

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

Wednesday 20 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 20 May can be found on page 22 of this document.

Links to First Minister's Questions relating to COVID-19 on 20 May, are included at page 21.

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 20 May)

Ministerial portfolio: Communities and Local Government

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what reviews and updates are being made of the weekly grocery box provided to vulnerable people shielding from COVID-19.

S5W-28980

John Swinney: Together with Food Standards Scotland, we are currently reviewing the contents of the grocery boxes provided to those who are shielding from Covid-19 to ensure they are continuing to meet the nutritional and other needs of recipients.

Ministerial portfolio: Finance

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

S5W-29017

Kate Forbes: Public Bodies are expected to align with fair work principles including in relation to trade union and staff engagement. On 25 March, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work & Culture and the STUC General Secretary issued a joint statement outlining the shared commitment to fair work practices in Scotland and calling on employers, trades unions and workers to work together constructively to reach the right decisions on all workplace issues that arise throughout the Covid-19 outbreak and ensure workers are treated fairly. The Cabinet Secretary wrote to Chief Executives of all of Scotland's Public Bodies on 26 March urging them to act in accordance with the Fair Work principles set out in the statement.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it would cost to extend 100% business grant funding in response to the COVID-19 outbreak to additional properties eligible for business support grants.

S5W-28853

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has no plans to extend 100% grant funding to additional properties eligible for business support grants but estimates that the cost of doing so would be around £33 million.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it carried out before deciding to offer 75% grants for additional properties eligible for business support grants in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28855

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has committed that the UK Government's Barnett consequential funding for business support to Scotland would be passed on to businesses. Ministers have also been clear that they would not simply replicate the decisions taken by the other governments but they would take the right decisions for the Scottish economy whilst being mindful of delivering value for money.

Ministers have considered a number of scenarios not just on business support grants but also on wider measures including non-domestic rates reliefs and other targeted forms of business support such as the Pivotal Enterprises Resilience Fund.

In a number of areas Ministers have sought to balance the needs of the broader economy with those of the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and have introduced a number of policies which are either more generous than their UK equivalents or do not even exist in England.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it would cost it to replicate the business grants system that has been put in place in England and Wales in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28851

Kate Forbes: England and Wales have introduced two different grants systems designed to suit their specific local circumstances.

The Scottish Government has committed that the UK Government's Barnett consequential funding for business support to Scotland would be passed on to businesses. Ministers have also been clear that they would not simply replicate the decisions taken by the other governments but they would take

the right decisions for the Scottish economy whilst being mindful of delivering value for money.

In a number of areas Ministers have sought to balance the needs of the broader economy with those of the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and have introduced a number of policies which are either more generous than their UK equivalents or are unavailable in England. At the same time, the Scottish Government does not agree with some of the policies introduced by the UK Government and believes they offer poor value for money to the taxpayer. For example, the UK Government's grant schemes may have made significant sums of money accessible to second home owners registered as self-catering accommodation.

Whilst we have not estimated the costs of replicating the system in Wales, following the Chancellor's announcement to introduce business support grants on 17 March 2020, the Scottish Government estimated that the cost of replicating the business support package in England would be between £2.3 and 2.5 billion. This compared to £2.23 billion of Barnett consequentials.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many business properties are eligible for additional grant funding worth up to 75% of the value of the first business support grant in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and how many are claiming this.

S5W-28852

Kate Forbes: On 5 May the Scottish Government commenced Phase 2 of the Business Grants Funding Scheme. This included the expansion of support for ratepayers with more than one property. In addition to a 100% grant on their first eligible property, ratepayers with additional qualifying properties will be eligible to apply for a 75% grant on each additional property. This has made available Small Business Grants of £7,500 and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants of £18,750 on any additional qualifying properties that a ratepayer may have, subject to compliance with EU State Aid Rules.

We estimate that there are around 11,000 business properties eligible for a 75% Small Business or Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant. As at 12 May 2020, nearly 1,000 business properties have claimed an additional grant.

Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what work it has undertaken to employ contact tracers; how many it expects to employ, and when they will be ready to respond to cases of COVID-19.

S5W-28827

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

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will introduce a programme of targeted lung (a) health checks and (b) cancer screening to support earlier diagnosis of conditions following the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28857

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

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of capacity in (a) radiology and (b) pathology to prevent delays in lung cancer diagnosis (i) during and (ii) following the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28858

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

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with (a) NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and (b) Inverclyde Council regarding Inverclyde recording the largest number of COVID-19-related deaths among local authority areas.

