to work with ports and airports to ensure the latest advice is displayed for the safety of all passengers and staff.

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it invests in protecting people with pre-existing respiratory illnesses, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and what plans it has to invest more, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28111

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government provides baseline funding to NHS Boards, which Boards use to best meet the healthcare needs of their resident population including protecting people with pre-existing respiratory illnesses, such as COPD. Additional funding to deal with coronavirus is being made available to NHS Boards through Local Mobilisation Plans.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, in situations where a person's death is recorded as COVID-19-related on their death certificate, whether (a) members of the same household and (b) other close contacts are offered testing if they are (i) symptomatic and (ii) not symptomatic.

S5W-28142

Joe FitzPatrick: The current tests in use in Scotland are effective at identifying people who have COVID-19 infection when they are symptomatic. However, the current tests cannot reliably detect infection prior to the onset of symptoms, and cannot confirm whether a person has had the infection once symptoms are resolved.

Whilst we are working very hard to increase our NHS laboratory testing capacity, we cannot currently offer testing to everyone with symptoms. Our three testing priorities in Scotland are: directing our testing capacity effectively to save lives and protect the vulnerable; ensuring that critical staff can return to work as soon as possible; and monitoring and reporting on the spread and prevalence of the virus in the population to understand the impact of public health measures.

It is vital that those in the same household as a person with possible coronavirus infection follow the guidance on household isolation. Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate for 7 days and any close or household contacts should self-isolate for 14 days. Information on household isolation can be found at NHS Inform.

We understand how difficult and distressing this situation will be for family members. Families can find advice on dealing with the death and bereavements of a loved one at the following websites:

<https://www.mygov.scot/births-deaths-marriages/death-bereavement> and <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/death-and-bereavement>.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason herceptin and perjeta courses of treatment for people with cancer have reportedly been stopped earlier than planned.

S5W-28151

Joe FitzPatrick: Whilst the ongoing COVID-19 situation is putting unprecedented strain on our National Health Service. Patient safety remains our absolute priority and COVID-19 is a very significant risk in relation to cancer treatment. For that reason, many patients will be offered alternative or delayed treatment plans, and a discussion between them and their clinical team should take place explaining this. We understand how distressing that can be for patients and their families, but these new approaches are aimed at reducing the risks to clinically vulnerable people as much as possible. Specific change to treatments are individual to patients and are best discussed with their clinical team. Any cancer patient worried about symptoms should call their existing cancer treatment helpline or the national cancer treatment helpline.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on temporarily relaxing access to controlled drugs to ensure that people prescribed them, and who are having to self-isolate for a number of weeks in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, can get the full complement for the period of self-isolation.

S5W-28162

Joe FitzPatrick: Access to controlled drugs under the Controlled Drugs (Supervision and Management of Use) Regulations are reserved to the UK Government, and the Scottish Government has no direct powers to alter their status.

In terms of access to medicines in the community during COVID-19, nominated representatives (such as family members) can collect dispensed

medication, including Controlled Drugs, with the patient's written consent. Only the patient (not the prescriber) can authorise someone to collect on their behalf. No amendment is required to the prescription. Pharmacists are advised to receive written authorisation from the patient however, they can use their discretion as to whether to accept a phone call from the patient in exceptional circumstances. The person collecting is acting as the "patient's agent" and it is this authorisation that allows them to legally possess a Controlled Drug that has not been prescribed to them. Collection by a nominated representative also extends to health service staff, Police etc. The pharmacist will make a record of who has collected the controlled drug on behalf of the patient.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on how many unpaid carers are living in the same household as an individual in receipt of a shielding letter in relation to COVID-19.

S5W-28338

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government does not hold this information.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to concerns of unpaid carers regarding the withdrawal of care packages for vulnerable people and families during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is reportedly taking place without any warning, effective review or risk assessment.

S5W-28340

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government absolutely values the support provided by Scotland's unpaid carers. Throughout this difficult time, it is critical that social care support is maintained to ensure the safety, dignity and human rights of people who already receive that support and their carers.

