

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

Monday 18 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 18 May can be found on page 30 of this document.

There were no oral questions on 18 May.

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 18 May)

Ministerial portfolio: Constitution, Europe and External Affairs

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Scottish National Party):

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

(S5W-28932)

Michael Russell: The reporting requirements set out in Section 15 of the Scottish Act specify a range of detail that must be covered as part of this process. In developing our approach we are considering how we focus and prioritise reporting towards matters of significant interest or implications – including impacts on vulnerable groups and human rights - and identify those areas in which more detailed reporting may be needed. Section 9 of the Scottish Act makes a commitment to the advancement of equality and nondiscrimination, and equality impacts and implications for individuals and groups with protected characteristics will be an important aspect of the reporting mechanisms adopted.

In my recent statement to Parliament I outlined the principles of the approach we are developing for reporting on the Acts, and I will shortly be setting out further detail on the terms and structure of these reports and the supporting process for engagement and scrutiny.

Ministerial portfolio: Economy, Fair Work and Culture

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how its economic recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will gather input on issues related to (a) climate change and (b) the wellbeing economy.

(S5W-28845)

Fiona Hyslop: Supporting our climate change targets, delivering inclusive growth and wellbeing economy objectives are core to our response to COVID-19 and our overall economic response and recovery plan. Decision regarding COVID-19 are based on the “4 harms” – the direct health impacts of the virus, the wider impacts on health and the social and economic impacts. Our wider economic recovery plan is guided by wellbeing economy principles, integrating economic, social, and environmental spheres. Ensuring a green recovery is central to this. As part of this we are engaging widely with a number of stakeholders and groups across Scotland and beyond.

We have already asked for and received advice from the Committee for Climate Change on how to ensure a resilient, green recovery for Scotland. The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform has also asked the Just Transition Commission to consider a green recovery as part of their remit.

Our membership of the Wellbeing Economy Governments' Group enables us to utilise international best practice to inform our approach to the economic recovery from Covid-19 ensuring that it progresses our transition towards a wellbeing economy.

A key part of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery's remit is to make recommendations on how the Scottish Government can support the transition towards a greener, net zero and wellbeing economy. Benny Higgins, who chairs the Advisory Group, wrote to Scottish Environment LINK and the Wellbeing Economy Alliance seeking their knowledge and insights to inform the Advisory Group on Economic Group's recommendations. This is part of a wider programme of engagement being undertaken by the Advisory Group which includes an open call for views which will be advertised widely to ensure that both environmental and wellbeing economy groups have the opportunity to share their views.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether the remit for the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, which has been set up in response to the COVID-19 outbreak includes (a) advising on decarbonising the economy and (b) moving towards a wellbeing economy.

(S5W-28846)

Fiona Hyslop: The remit of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery is to advise on the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, including;

- measures to support different sectoral and regional challenges the economy will face in recovery; and

- how business practice will change as a result of Covid, including opportunities to operate differently and how Government policy can help the transition towards a greener, net zero and wellbeing economy.

The remit of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery explicitly states that it should consider how Government policy can help the transition towards a greener, net zero and wellbeing economy. The engagement that the Advisory Group has conducted so far suggests that these areas are featuring strongly in its deliberations.

Ministerial portfolio: Education and Skills

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-28306 by John Swinney on 29 April 2020, what steps it will take to collect data from local authorities on the use of critical provision for school and early learning during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28822)

John Swinney: A holding answer was provided.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Scottish Green Party): 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-29030)

Richard Lochhead: The Scottish Government has continued to progress work on the fee status of EU undergraduates who will be starting at Scotland's universities in 2021-22. This work has been continued as we work to support the further and higher education sectors through the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Scottish Government has already confirmed that EU students who commence a higher education course up to and including Academic Year 2020-21 will continue to benefit from tuition fee support for the duration of their course. This support also extends to those who then articulate to another higher education course immediately thereafter.

We will continue to progress work in this area and will aim to provide an update in the near future concerning EU students who commence their studies in 2021-22.

Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport

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

(S5W-28658)

Jeane Freeman: Our decision making in the approach to responding to Covid-19 has been and continues to be guided by the latest scientific evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), which feeds into SAGE.

SAGE advises both COBR and the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) Group which comprises of the CMOs from all four administrations in the UK. Scottish Ministers received further advice from the Scottish CMO and the Scottish Government Covid-19 Advisory Group.

Advice and guidance on moving into lockdown was provided by these groups and all decisions were made following scientific and medical advice. Published papers from SAGE and the Scottish Government Covid-19 Advisory Group can be found on the [UK Government website](#) and the [Scottish Government website](#).

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

(S5W-28660)

Jeane Freeman: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28658 on 18 May 2020 ; advice and guidance on moving into lockdown in response to the Covid-19 outbreak was received through SAGE, COBR, and the Scottish CMO and all decisions were made on the scientific and medical advice. 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>

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): 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: Access to medicines should not be affected by the current COVID-19 global pandemic. There are no known supply issues and hydroxychloroquine remains available from manufacturers for community pharmacies to order through wholesalers.