S5W-28862

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

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what additional COVID-19 testing will be carried out in Inverclyde, in light of it recording the highest level of COVID-19-related deaths among local authority areas.

S5W-28864

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

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many people in Inverclyde have tested positive for COVID-19 but have recovered, broken down per NRS Scotland age category, and how this compares with the national average.

S5W-28865

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

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what assistance it is providing to the care home sector in Inverclyde to reduce the number of COVID-19-related deaths.

S5W-28867

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

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether stricter guidelines are required to help reduce the number of COVID-19-related deaths.

S5W-28869

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

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the National Clinical Director's reported comment on Channel 4 News on 16 March 2020 that "we have absolutely adequate testing in Scotland".

S5W-28874

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

Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the timeline will be for the full resumption of (a) bone infusions, (b) radiotherapy and (c) other cancer treatments following the end of the COVID-19 lockdown.

S5W-28894

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

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to international evidence, including from the World Health Organization, which suggest that protective face masks can help prevent the wearer from spreading COVID-19.

S5W-28609

Jeane Freeman: Guidance on the personal use of face coverings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was published on 28 April 2020 and can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-use-of-face-coverings/>.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many staff are trained to care for a patient on a ventilator in each NHS board.

S5W-28574

Jeane Freeman: All Health Boards have produced mobilisation plans which set out the steps they are taking to maximise intensive care capacity while maintaining essential services, such as emergency, cancer and maternity care. All Health Boards have now implemented plans to increase ICU capacity to treble their baseline. This increase in ICU bed capacity includes increased staffing delivered through internal redeployment supported by education and training which is being locally provided to meet the needs of each Board. The Chief Nursing Officer issued guidance to all Health Boards to support the deployment of Nursing, AHP, Pharmacy and other staff in Critical Care last month.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions the Chief Scientist Office has had with counterparts elsewhere in the UK or internationally regarding development of a vaccine for COVID-19.

S5W-28567

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government Chief Scientist Office has 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 Scottish Government Chief Scientist Office funded NHS Research Infrastructure is available to support vaccine studies when they are at the appropriate stage of development.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government which NHS (a) wards, (b) respiratory wards and admission units (c) other facilities are not providing staff with full personal protective equipment (PPE) and for what reasons.

S5W-28565

Jeane Freeman: That information is not held centrally. Between 1 March 2020 and 27 April, over 97 million items of PPE have been distributed to NHS Boards.

Each board now has a single point of contact for supply and importantly distribution of appropriate PPE to each clinical setting in hospital and to ensure any issues are speedily addressed.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government how many people who have died from

COVID-19 had (a) heart disease, (b) diabetes, (c) experienced a stroke, (d) cancer and (e) a lung condition.

S5W-28552

Jeane Freeman: This information is currently not available. NRS plan to publish more detailed analysis of COVID-19 deaths, including information on pre-existing conditions mentioned on the death certificate, in due course.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will encourage the public to use face masks to limit the spread of COVID-19.

S5W-28537

Jeane Freeman: Guidance on the personal use of face coverings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was published on 28 April 2020 and can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-use-of-face-coverings/>.

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: The Chief Medical Officer wrote to those people considered most at risk from COVID-19 on 26 March. The letter provided information and support on shielding themselves from Covid-19 and how they could access the care and treatment they might need. The letter also explained that their GP practice would contact them to discuss how best to ensure they still receive the medical care appropriate to them during this period.

As part of these discussions, the GP may ask about their health and care wishes to ensure that they are recorded should they become unwell with COVID-19. These conversations are known as Anticipatory Care Planning (ACP) and GPs and other health professionals are supported to have them in a sensitive manner. This discussion might also include conversation about Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions if raised by the person or their GP deems it necessary.

To support GPs in having these discussions in a way that is compassionate and respectful, on 10 April we issued a letter to GP practices to provide advice and support on having anticipatory care planning conversations. The letter makes clear that there is no requirement for health professionals to have a DNACPR discussion as part of this conversation, unless the patient wishes to discuss it or clinician feels strongly it is necessary to raise in conversation for the patient's wellbeing.

Additionally, on 17 April, a further joint letter from the Scottish Government's Chief Medical Office, BMA and RCGPs was sent to GPs to reinforce this message and set out how they could effectively support care homes during this difficult time.