I have expressed my concern about these reports in the Scottish Parliament and stated that it is not acceptable that care packages are cut.

In addition to the funding directed towards social care from the 2020-21 budget, we reached agreement with COSLA some weeks ago that we would meet additional costs incurred because of the impact of the pandemic. That agreement was specifically to ensure that both existing and new demand could be met.

Alongside this, around 185 returning social services staff have been matched into roles in care homes and care at home services, and several hundred more are ready and available. We expect the number of matches to increase rapidly in the coming weeks to ensure staffing resilience.

I expect the steps I have already taken to be used locally and I have emphasised that we are ready to work with colleagues in the sector if there is more that needs to be done to ensure existing packages are not cut and new demand is met.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):

To ask the Scottish Government what information it has regarding the number of people dying at home each day from cardiac arrest since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, and how this compares to the figures prior to this.

S5W-28498

Jeane Freeman: In the 50 days between 1 March and 19 April 2020, 43 death were registered where the deceased died at home or in a non-institutional setting and cardiac arrest was mentioned on the death certificate either as the underlying cause or as a contributory cause of death. The equivalent figure for the previous 50 days (11 January to 29 February 2020) was 26.

Footnotes

Based on ICD-10 code I46

Figures based on date of registration rather than date of death.

Figures are provisional and may change before final publication in June 2021.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):

To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that people with non-COVID-19 health conditions, including cancer, are (a) seeking and (b) getting the treatment that they require during the lockdown.

S5W-28499

Joe FitzPatrick: Scottish Government launched the 'NHS is Open' campaign on Friday 23 April. This campaign encourages people to promptly seek help for urgent non-coronavirus health concerns, possible cancer signs and to attend immunisation appointments. It reinforces that GP surgeries and hospitals are still open, and patients or anyone in need should continue to contact their GP surgery or call 111 out of hours and 999 in an emergency. The campaign is initially running on TV, radio, newsprint, and digital and social media from 23 April – 14 May.

Patient safety remains an absolute priority for the Scottish Government, and COVID-19 is a very significant new risk in relation to cancer treatment. Because of this risk, many patients – in discussion with their clinical team – will be offered alternative or delayed treatment plans.

Vital cancer treatments will continue where clinically agreed. We are working hard to ensure vital and urgent care remains, including the use of private hospitals to treat these NHS patients. Alongside this, our national COVID-19

cancer treatment response group continues to meet weekly to provide ongoing advice and support around cancer treatments.

Any cancer patient worried about symptoms should call their cancer treatment helpline or the national Cancer Treatment Helpline on 0800 917 7711.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what additional resources it has provided the Scottish Ambulance Service with in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and how these have been used.

S5W-28539

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Government is working closely with all NHS Boards, including Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to respond to the additional demands arising from the current unprecedented emergency. This includes provision of additional funding from the Scottish Government to support agreed local plans, and SAS will be supported by this. We will continue our regular engagement with Boards, with local plans being updated and reviewed on a weekly basis. In addition, the Scottish Government is managing centrally funded initiatives, including provision of personal protective equipment and support to GPs.

The Scottish Government has taken urgent action to provide significant financial and practical support across NHS Scotland due to Covid-19. The circumstances demand a coordinated UK response and we are continuing to work closely with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations on funding requirements and arrangements.

SAS has used this funding to support a number of key areas, including enhancing its air transfer capacity through procurement of additional aircrafts from Loganair, and procurement of Epishuttle isolation pods for safe air transfer of patients.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many care homes (a) were issued with an improvement notice, (b) had conditions applied to their registration and (c) had their registration cancelled by the Care Inspectorate between 1 January and 30 April 2019, and how this compares with the same period in 2020.

S5W-28544

Joe FitzPatrick:

Between 1 January and 31 March 2019

- (a) 1 care home was issued with an improvement notice.
- (b) No care homes had conditions applied.
- (c) No care homes had their registration cancelled.

Between 1 January and 31 March 2020

- (a) No care homes were issued with an improvement notice.
- (b) No care homes had conditions applied.
- (c) No care homes had their registration cancelled.