There are a number of established clinical trials to explore whether a number of medicines, including hydroxychloroquine, may provide a potential treatment for COVID-19. Public Health England has secured relatively large volumes of hydroxychloroquine specifically for any NHS clinical trials across the UK, including Scotland, and the NHS has been advised to order through established supply routes so that prescription supplies are not affected.

The Medicines Healthcare and products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has published a reminder that hydroxychloroquine is not licensed to treat COVID-19 related symptoms or prevent infection and that it should only be used for this purpose within a clinical trial. The MHRA has also added hydroxychloroquine to the list of medicines that cannot be parallel exported from the UK in order to protect stock in the country for UK patients.

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: The SSSC, with the consent of Scottish Government, has already taken action to address the payment of registration fees for social care workers during this COVID-19 outbreak. This includes:

- New and returning care workers will not immediately have to pay the registration fee if joining the workforce. SSSC will not require registration or fee payment until 12 months passes. Previously fees had to be paid within 6 months so we have extended this period during the current pandemic.
- SSSC will not remove workers from the Register who are unable to pay the annual fee on time but will contact them at a later date if the fee remains due.
- A temporary register for Social Workers has also been established to encourage qualified students or those returning from a career break to back into permanent roles. For these social workers SSSC will waive fees, and will only request them when the emergency situation is over and that person remains employed as a social worker.

Details can be found on the SSSC's website www.sssc.uk.com

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what ethical guidelines it will put in place for the rationing of medical equipment during the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28100)

Jeane Freeman: There are no plans to ration medical equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every effort is being made to ensure that the capability and capacity needed are put in place.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it includes suspected and presumed deaths from COVID-19 in the daily figures that are published, and for what reason.

(S5W-28149)

Jeane Freeman: The number of deaths reported daily by the Scottish Governments represents any individual who has died and has had a laboratory confirmed report of COVID-19 in the 28 days prior to death. Further information on deaths involving coronavirus, including presumed deaths in the community is published weekly on the National Records of Scotland website:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-bytheme/vital-events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-birthsand-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland>

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has, beyond statutory sick pay, to provide financial support for people working in care and residential homes who need to self-isolate.

(S5W-28163)

Jeane Freeman: Jointly with COSLA, I have agreed there will be no delay for adult social care support workers receiving at least the new Real Living Wage rate of £9.30 an hour for all hours worked, including sleep-overs and hours worked by personal assistants. This is payable from 1 April and avoid delay from prolonged contract negotiations. This package will also provide funding to third sector and independent providers specifically to ensure staff receive sick pay if they are off work ill or because they are self-isolating. A joint letter with Cllr Currie was issued to all local authorities setting out details of this arrangement on 10 April.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish all advice it has received from (a) the Chief Medical

Officer, (b) the National Clinical Director and (c) any other government advisers regarding testing for COVID-19.

(S5W-28165)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government does not routinely publish advice to Ministers of this kind.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many tests for COVID-19 have been carried out on each day since 1 February 2020.

(S5W-28167)

Jeane Freeman: Daily trends in COVID-19 data, including number of tests are available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-ofpeople-in-hospital-with-confirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish all documents relating to discussions it has had with the UK Government regarding testing for COVID-19.

(S5W-28168)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government has no plans to publish this information.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether people should have the right to know whether or not they have COVID-19.

(S5W-28187)

Jeane Freeman: Where a person receives a test for COVID-19 they are informed of the result.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that medical practices are seeking donors or suppliers of hand sanitiser or disinfecting wipes via social media, as a result of being unable to obtain these from the NHS.

(S5W-28213)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government is committed to keeping staff across the health and social care system safe, which includes ensuring

continued access to appropriate PPE for all staff involved in the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Health Protection Scotland have issued [revised guidance on the equipment required for staff](#). This is based on clinical and scientific evidence, and we continue to work to ensure all services have the resources they require. We expect all NHS Boards to ensure staff dealing with COVID-19 have the appropriate training and personal protective equipment to ensure safety. However, it is clear some staff continue to have legitimate concerns about access to the right PPE during this crisis.

We are working closely with NSS National Procurement to ensure that adequate PPE supplies are available for all front-line staff across the Health and Social Care Sector.

We have now moved to providing substantial extra deliveries, and support will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services across the NHS are urgently being sent stocks of PPE to help them manage cases and potential cases of COVID-19 and keep staff safe.

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: The NHS Scotland testing capacity on these dates is set out in the following table.