To raise public awareness and support people to have these conversations we have added information about anticipatory care planning in the context of COVID-19 to the NHS Inform website. This includes a link to a video providing information and support about what to consider with those closest to you before having an ACP conversation with your GP or other health professional.

The Scottish Government continues to consider public feedback and work with stakeholders to consider how we can best promote awareness of anticipatory care planning and support people and those closest to them to have those conversations.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what work it has undertaken to employ contact tracers; how many it expects to employ, and when they will be ready to respond to cases of COVID-19.

S5W-28827

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government set out our approach to contact tracing on 4 May in the Test, Trace Isolate, Support Strategy. Existing health protection teams have high quality skills and experience in delivering contact tracing and some are already undertaking COVID-19 contact tracing work.

The increase to the number required is three-fold: expansion of existing local teams drawing from NHS Scotland workforce, recruiting from the bank of NHS returners and via the ad campaign.

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: NHS National Services Scotland is working with Public Health Scotland to assess whether antibody tests can be used to determine whether individuals have been exposed to the virus. We do not yet know whether the presence of antibodies indicates that someone is immune to future infection, and if so, for how long that immunity would persist.

Antibody testing is in the early stages of development and the information currently being collected as part of randomised antibody testing from routinely collected blood samples will inform how best to prioritise the testing.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many items had been stockpiled for a possible pandemic in January (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018, (d) 2019 and (e) 2020.

S5W-28630

Jeane Freeman: I assume the member is referring to items of PPE. If that is the case the number of items stockpiled for a pandemic event at the first quarter of each year from 2016 to 2020 are as follows:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Items	54,603,969	52,097,543	50,778,328	50,622,848	53,932,628 *

Note: These figures do not include any procurements made in response to the Covid 19 outbreak.

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: Contaminated uniforms are always washed in NHS laundry facilities and there should be no exception to this. NHS laundry facilities can be used to launder non-contaminated uniforms, where available. Where staff have access to NHS laundry facilities this is also subject to the capacity available.

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 refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28349 on 20 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>

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: The Scottish Government is involved in discussions with the UK Government on participation in the EU procurement of COVID-19 therapeutics. This important work will supplement the enormous efforts already being undertaken by Scotland, both independently and in direct collaboration with the UK Government, other Devolved Administrations, and international partners. As the UK is a signatory to the EU Joint Procurement Agreement, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) represents the UK, including Devolved Administrations, on the EU's Joint Procurement Steering Group where joint procurements are discussed. Scottish Government officials are in regular contact with DHSC officials to ensure that any future UK participation in EU Joint Procurement exercises takes into account the health and social care needs of Scotland during the COVID-19 crisis.

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: Scottish Government do not hold this information, which is kept at a local level. However, we have been clear that it is critical that social care support is maintained throughout this difficult period to ensure the safety, dignity and human rights of people who already receive support. We have made clear to Local Authorities that they should act to do what is right to deal with the virus, and not be constrained by funding issues.

We have made it clear to Local Authorities that they should act to do what is right to deal with the virus, and not be constrained by funding issues. An initial £50 million to help the social care sector deal with the financial implications of COVID - 19 was confirmed on 12 May. This funding will allow cash to flow to those parts of the social care sector where additional costs have been incurred, particularly in care home and care at home services. This year our package of investment to support integration and social care will exceed £800 million. The money from the UK Government's Coronavirus Emergency Response Fund has already been allocated to support a range of important measures. We will continue to press the UK Government for urgent additional funding for the health service, local government and care sector to adequately deal with this crisis.

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: 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 along with their carers.

I have already stated in the Scottish Parliament that it is not acceptable that care packages are cut during this period.

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.

Scottish Government and COSLA jointly issued guidance to all authorities on 14th May which is very clear that while there are some unavoidable reasons that may affect packages, any changes to support should be temporary. Such unavoidable changes include workforce capacity pressures and infection control measures which prevent delivery of support in a group setting.