In April 2019

- (a) 1 care home was issued with an improvement notice.
- (b) No care homes had conditions applied.
- (c) No care homes had their registration cancelled.

Data for April 2020 is not yet published by the Care Inspectorate.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):

To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on the number of people who have died at home from heart failure each day since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, and how this compares to figures prior to the outbreak.

S5W-28556

Joe FitzPatrick: In the 50 days between 1 March and 19 April 2020, 209 deaths were registered where the deceased died at home or in a non-institutional setting and heart failure was mentioned on the death certificate either as the underlying cause or as a contributory cause of death. The equivalent figure for the previous 50 days (11 January to 29 February 2020) was 135.

Footnotes

Based on ICD-10 code I50

Figures based on date of registration rather than date of death.

Figures are provisional and may change before final publication in June 2021

Ministerial portfolio: Justice and the Law Officers

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what provision is being made to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline staff dealing with prisoner transfers for court appearances.

S5W-28335

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

The transfer of people between prison custody and court is undertaken by GEOAmey under the Scottish Court Custody and Prisoner Escorting Service

contract. GEOAmev is responsible for the risk assessment and provision of PPE to their staff.

GEOAmev report that all members of their staff have access to supplies of appropriate PPE in accordance with operating guidelines and are working to ensure adequate levels of stock are maintained.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what consideration has been given to the remit of Police Scotland's force reserve for the remainder of 2020, given the cancellation of major events and the circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28310

Humza Yousaf: Police Scotland's Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) reviewed the remit of the Force Reserve, on 12 February 2020, and agreed to rename the unit as the Flexible Response Unit (FRU). The SLB also agreed that the unit would be retained in an amended format to support the high volume of events predicted throughout 2020. The primary focus of the FRU is to continue to support Local Policing Divisions, in communities across Scotland, with enhanced skills able to respond to a wide variety of incidents and events.

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak, the FRU was identified as being a flexible asset that could be used to respond to Covid-19 linked incidents. As a consequence, the FRU were prioritised for training in Covid-19 personal protective equipment and has been utilised as the initial primary police responders to Covid-19 linked incidents.

Police Scotland has set out that the FRU will have a pivotal role throughout the response phase to Covid-19 and that this will continue well into the recovery and the transition to a new normal. The timescales of these Covid-19 phases are yet to be determined and Police Scotland will continue to keep the role and remit of the FRU under consideration, as they plan for future demand in 2020 and into 2021.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether Police Scotland's force reserve has undertaken any duties specifically arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, or is expected to do so.

S5W-28311

Humza Yousaf: Police Scotland's Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) reviewed the remit of the Force Reserve, on the 12 February 2020, and agreed to rename the unit as the Flexible Response Unit (FRU).

During the current pandemic the FRU has attended a wide variety of incidents where it can be assumed that Covid-19 is present, including reports of

ongoing criminality, non-compliance with the Coronavirus Act, movement of symptomatic prisoners and sudden deaths in the community. The FRU is tasked on a daily basis by the Police Operations and Co-ordination Centre (POCC) and in the absence of specific calls are defaulted to public areas where non-compliance in the restrictions can be anticipated or criminality is prevalent. In the early stages of the Police Scotland response to Covid-19, the FRU's activity safeguarded Local Policing officers from attending calls where they would be at risk of infection.

Many of the incidents attended by the FRU have been in partnership with other agencies, most notably the Scottish Ambulance Service, in response to sudden deaths within the community. This joint approach has allowed for a collective understanding of the circumstances and agreement on whether further Police investigation is required. This partnership approach has generated efficiencies in services, whilst respecting the sensitive nature of the incidents and the impact on the families concerned.

Police Scotland has set out that the FRU will have a pivotal role throughout the response phase to Covid-19 and that this will continue well into the recovery and the transition to a new normal. The timescales of these Covid-19 phases are yet to be determined and Police Scotland will continue to keep the role and remit of the FRU under consideration as they plan for future demand in 2020 and into 2021.