Date	Capacity	Tests
6 April	2402	1097
7 April	2572	1555
8 April	2620	1644
9 April	2620	1391

We are taking steps to ensure we maximise the use of our daily capacity for NHS Scotland testing. NHS testing capacity has been progressively increased to at least 3,500 tests daily and it was announced on 1 May, that capacity for testing had gone beyond this figure. By 9 May the weekday NHS testing capacity had increased to 6,159 tests a day. The number of tests carried out daily by NHS Scotland in hospitals, care homes or the community are provided in the Covid-19 daily data for Scotland, the link to which can be found below.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-forscotland/>

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: The daily and cumulative number of suspected COVID-19 cases in adult care homes is published on the Scottish Government website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-forscotland/>

The following information is also available:

- Number/ proportion of adult care homes which have lodged at least one notification for suspected COVID-19 to the Care Inspectorate.
- Number of adult care homes which have reported more than one case of suspected COVID-19.
- Number/ percentage of adult care homes which have a current outbreak of suspected COVID-19. This is a care home where at least one care home resident has exhibited symptoms during the last 14 days.

Every Wednesday National Records of Scotland (NRS) publish a weekly report on deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland. This includes a breakdown of deaths by location, including care homes.

The latest update can be found here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative 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 recognise how important the death in service benefit is to NHS staff and that is why it has been agreed with the principal health service unions, including the BMA, RCN and Unison, that all staff affected by COVID-19 as a result of providing frontline services will have access to the death in service benefits available under the terms of the NHS pension scheme, should the worst happen, including provision of a lump sum and survivor's benefits. This applies to permanent and fixed-term staff. I can advise that NHS Bank and NHS Locum staff are also included. The death in service benefit ensures parity between colleagues and will provide reassurance for staff in these unprecedented times.

I have subsequently sent a letter on 24 April 2020, advising the Health and Sport Committee that my officials are working at pace with NHS Employers and our trade union partners to finalise the scheme's terms and conditions; we

aim to publish a Statement of Scheme Particulars by 1 May 2020, at which time I will share the details with the committee.

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: This data is not available. Public Health Scotland started receiving data according to type of worker from 16 April 2020 and the data collection does not separate staff from their family members. The COVID-19 data and trend charts for Scotland are published daily and provide a range of information on the number of people tested for COVID-19 across Scotland to date, with a breakdown for negative and positive results. The link to the daily data update is:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-of-people-in-hospital-withconfirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when the first (a) residential care home, (b) home care and (c) local government workers were tested for COVID-19 at the Glasgow Airport testing facility.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28483)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many tests for COVID-19 have been done at the Glasgow Airport testing facility on each day since it became operational, and how many of these were for (a) NHS staff, (b) local authority care staff and (c) staff of independent care providers.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28486)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the testing capacity is of the COVID-19 testing facility at Glasgow Airport, and what level it plans to increase the testing capacity to.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28487)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that the chair of a national care home operator described COVID-19 testing in the west of Scotland as "hopeless".

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28488)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government which NHS boards, local authorities and care providers have access to the Glasgow Airport COVID-19 testing facility, and when access will be extended.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28489)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many tests for COVID-19 it estimates are required in care homes each week to meet official guidance, and how many are currently being done each week in or on behalf of care homes.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28490)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how it is procuring COVID-19 tests, and what action it is taking to prevent interruptions to supplies.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28491)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many care home staff have tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the lockdown measures.

Holding answer issued: 18 May 2020

(S5W-28492)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what plans are being developed to increase the capacity of elective surgery sites.

(S5W-28605)

Jeane Freeman: As the member knows our waiting times improvement plan included the delivery of six elective diagnostic and treatment centres. The first of these will open at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital.

The member will appreciate that in scaling up and repositioning the NHS to cope with the challenge of COVID-19 this work has been slowed down. However as we develop our plans to "restart" the NHS, these centres will be an important part of our consideration. This restart work is underway, clinically led and with the engagement of the Royal Colleges, Board and Unions and mindful of other inter-dependencies such as construction work and transport. We hope to make the intention and plans for the initial phase public in the near future.

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

(S5W-28614)

Jeane Freeman: The development of the UK-wide 4 nations COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance was based on current evidence for droplet transmission.

The transmission of COVID-19 is considered to occur mainly through respiratory droplets generated by coughing and sneezing, and through direct and indirect contact from hands or contaminated surfaces/environment respectively. The UK-wide 4 nations COVID-19 IPC guidance, which includes PPE guidance, is therefore based on the current evidence for both droplet and contact precautions.

Currently there is no evidence of airborne transmission of COVID-19, however Aerosol-Generating Procedures (AGPs) have been associated with an increased risk of transmission through aerosolization when AGPs are carried out. Therefore, the IPC and PPE guidance reflects this associated risk with AGPs.

Current UK IPC guidance also recommends that, during this period of sustained community transmission, health and social care staff risk assess use of appropriate PPE when delivering direct care to people not considered to be COVID-19 positive.

The guidance had input from Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) experts from across the UK, the 4 UK nations Public Health bodies, the Royal Colleges, and was ultimately agreed by the four country Chief Medical Officers and Chief Nursing Officers.

Given the Scottish Governments considerable additional PPE provision to the hospital, primary care, pharmacy and social care sectors and to unpaid carers and personal assistants, it should be clear that this action was not driven by resource constraint.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government on what basis a care worker can self-assess that they do not need to wear a protective mask while administering care to a vulnerable person during the COVID-19 outbreak (a) given the reported rate of false negative test results and (b) if they have not been tested for the virus.