We have made it clear to Local Authorities that they should act to do what is right to deal with the virus, and not be constrained by funding issues. An initial £50 million to help the social care sector deal with the financial implications of COVID - 19 was confirmed on 12 May. This funding will allow cash to flow to those parts of the social care sector where additional costs have been incurred, particularly in care home and care at home services. This year our package of investment to support integration and social care will exceed £800 million. The money from the UK Government's Coronavirus Emergency Response Fund has already been allocated to support a range of important measures. We will continue to press the UK Government for urgent additional funding for the health service, local government and care sector to adequately deal with this crisis.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it has taken to ensure that COVID-19 guidance is underpinned by appropriate psychological knowledge, and how it ensures that its decisions on such matters are clearly communicated to the public.

S5W-28197

Jeane Freeman: Guidance is based on reviewing the available published evidence and informed by expert opinion drawn from a wide range of sources, including from behavioural sciences. Guidance and advice for the public is available through NHS Inform, a substantive media campaign is underway to raise awareness of these resources.

Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what arrangements it has made to ensure that rheumatology patients, particularly those diagnosed with Lupus, have sufficient access to the drug, hydroxychloroquine, while it is being used in COVID-19 clinical trials.

S5W-28193

Jeane Freeman: Access to medicines should not be affected by the current COVID-19 global pandemic. There are no known current supply issues with hydroxychloroquine and it remains available from manufacturers for community pharmacies to order through wholesalers as usual.

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 what its exit strategy is from the current state of lockdown that is in place in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28098

Jeane Freeman: Coronavirus (Covid-19): framework for decision making was published on 23 April 2020 and outlines the approach and principles that will guide decision making about transitioning out of the current lockdown arrangements. The framework can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making/>.

Further information was published in the Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - further information document on 5th May 2020 and can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-further-information/>.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-27798 by Joe FitzPatrick on 18 March 2020, what measures

are being taken to raise awareness of Lyme disease to people who may be out walking more now due to a lift in restrictions due to COVID-19.

S5W-29008

Joe FitzPatrick: Existing guidance and materials are widely available and remain relevant for anyone walking outdoors – they can be accessed at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/bugs-and-germs>. There has not been any new guidance produced recently, as the Scottish Government’s focus has been on supporting the Covid-19 response.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what arrangements are in place to support people who might require home care in the event that the COVID-19 outbreak results in staff absence.

S5W-27965

Jeane Freeman: We have taken steps both nationally and locally to rapidly increase our health and social care workforce capacity to enable those who receive care at home to continue to do so. We are increasing recruitment / hiring across the social care workforce. For example, NHS Education Scotland has developed a national web-based recruitment portal to support local efforts to enable those with relevant skills and experience to come forward and support health and social care services at this time of national emergency. People returning to, and entering, the social care workforce are being deployed quickly to where they are most needed.

There is already flexibility in the registration system for social services staff to move to another service or start to work in another type of registered service, but more has been done to clarify and implement minimum training requirements and enable redeployment of staff as necessary. The SSSC has developed a minimum training package for social care for redeployment and volunteers, who will play an essential role in the delivery of day-to-day services. Further information can be accessed via the SSSC website: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/>

We have also asked NHS National Services Scotland to provide PPE stock to personal assistants and unpaid carers as well as the regulated social care sector during this emergency period, this will go towards supporting those who may be required to provide home care during this time.

We have also put in place shielding measures to protect people at the highest risk because of existing health conditions and also set up a national helpline for Covid support which is aimed at “group two” vulnerable people, for those who have not been classed within the shielding group. This national helpline will provide a number of links to council services who will help access support

such as essential food and medication, social work services and emotional support during this unprecedented time.

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

Joe FitzPatrick:

a)

	Week 14		Figures making up 5 year average				
	Registered deaths 2020	Five year average (2015-2019)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cancer	375	292	284	296	274	321	287
Dementia/Alzheimer's	203	118	99	119	124	130	116
Circulatory (heart disease and stroke)	390	286	273	314	287	305	250
Respiratory	160	143	145	156	127	156	131
Other	360	260	241	281	248	280	248
All	1,488	1,098	1,042	1,166	1,060	1,192	1,032

b)

	Week 15		Figures making up 5 year average				
	Registered deaths 2020	Five year average (2015-2019)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cancer	341	301	330	278	263	326	306
Dementia/Alzheimer's	215	113	124	93	119	117	114
Circulatory (heart disease and stroke)	352	299	337	298	252	328	281
Respiratory	141	139	160	138	142	133	120
Other	341	248	241	241	222	288	248
All	1,390	1,100	1,192	1,048	998	1,192	1,069

Footnote

1) The ICD 10 codes for disease categories are as follows:

Cancer: C00-C97

Dementia and Alzheimer's: F01, F03 and G30

Circulatory: I00:I99

Respiratory: J00-J99

The 2020 figures do not include COVID-19 deaths

Source: National Records of Scotland

Ministerial portfolio: Justice and the Law Officers

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

S5W-28912

James Wolffe QC: On 25 March 2020, following announcements made by the UK and Scottish Government, the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) announced that in order to safely maintain essential services that support justice all Sheriff court business would be adjourned or continued administratively except for: (i) cases where the accused is in custody; (ii) appearances from undertakings; and (iii) emergency civil applications.