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 13 May 2020
(Expected answer date: 29 May 2020)

S5W-28970 Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government how many new referrals to mental health services have been received by each NHS board in each month since March 2020, and what analysis it has carried out of the impact of the COVID-19 on these figures.

S5W-28972 Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government what business support it is making available to dental practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

S5W-29027 Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government when it reached the decision to contact all people in COVID-19 shielded groups and notify them with advice; when the first contacts were made, and whether every person initially identified as being in these groups has now been contacted.

S5W-29028 Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government what it considers the maximum waiting time should be for a person with lung cancer to be notified that they are in the COVID-19 shielded group, and what its response is to reports of this taking up to seven weeks in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area.

S5W-29030 Ross Greer: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak causing applicants to consider delaying applying to university, what consideration it is giving to continuing the policy of free tuition for EU students.

S5W-29031 Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government when it will be making the first payments to hospices in the Central Scotland region from the £19 million that it announced on 28 April 2020 to support such facilities in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Kilbryde Hospice in East Kilbride, which is reportedly at risk of closure.

S5W-29033 Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to the Urgent Question by Jeane Freeman on 12 May 2020 regarding the identification of COVID-19 cases (*Official Report*, c, 14), on what date it was made aware of the outbreak at the February 2020 Nike conference in Edinburgh, and what advice or guidance it gave to NHS Lothian regarding making the public aware of the outbreak.

S5W-29034 Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to the Urgent Question by Jeane Freeman on 12 May 2020 regarding the identification of COVID-19 cases (*Official Report*, c, 14), who carried out the contact testing following the outbreak at the February 2020 Nike conference in Edinburgh; what role NHS Lothian played in this; how many people in the (a) NHS Lothian area and (b) rest of the country were tested, broken down by each organisation responsible for testing, and what information it has regarding the number of people from outwith Scotland who were tested.

S5W-29035 Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to the Urgent Question by Jeane Freeman on 12 May 2020 regarding the identification of COVID-19 cases (*Official Report*, c, 14), in light of the outbreak at the February 2020 Nike conference in Edinburgh, how many (a) hotel (i) staff and (ii) residents who were not attendees at the conference and (b) shop workers, bar workers, taxi drivers and others whom the delegates might have been in contact with, were contact-tested; for what reason testing

was limited to people who were suspected of being within two metres of delegates for more than 15 minutes, and who gave this advice.

[S5W-29038](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government when its policy on the testing of asymptomatic people changed from not testing to testing.

[S5W-29039](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government how many people in each week since 1 February 2020 have been discharged from hospital to care homes; of those, how many were (a) tested and (b) not tested for COVID-19, also broken down by how many tested (i) positive and (ii) negative.

[S5W-29040](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government whether care homes are notified of people who are discharged from hospital into their care who have tested positive for COVID-19.

[S5W-29041](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government whether every person discharged from hospital to a residential care setting is tested twice for COVID-19 and is only transferred if both tests are negative, and whether the care home is advised.

[S5W-29042](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government how many care home staff in the (a) public, (b) voluntary and (c) private sector have been tested for COVID-19, and what percentage of the total workforce in each category this represents.

[S5W-29043](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government how many care home residents have been tested for COVID-19, and what percentage of the care homes population this represents.

[S5W-29044](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it did not support the testing of asymptomatic NHS, care home and home care staff, given that this policy was adopted prior to the establishment of its COVID-19 advisory committee, and on whose advice its policy was based.

[S5W-29045](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government how many COVID-19 outbreaks/cases it has not made public due to patient confidentiality or for any other reason.

[S5W-29046](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government what guidance has been provided to public service providers and retailers to support people with sight loss maintaining two metres' social distancing (a) when queuing to access buildings and (b) once they enter a building.

[S5W-29048](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government what guidance has been issued on the use of tactile markers to make it easier for people with sight loss maintaining two metres social distancing while queuing to access buildings.

[S5W-29049](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government what public awareness information has been provided to support people with sight loss to safely maintain two metres social distancing.

[S5W-29050](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government what guidance has been issued to public transport providers to support people with sight loss maintain two metres social distancing before and during travel.

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](#).