(S5W-28620)

Jeane Freeman: Self-assessment should be based on the professional judgement of the care worker, based on their assessment of the patient and the situation. For example, if the social care worker was undertaking a procedure where there was a risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, they might risk assess that they required additional protection as per Table 4 of the UK wide guidance.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will depart from the four nations' personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak

and instruct that all carers wear surgical masks whenever they administer care to vulnerable people, whether in the community, supported accommodation, care homes or clinical settings.

(S5W-28621)

Jeane Freeman: Updated PPE guidance was published on 2 April 2020 for health and social care workers. This followed a review of the existing guidance against the latest evidence and WHO advice, on the safest way to protect health and social care staff. The guidance had input from Royal Colleges and was agreed by the Chief Medical Officers and Chief Nursing Officers in the UK. It outlines what type of PPE frontline health and social care workers should be wearing in different settings and scenarios.

Importantly, in terms of shielding the extremely vulnerable in our society, the guidance advises that secondary, primary and community care workers should wear a surgical mask when providing care to any individuals in the extremely vulnerable group.

In addition to this, the guidance also recommends that care workers providing direct care to patients or residents should risk assess sessional use of a fluid resistant face mask along with other appropriate PPE. Where staff consider there is a risk to themselves or the individuals they are caring for, they should wear a fluid repellent surgical mask with or without eye protection as determined by the individual staff member. This guidance was also outlined in the joint statement <https://www.gov.scot/news/protecting-the-social-careworkforce/>, published on 9 April 2020, by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Trade Unions.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether the testing it has announced for workers and residents in care homes will apply to all residential settings.

(S5W-28622)

Jeane Freeman: The approach to testing for Health and Social Care staff also applies to staff working in the community and other residential settings. For those in community care and residents in residential settings other than care homes, the previous approach on testing, based on clinical assessment, remains appropriate. See the full guidance available on Health Protection Scotland here: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources/container/information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings/>.

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether the testing it has announced for workers and residents in care homes will apply to (a) people receiving care in the

community, including at home, and (b) disabled and other vulnerable people in supported accommodation.

(S5W-28623)

Jeane Freeman: The approach to testing for Health and Social Care staff applies to staff working in the community and other residential settings too. For those in community care and residents in residential settings other than care homes, the previous approach on testing, based on clinical assessment, remains appropriate. See the full guidance available on Health Protection Scotland here: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resourcescontainer/information-and-guidance-for-social-or-community-care-andresidential-settings/>.

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

(S5W-28665)

Jeane Freeman: Reducing delayed discharge is a long standing objective given the clinical benefit to patients. Following the Covid-19 outbreak the Scottish Government commenced the collection of daily delayed discharge management information from Health and Social Care Partnerships. Since recording began on 4 March over 1,000 patients whose discharge was delayed were discharged from hospital to a community setting, a 63% reduction (as at 30 April 2020).

This information does not include destination on discharge. However, based on data collected by Public Health Scotland for the February Delayed Discharge census returns suggests that around 71% of delayed discharges return to their own home, and 29% are admitted to a care home. Local information from Health and Social Care Partnerships suggests this trend has continued through the current crisis, albeit there may be some people who move temporarily to care homes before returning home.

Figures for calendar month February 2020 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of discharges following a period of delay where the delay reason was awaiting completion of care arrangements or place availability 1 ; Calendar month February 2020

		Discharged To		
Date of Discharge	Day of Discharge	Home 2	Placement 3	Total Discharges
01-02-2020	Saturday	13	8	21

02-02-2020	Sunday	8	1	9
03-02-2020	Monday	80	16	96
04-02-2020	Tuesday	49	19	68
05-02-2020	Wednesday	56	21	77
06-02-2020	Thursday	56	24	80
07-02-2020	Friday	52	23	75
08-02-2020	Saturday	11	5	16
09-02-2020	Sunday	3	1	4
10-02-2020	Monday	77	25	102
11-02-2020	Tuesday	51	19	70
12-02-2020	Wednesday	46	22	68
13-02-2020	Thursday	52	24	76
14-02-2020	Friday	64	27	91
15-02-2020	Saturday	10	6	16
16-02-2020	Sunday	3	0	3
17-02-2020	Monday	60	21	81
18-02-2020	Tuesday	53	29	82
19-02-2020	Wednesday	56	21	77
20-02-2020	Thursday	39	25	64
21-02-2020	Friday	42	22	64
22-02-2020	Saturday	10	3	13
23-02-2020	Sunday	5	1	6
24-02-2020	Monday	60	18	78
25-02-2020	Tuesday	51	22	73
26-02-2020	Wednesday	60	21	81
27-02-2020	Thursday	41	17	58
28-02-2020	Friday	52	15	67
29-02-2020	Saturday	8	8	16
Total in February 2020		1,168	464	1,632

1 Includes delays awaiting completion of arrangements in order to go home or awaiting place availability in a care home or other facility.