Since that time senior officials in COPFS have remained in close discussion with SCTS about arrangements for timetabling both existing and future criminal proceedings and Fatal Accident Inquiries. This has included discussions about the circumstances in which certain FAIs might continue to be dealt with at this time. Although there are significant limitations on the hearings which can take place in court at this time, COPFS staff are able to work remotely, and, continue to undertake death investigations and to prepare cases where FAIs are pending.

Whilst timetabling of Inquiries is not for me but rather for SCTS, I can however confirm that COPFS continue to liaise with SCTS and with families affected by delays to Fatal Accident Inquiries.

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

S5W-28913

James Wolffe QC: As at week commencing 23 March 2020, in terms of Section 15 of the Inquiries into Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths etc. (Scotland) Act 2016 (the 2016 Act), the Crown had initiated, by First Notice, 33 Fatal Accident Inquiries with Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS). In none of these had evidence commenced being led at that time, but all had future scheduled court dates for either a preliminary hearing; date for evidence to be led or both.

Since 23 March 2020, one of these FAIs has been concluded by the Court and 25 have been adjourned by the Court to future dates. The remaining seven FAIs have yet to be considered by the Court, with the original scheduled dates in place. I am advised that these remain subject of ongoing review and discussions between the Court, the Crown and other interested parties to the FAIs.

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

S5W-28910

James Wolffe QC: As I advised Parliament on 13 May 2020, a death falls to be reported to the Crown if the circumstances are such as to give rise to public anxiety. I have issued directions that two categories of COVID-19 or presumed COVID-19 deaths meet this criterion and should accordingly be reported to the Crown. These categories are:

(i) All COVID-19 or presumed COVID-19 deaths where the deceased may have contracted the virus in the course of their employment or occupation. Whilst not exhaustive, this may include deaths of care home workers, frontline NHS staff, public transport employees and emergency services personnel; and

(ii) All COVID-19 or presumed COVID-19 deaths where the deceased was resident in a care home when the virus was contracted.

It would not be appropriate for me before investigations have been carried out in relation to reported COVID-19 deaths, to speculate about what those investigations might lead to or about the circumstances in which a fatal accident inquiry will be held. However, where the law requires a fatal accident inquiry, one will be held. Where the Crown concludes, following investigation, that a fatal accident inquiry should, in the public interest, be held, one will be instructed. The Crown will remain sensitive to the needs of bereaved relatives; and will keep them informed about any investigation in accordance with the Family Liaison Charter which I laid before Parliament in 2016.

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

S5W-28909

James Wolffe QC: In accordance with Section 2 of the Inquiries into Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths etc. (Scotland) Act 2016, a Fatal Accident Inquiry requires to be held into the death of a person which occurred in Scotland, if, at the time of death, the person was in legal custody.

I can confirm that the sudden, unexpected and unexplained deaths reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) since the beginning of the current pandemic, include deceased who have died in Scottish prisons, from COVID-19 related illnesses.

A FAI will accordingly require to be held into each of these deaths. As I advised Parliament on 13 May 2020, when I updated the Chamber on the categories of death which fall to be reported to the Crown during the pandemic; where the law requires a fatal accident inquiry, one will be held.

The progress of a death investigation depends on a variety of factors. While most death investigations conclude once a cause of death is known, other cases require further investigation, which may include complex technical and medical issues requiring the instruction of experts.

Where a FAI is to be held, the speed with which it proceeds to the conclusion of evidence, and, thereafter, to issue of the sheriff's determination depends on a variety of factors, including the scale and complexity of the inquiry and the other demands on court and judicial time. There are also, currently, significant constraints on court hearings. In light of the current situation that we face, it would be premature for me to speculate when any FAI into the deaths to which I have referred may commence.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with (a) Police Scotland, (b) the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership and (c) the retail sector regarding people's adherence in Inverclyde to the social distancing guidelines, in light of it recording the highest average level of COVID-19-related deaths among local authority areas.