2 Home includes discharges home, and discharges home with support.

3 Placement includes discharges to care home, and other placements including Intermediate Care.

Ref: IR2020-00471

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many hospital patients who had been categorised as a delayed discharge case but were subsequently discharged since 1 March 2020 have died each day.

(S5W-28698)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government does not hold information on the number of patients who may have died after discharge from hospital.

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: This specific information requested is not held centrally.

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)

Joe FitzPatrick:

Part A - Antibody

Antibody testing will tell us if a person has had the infection and enable us to learn more about the virus and how it is spreading through the population in Scotland. Evidence is evolving on whether the presence of antibodies indicates that someone is immune, and if so, for how long that immunity would persist.

Health Protection Scotland commenced antibody testing, for surveillance purposes, on 6 May. A reliable antibody test that can be deployed on a large scale is not yet available, although Health Protection Scotland is working with a number of companies on this. The aim would be to start to introduce diagnostic antibody testing as soon as possible after that.

Part B - Vaccines

The Scottish Government Chief Scientist Office continues to have regular contact with equivalents in the other UK health departments as part of UK wide coordination of COVID-19-related research, and has been updated as

part of this contact on the establishment of a Vaccines Taskforce to support UK efforts to rapidly develop a coronavirus vaccine. The CSO funded NHS research infrastructure is available to support vaccine studies when they are at the appropriate stage of development.

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: The Scottish Government published its strategy for a "test, trace, isolate, support" approach in Scotland on 4 May. The publication can be found at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-trace-isolate-support/>

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 refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28605 on 18 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 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 refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28366 on 13 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 how many older people discharged from hospital to care homes have died of (a) suspected and (b) confirmed COVID-19.

(S5W-28738)

Jeane Freeman: Information on hospital discharges is collected by Public Health Scotland. The specific information requested is not held centrally.

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: Between 1 November 2019 and 30 April 2020, 15 adult patients who were thought by their local specialist to require further treatment for certain types of lymphoma were referred to and considered by the Scottish lymphoma CAR -T Multi-Disciplinary Team. 10 of these patients were considered to be suitable for treatment with one of the two currently licensed and SMC recommended CAR-T therapies. These patients were then referred for further assessment and treatment to either the Scottish adult CAR-T service in Glasgow or to a specialist centre in England. Referring and treating clinicians are considering the potential consequences of the pandemic and the risks of proceeding with treatment in the current climate versus the risk of either delaying or offering alternative treatments, with patients assessed on a case by case basis. Referrals to the adult centre in Glasgow and other providers in England have been accepted over the last 2 weeks.

The Scottish Cancer Registry has confirmed cancer registration data up to December 2018. CAR-T cell therapy is a treatment introduced after 2018. Therefore, Public Health Scotland do not have this registration information yet.

Table 1 shows information on the number of hospital admissions for patients who received a stem cell transplant and had a diagnosis of blood cancer in each of the last six months for which data are available.

Table 1:

Month	Number of patients
January 2019	23
February 2019	20
March 2019	17
April 2019	16
May 2019	27
June 2019	16

The information requested in section (b) of this question is not held centrally.

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: In partnership with NHS Education for Scotland, the Scottish Government set up the Health and Social Care Covid-19 Accelerated Recruitment Portal at the end of March to enable those with relevant skills and experience to come forward and support health and social care services.

The Health and Social Care Portal is one of three strands of Covid-19 recruitment and volunteering encouraged by the 'Scotland Cares' campaign, hosted on the Ready Scotland website. As more than 76,000 applications have been received across all three strands, the campaign has been temporarily paused with effect from 30 April.

The returners and students who have registered with the Portal are being considered for paid positions within NHS Boards across Scotland and are unlikely to be among those providing telephone support to the extremely vulnerable group of people being asked to shield at home.

However the two other strands of "Scotland Cares" offer alternative options for individuals to offer a variety of health and care services in support of their communities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic:

- To help public services, individuals are directed towards the British Red Cross: Community Reserve Volunteer scheme;
- To help voluntary and community organisations, individuals are directed towards the Volunteer Scotland recruitment website.

The British Red Cross and Volunteer Scotland schemes connect to local authority and third sector activity in communities, creating a pool of volunteers for local organisations to draw upon and deploy as required. The roles already being undertaken by these volunteers include food-parcel distribution, shopping assistance, medicine delivery and making welfare calls.

All local authorities have established local helplines in order to identify and respond to the needs of shielded individuals in their area. Those who are advised to shield have been sent a letter setting out the support which is available to them, including details of local helplines.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) anaesthetists and (b) other NHS staff have been redeployed since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28776)

Jeane Freeman: Information on how many (a) anaesthetists and (b) other NHS staff have been redeployed since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak is not held centrally by ISD or NES.

National Boards have been asked to consider where they can return any clinical staff to clinical roles in territorial boards.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government (a) how many and (b) what proportion of anaesthetists in each NHS board have been absent from work due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

(S5W-28777)

Jeane Freeman: Information on (a) how many and (b) what proportion of anaesthetists in each NHS board have been absent from work due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is not centrally held by ISD or NES.