S5W-28868

Humza Yousaf: Myself and the Chief Constable have regular discussions on a range of issues. Additionally, Police Scotland provides daily updates on the Covid-19 response and impact which have included reports about enforcement activity in respect of the emergency regulations in Inverclyde, flagging levels of traffic and pedestrians within the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Division area. While operational decisions are a matter for the Chief Constable, the Scottish Government is willing to engage in any multi-party discussions about the local response as appropriate.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is working in partnership with the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership in responding to COVID-19, including ongoing monitoring of its impact.

Local authorities are responsible for enforcement of the emergency regulations in respect of retail workplaces. In doing so, they are working closely with Police Scotland to enforce the emergency regulations effectively.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason police officers who are asymptomatic but attend incidents where there is a high risk of exposure to COVID-19 are reportedly not being tested for the virus.

S5W-28818

Humza Yousaf: Police officers and staff who are feeling concerned about their health or wellbeing following a Covid-19 interaction can contact their HR department to be risk assessed, following which a decision can be made on whether testing is appropriate. This position has been welcomed by the Scottish Police Federation.

The tests that are currently available are effective at identifying people who have COVID-19, but only when they are symptomatic. If someone is asymptomatic, then the tests cannot reliably detect infection prior to the onset of symptoms.

The testing of police officers and staff is important and they will continue to have priority access to testing for as long as is necessary.

Ministerial portfolio: Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what progress is being made with implementing the R100 high-speed broadband programme, and what additional work is being carried out to accelerate this to facilitate home (a) schooling and (b) working during the COVID-19 outbreak.

S5W-28891

Paul Wheelhouse: The COVID-19 pandemic – and the consequent lockdown and social distancing guidelines we have implemented – have resulted in some restrictions on the types of work that telecommunications suppliers can do at this time. However, guidance for councils and operators has meant that a limited amount of build of new infrastructure has continued (for example to NHS sites and in more rural areas), as well as critical maintenance and repairs to our existing telecommunications network. We are also working closely with the UK Government, Ofcom and industry to ensure adequate

support is available for anyone struggling in the current climate. On 29 March, a series of welcome measures were introduced, including the removal of data caps for fixed line services and increased data allowances at lower costs for mobile service, to keep customers connected during these difficult times.

With regards to the R100 programme, we continue to work with BT on the Central and South contracts, final surveys are being undertaken to assess updated speed coverage templates and we know the intention is to look to accelerate build wherever possible. However, Aberdeenshire sits within the North lot, and I remain unable to comment on progress for this specific contract, due to the ongoing legal proceedings which we must respect. As regards the North lot, I will seek to update Parliament, as soon as possible, once those proceedings have concluded.

Of course, despite all regulatory and legislative responsibility for telecommunications resting solely with the UK Government, the Scottish Government has taken action to greatly improve digital connectivity in Scotland – the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) has delivered transformative results across all local authorities, including Aberdeenshire, where more than 73,000 properties are now able to access superfast speeds of 30 Megabits per second (Mbps) as a result of Scotland's £400 million Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme (DSSB).

However, I recognise the vital importance of good quality digital connectivity. This is why we made our commitment to ensure 100% of premises could access superfast broadband services, and, aside from some ongoing, legacy DSSB activity delivered via the 'Gainshare' mechanism, this commitment will be delivered through three strands of activity: firstly, through the three Reaching 100% programme (R100) contracts, in the North, Central and South lots; secondly, through a Scottish Government funded nationwide, superfast broadband voucher scheme aligned to our R100 programme, which will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to access superfast broadband by the end of 2021 where R100 itself is known in some localities to be scheduled to deliver to their specific premises after December 2021, or where their premises are not among those cited within the successful bid for the Lot in question; and, thirdly, through continued commercial coverage. As you may be aware, the Scottish Government is funding £579 million or 96.5% of the £600 million R100 contracts with the UK Government contributing 3.5% of funding (£21 million).

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

S5W-29023

Michael Matheson: Our key priority remains protecting the lives of everyone in Scotland as we continue to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. At this stage it is too early to assess the impact of the temporary closures of trunk road

construction sites. However, once work is permitted to recommence in line with the Scottish Government's construction sector guidance, our contractors will be required to review their programmes of work. There is likely to be some impact on cost and programmes but it is too early to determine at this stage in respect of the current financial year.