The info on Covid absence is published daily and can be found on the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-of-people-in-hospital-with-confirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>

See 'Trends in daily COVID-19 data' – Table 6.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many anaesthetists have been tested for COVID-19, and how many have tested positive.

(S5W-28778)

Jeane Freeman: The requested information is not collected or held by the Scottish Government.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will hold a public inquiry into the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28801)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government's focus is currently on tackling the disease, its impact on our society and how we might safely ease the country's lockdown restrictions. This will continue to be our priority. It is right that a process of scrutiny should take place once it is possible to determine the

scope and scale of such a process. Scottish Ministers will carefully consider the most appropriate options for doing so in the fullness of time so that lessons can be learned.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will introduce a public holiday as mark of respect for the people who lost their lives during the COVID-19 crisis, and in recognition of the contribution of workers at this time.

(S5W-28806)

Jeane Freeman: It is important that we acknowledge the role and sacrifice made by key workers and others during the COVID-19 pandemic. The First Minister stresses this in her daily briefings and also notes the personal loss that is experienced by friends and family to those who have tragically lost their lives.

The Scottish Government's focus is currently on tackling the disease, its impact on our society and how we might safely ease the country's current lockdown restrictions. In the fullness of time, we will consider what would be an appropriate and meaningful way for the nation to pay its respects.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish the data being collected through the community surveillance testing programme for COVID-19.

(S5W-28810)

Jeane Freeman: Health Protection Scotland is responsible for the community surveillance testing programme which is currently underway. This informs the Scottish Government's response to Covid-19. The Scottish Government is working with Health Protection Scotland on the dissemination of results once they become available.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what data is being used for calculating or estimating the R number for COVID-19 in communities.

(S5W-28811)

Jeane Freeman: R is a measure of the average number of people that would be infected by one individual with COVID-19. If R is 2, then two people would be infected by one person on average. It is calculated through modelling of the path of the virus in Scotland. The epidemiological progression in the Scottish Government model is simulated using the publicly available Imperial College COVID-19 model as used for UK level modelling. This uses data on

cases and deaths published on the Scottish Government website:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-of-people-in-hospital-with-confirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what consideration will be given to prioritising testing for stage 4 cancer patients once a COVID-19 antibody test is developed and introduced.

(S5W-28819)

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 for what reason it publishes a daily list of COVID-19-related deaths for hospitals only, and whether it plans to publish a daily list of such deaths across all settings, similar to the approach in England.

(S5W-28834)

Jeane Freeman: Daily statistics published by the Scottish Government have always included the number of Covid-19 deaths (where COVID-19 has been confirmed from a lab positive test result) in all settings of death, including in hospitals, care homes, homes or other settings. This was in contrast to the original daily reporting of deaths in England which applied to hospital settings only.

Scottish Government statistics are published on the Scottish Government website each day at 2pm.

In addition to the daily statistics, the National Records of Scotland (NRS) also publishes a weekly report on the number of deaths where there was a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19. These include a breakdown of deaths by setting.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has carried out of the reasons why Inverclyde is recording the highest average level of COVID-19-related deaths among local authority areas.

(S5W-28860)

Joe FitzPatrick: The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) analyses and categorises the nearly 7,000 'data zones' of Scotland by deprivation.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-multiple-deprivation-2020/pages/5/>

The 2020 SIMD report shows that Inverclyde has a high proportion of data zones which are part of the 40% most deprived data zones in Scotland. A total of 59% of Inverclyde's data zones are from the cohort of the 40% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

Statistics published this week by National Records of Scotland (NRS) show that people living in the most deprived areas of Scotland were 2.3 times more likely to die with COVID-19 than those living in the least deprived areas.

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

Analysis of the NRS data shows that (year to date up to 10 May), Inverclyde local authority had the highest rate of death from COVID-19 across all local authorities (at 132 deaths per 100,000). There will be other factors alongside deprivation that will contribute to this, for example, Inverclyde has a higher proportion of people who are pensionable age (21%) compared to the proportion for Scotland (19%).

Further work is being done by analytical partners across the Scottish Government, NRS, Public Health Scotland and the NHS to consider how we can better understand the impact of COVID-19 on the people of Scotland.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what additional action it is taking to help reduce the number of COVID-19-related deaths in Inverclyde, in light of it recording the highest average level among local authority areas.

(S5W-28861)

Joe FitzPatrick: We are working with Public Health Scotland to better understand the link between Covid-19 cases and poverty and deprivation, and how we can best support all vulnerable groups at this time.

PHS has undertaken a range of analyses to look at the impact of deprivation on COVID and non-COVID excess mortality, which it will be publishing as part of its weekly Covid 19 statistical report, in the coming weeks. The current report (13 May) is available here:

<https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/13-may-2020/>

National Records of Scotland have also recently published additional information on COVID-19 deaths and deprivation, available here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/covid19stats>

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

(S5W-28902)

Clare Haughey: Staying at home for a prolonged period of time can be difficult, frustrating and lonely for some people. Health visitors, midwives or GPs are the best sources of advice and should be contacted if pregnant women or new mothers feel they are struggling emotionally or if they have any concerns about their mental wellbeing and wellbeing.

The Scottish Government has produced two leaflets providing information on pregnancy, maternity care and care of a new baby during the COVID-19 outbreak. These are being distributed to all pregnant women and parents of new born babies via their midwife/health visitor.

In August 2019 we announced £225,000 for services to support new mums at risk of poor mental health, which was to help 'build the third sector'. This was extended for a further five months in 2020 to provide continuation of services and to plan for scaling up and expansion in the next financial year. These organisations are being supported to work within Covid-19 limitations.

The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund was launched in May 2020 and will provide funding from August 2020 through to March 2023 of up to £1 million per year. The fund is open to third sector organisations working to support and promote perinatal and infant mental health in Scotland.

To increase awareness of available services, an online digital directory of Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services has been created. The primary audience is midwives and health visitors however the tool can also be used by parents. The directory can be accessed here:
<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/perinatal-mental-health-services/>

Up to date information is also on NHS Inform, Ready Steady Baby, Parent Club and Clear Your Head sites. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) also issue guidance for women and for professionals, including information about perinatal and infant mental health during Covid-19.

Antenatal classes have been paused in most Health Board areas. To ensure that all pregnant women across Scotland continue to have access to antenatal information and advice, the Scottish Government has purchased a 6 month licence for the Solihull Approach online antenatal course. The course is free to access, provides expectant parents with practical information about pregnancy and birth and covers all of the information given in a traditional

face to face antenatal class. This includes support on managing emotions and relaxation strategies.

The course went live online last month and has been well received by both pregnant women and midwives.

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

(S5W-28915)

Jeane Freeman: The scheme will be administered by the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA), but will be fully funded by the Scottish Government.

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

(S5W-28927)

Joe FitzPatrick: Last year we published a National Framework 'Neurological Care and Support in Scotland 2020-2025' that sets out an overview of current provision informed by lived experience engagement nationally with 17 commitments across five aims detailing how we will work with stakeholders and partners to drive improvement in health and social care from diagnosis to anticipatory care planning needs. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/neurological-care-support-scotland-framework-action-2020-2025/>

This National Framework builds on support already available to NHS Boards through the Specialist Nursing and Care Fund that invests £2.4 million annually to enhance the specialist nursing care for people living with a range of conditions across the life spectrum and across hospital and community settings. As of May 2017, reports from NHS boards show that specialist nursing capacity had been enhanced through the additional investment by 31.4 whole time equivalents (WTE).

We are committed to ensuring people receive the correct information about the level of risk to them if they become infected by COVID-19 and what actions they should take to protect themselves if they are classed as at the highest risk of severe illness from the virus. We have published advice for people with long-term health conditions, including neurological conditions, at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tailored-advice-for-those-who-live-with-specific-medical-conditions/>. The guidance has been widely circulated to clinicians, organisations supporting people with

neurological conditions, including Epilepsy Scotland, for them to disseminate through their networks.

We have been clear that patient safety remains the utmost priority and NHS Scotland continues to deal with urgent non-Covid related referrals as well as providing on-going essential care provision. NHS Boards have mobilised their activity including protecting critical neurological services and establishing mechanisms to support their local population including the use of telephone and video consultations to minimise face to face contact unless absolutely necessary.

The Chief Nursing Officer in Scotland has also written to NHS Board Nurse Directors to ensure they prioritise community support for the most vulnerable people to enable them to manage their conditions and remain in their own homes.

We continue to work with NHS Boards and Integrated Joint Boards alongside the wider neurological community to understand and address the emerging implications from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministerial portfolio: Justice and the Law Officers

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the feasibility of temporarily expanding the prison estate with additional cells, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28482)

Humza Yousaf: I have asked Teresa Medhurst, Interim Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), to respond. Her response is as follows: On 3 January 2020, there were 8,159 people in custody, compared with 7,176 on 24 April 2020, a reduction of 983. Our population level is currently at the lowest it has been since the end December 2016 when the lowest level recorded was 7,185.

Scotland's prison population is projected to continue to decline in the coming months through the applications of early release legislation and the relaxation of some restrictions in the HDC process. It is therefore not necessary for the SPS to expand the prison estate with additional cells as is happening in other jurisdictions.

It should be noted that whilst there may be capacity in establishments, SPS are following public health advice and all non-essential prison transfers have been suspended to minimise the spread of infection.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance (a) the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and (b) Police Scotland has drawn up for the enforcement of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

(S5W-28500)

Humza Yousaf: It is a matter for the Lord Advocate, as the head of the system of prosecution in Scotland, to consider whether it is appropriate or relevant to issue guidance on the enforcement of The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”).

(a) However, I can advise you that the Lord Advocate has issued Guidelines to Police Scotland on the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme under the Regulations. The Guidelines are published on the COPFS website.