ORAL QUESTIONS ON 20 MAY 2020

First Minister's Questions

The following questions were asked:

1. **Jackson Carlaw:** Question to be taken in Chamber. ([S5F-04127](#))
2. **Richard Leonard:** Question to be taken in Chamber. ([S5F-04128](#))
3. **Patrick Harvie:** Question to be taken in Chamber. ([S5F-04129](#))
4. **Willie Rennie:** Question to be taken in Chamber. ([S5F-04130](#))
5. **Alex Neil:** To ask the First Minister what plans the Scottish Government has for introducing the new antibody tests for COVID-19 in Scotland. ([S5F-04132](#))
6. **Brian Whittle:** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to reports that obesity and diabetes increase an individual's risk of contracting COVID-19. ([S5F-04137](#))
7. **Pauline McNeill:** To ask the First Minister what analysis the Scottish Government has made regarding the potential impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on women's position in the labour market. ([S5F-04139](#))
8. **Liz Smith:** To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking to ensure that all answers to written parliamentary questions about COVID-19 are being processed as quickly as possible. ([S5F-04140](#))

Answers to all of the above questions, and others relating to COVID-19, can be found in the Official Report of proceedings [here](#).

Written questions lodged on 20 May 2020

(Expected answer date 5 June 2020)

[S5W-29217](#) Rachael Hamilton: To ask the Scottish Government what grant support it provides to businesses that are experiencing financial difficulty during the COVID-19 pandemic, but which do not possess a rateable value.

[S5W-29218](#) Rachael Hamilton: To ask the Scottish Government what support is available during the COVID-19 pandemic to sports clubs that are liable to pay rent for sports facilities from local authorities.

[S5W-29219](#) Rachael Hamilton: To ask the Scottish Government what financial support has been allocated to local authorities to support local sports clubs and community groups that are facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[S5W-29220](#) Rachael Hamilton: To ask the Scottish Government what guidance was issued to local authorities on the allocation of funding to sporting businesses from the Creative or Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund.

[S5W-29221](#) Rachael Hamilton: To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful applications have been made by sporting businesses to the Creative or Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund, also broken down by local authority area.

[S5W-29225](#) Claire Baker: To ask the Scottish Government how many people in the creative industries it has identified as not being eligible for the (a) furlough and (b) self-employment income support scheme, and what alternative support is available to those individuals.

[S5W-29226](#) Claire Baker: To ask the Scottish Government how many applications it has received from people in the cultural sector for support from the Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund; what the total value of the funding requested was; how many of those applications were approved, and what the total value of the awards made was.

[S5W-29227](#) Claire Baker: To ask the Scottish Government how many applications for support from the Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Fund it has received; what the total value of funding requested was; how many applications were approved, and what the total value of the awards made was, also broken down by the (a) creative and cultural, (b) tourism and (c) hospitality sector.

[S5W-29228](#) Claire Baker: To ask the Scottish Government what steps it has taken to raise awareness of the (a) Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund and (b) Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Fund.

[S5W-29229](#) Claire Baker: To ask the Scottish Government what COVID-19 funding support packages it has in place for people working in the cultural sector, and how many people have been supported to date.

[S5W-29230](#) Mark Griffin: To ask the Scottish Government, in light of comments by Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Disabled People, at the Work and Pensions Select Committee on 23 April 2020, regarding a fall in the number of applications for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), whether there has been a fall in such claims from disabled people in Scotland.

[S5W-29231](#) Daniel Johnson: To ask the Scottish Government what information and data it holds on the use of do not resuscitate (DNR) notices in hospitals.

[S5W-29237](#) Daniel Johnson: To ask the Scottish Government whether specific advice will be provided for each leisure activity as the COVID-19 lockdown measures are eased.

[S5W-29239](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government how many people with learning disabilities or other support needs have died from COVID-19-related conditions in care homes, and many of these are for groups other than older people or people with dementia.

[S5W-29240](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government how many care homes for groups other than older people or people with dementia have had notifiable outbreaks of COVID-19.

[S5W-29241](#) Jackie Baillie: To ask the Scottish Government how many tests for COVID-19 have been carried out on people with (a) learning disabilities and (b) other support needs who are resident in care homes.

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](#).