Similarly, it is for the Chief Constable to determine the operational approach that police officers should take in exercising the new enforcement powers under the Regulations and to develop the operational guidance that he considers relevant and appropriate in the circumstances.

(b) Again, I can advise you that Police Scotland have produced operational guidance on the proportionate application of the enforcement powers under the Regulations for dissemination to officers, including proactive communications and social media highlighting that, even in these exceptional times, their approach to policing will remain governed by consent, with “soft enforcement” as the default setting.

This guidance also sets out the four step operational strategy of Engage; Explain; Encourage; and Enforce. Enforcement is only used as a last resort.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it will take to protect the legal rights of a surviving partner where a planned marriage has been postponed as a result of the COVID-19 emergency and the other partner dies in the interim period.

(S5W-28509)

Ash Denham: During the current pandemic, wedding and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions, and those who participate in them, are restricted by the current health protection regulations set out in the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

In Scotland, local authority registrars process marriage and civil partnership notices and prepare the written documentation required for all marriages and civil partnerships to proceed. This includes religious and belief marriages and civil partnerships.

Registration offices are closed to the public in line with existing Scottish Government guidance and local registrars are prioritising registration of deaths and still-births.

However, the Registrar General for Scotland has procedures in place so that a marriage or civil partnership can proceed during the current pandemic where there is a pressing need for the couple to formalise their relationship.

This could include one partner being terminally ill or being required for immediate overseas deployment with the armed forces. The Registrar General has recently published further information on this on the National Records of Scotland website at:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/aboutus/service-status>.

If a marriage or civil partnership is to proceed during the current health emergency, all the arrangements must comply with the Regulations and physical distancing would also need to be followed.

Written questions lodged on 18 May 2020

[S5W-29117](#) Mark Griffin: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the letter to all MSPs from the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, Europe and Constitutional Affairs of 7 April 2020 establishing a process for Members to raise urgent COVID-19 issues direct with Ministers, how many items of correspondence from MSPs and MPs have been received to date in this regard; how many have been answered through (a) private office and (b) COVID-19 priority mailboxes since then, also broken down by ministerial portfolio, and what the average time taken to respond was by portfolio.

[S5W-29118](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will review the policy of only allowing family members from the same household to carry out an end of life visit in situations where there is adequate PPE to protect all close relatives regardless of whether they live together.

[S5W-29119](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government what it can do to ensure that care homes are resourced properly with both care and cleaning staff.

[S5W-29120](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on what additional staffing will be required in care homes to ensure that residents can access exercise and time away from their rooms while also social distancing.

[S5W-29121](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to allow greater freedoms to older people who have been advised to self-isolate.

[S5W-29122](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government what advice it has given to care homes on the care of people with dementia who are unable to understand the current lockdown rules.

[S5W-29123](#) Rhoda Grant: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will review its advice on PPE for care homes to offer greater protection to staff and residents.

[S5W-29124](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reports that staff at further education colleges, including West Lothian College, are being asked to go through a redundancy procedure, which includes online interviews, during the COVID-19 lockdown; whether it considers this a fair process, and what impact it believes that this might have on staff mental health and wellbeing.

[S5W-29126](#) Gordon Lindhurst: To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making on developing a safe operating protocol that would allow the recommencement of the property transaction process, in light of the resumption of this in England.

[S5W-29127](#) Gordon Lindhurst: To ask the Scottish Government what consideration it has given to proposals to allow for the clearing of a backlog of home reports required to support housing transactions in progress.

[S5W-29128](#) Gordon Lindhurst: To ask the Scottish Government what progress is being made on digitising the land register that is held by the Registers of Scotland.

[S5W-29129](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it is reportedly taking up to eight weeks for it to provide a substantive reply to some written parliamentary questions.

[S5W-29130](#) Jamie Greene: To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to help ensure that merchant navy staff from Scotland who are currently unable to return home because of the COVID-19 outbreak will be able to do so.

[S5W-29136](#) Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government whether all prisoners are tested for COVID-19 prior to release and, if so, at what point.

[S5W-29143](#) Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reported criticism that its policy of closing local courts and moving business to hubs during the COVID-19 outbreak may actually increase the risk of spreading the virus.

[S5W-29144](#) Neil Findlay: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-28643 by Clare Haughey on 14 May 2020, whether it plans to gather this information.

[S5W-29156](#) Iain Gray: To ask the Scottish Government how test, trace and isolate will work when an individual's contacts are identified in both Scotland and England if, for example, they live in one country but work in another.

[S5W-29184](#) Mark Griffin: To ask the Scottish Government what the average weekly number of items of correspondence it received from MSPs and MPs has been since 1 January 2019, broken down by ministerial portfolio, and what the average time taken to respond was by portfolio.

[S5W-29185](#) Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government what support it will provide to veterinary businesses that have remained open to carry out continuing surveillance and statutory testing of livestock, but which have lost most of their usual income streams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[S5W-29186](#) James Dornan: To ask the Scottish Government at what stage it is in its planning for delivering education in the event of a second wave of COVID-19 later in 2020.