

Monday 19 May 2014

## SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

### Finance

**Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government when the non-profit distributing (NPD) model was developed and introduced as an alternative to the private finance initiative and what the first NPD-funded capital project was.

**Holding answer issued: 16 May 2014**

**(S4W-20757)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The current NPD model with a simplified and standardised contract and recycling of returns to the public sector was developed by the Scottish Futures Trust. The first NPD project in the current pipeline of investments to reach financial close was Inverness College on 29 April 2013.

The current model built on and enhanced an earlier NPD-type funded model, initially developed with support from the Scottish Government and the former Partnerships UK organisation. This earlier model was piloted by Argyll and Bute Council with a project for the construction of ten schools which reached financial close on 9 September 2005.

### Governance and Communities

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what the reason is for the delay in the publication of the final report of the Expert Group on Welfare and Constitutional Reform; when it will publish the report, and whether this will allow sufficient time for the Parliament to scrutinise it.

**(S4W-21001)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The publication of the final report of the Expert Working Group on Welfare has not been delayed. The Group were asked to report to Ministers in spring 2014 and they are sticking to that timescale. Taking into account printing and publishing timescales, I expect that it will be published in June 2014.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on each of the recommendations made by the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum in its 2014 report, *Review of the Scottish Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy*.

**(S4W-21007)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The Scottish Government has now considered and accepted all of the recommendations made in the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum's 2014 report, *Review of the Scottish Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy*. A letter was sent to the Forum on 16 May 2014 which set out the Scottish Government's response to each of the recommendations made. This response has been published on the Scottish Government's website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/warmhomes/fuelpoverty/ScottishFuelPovertyForum>.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many households have been affected by fuel poverty since the publication of the Scottish House Condition Survey 2012.

**(S4W-21008)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** This information is not available.

Figures on the number of people affected by fuel poverty take into account energy efficiency improvements to dwellings and changes in the incomes of Scottish households. This information is collected in the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS). The most recent official statistics are for 2012, published at the end of 2013. Figures for 2013 will be published in the SHCS Key Findings Report 2013, in December 2014.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to improve access for fuel poor households in rural areas to the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland.

**(S4W-21009)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Scottish Government funding for the Home Energy Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS) is distributed across all local authorities in Scotland. For 2014-15, £42 million of the £60 million available for HEEPS: ABS is allocated on the basis of need, which takes into account levels of fuel poverty and reflects the different types of properties within rural areas. This ensures that funding is directed to those areas most in need of assistance, including our rural areas.

£14.4 million, 34% of the allocated HEEPS: ABS funding for 2014-15, has been distributed to local authorities in rural areas. This year's funding will support delivery in off-gas grid areas by providing specific funding to be used to deliver heating and insulation improvements for low-income and vulnerable households who meet the affordable warmth eligibility criteria in off-gas grid properties.

In addition, from April 2014, eligibility for the Energy Assistance Scheme takes precedence over the Affordable Warmth Scheme, helping to address a lack of service for off-gas grid households.

We are also lobbying the UK Government to amend the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to ensure fairer delivery for rural and remote areas in Scotland. I have written to the UK Government flagging up concerns over the slow delivery of the ECO to rural and remote areas. Following extensive engagement with our stakeholders, the Scottish Government recently responded to the UK Government's consultation on proposed changes to the ECO. We welcomed the UK Government's proposals to widen eligibility and include additional incentives for delivery in areas that are off the mains gas grid. However, we remain concerned that this may not go far enough and have called for additional support for rural areas to be applied across all targets within the ECO.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to assist fuel poor households in harder to treat properties.

**(S4W-21010)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The Scottish Government strongly disagrees with the UK Government's proposed reduction of support for hard to treat properties. We have written to the UK Government flagging up concerns over this switch of focus which will undermine investment in energy efficiency, jobs in the insulation industry and progress in tackling fuel poverty and climate change.

In *Scotland's Future*, we set out how, given the powers of independence, we would remove the cost of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Warm Homes Discount from household energy bills providing year on year savings while maintaining investment in energy efficiency. With our existing powers, we are taking action through our Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland (HEEPS) to mitigate the impact of these changes as far as possible.

Following extensive engagement with our stakeholders the Scottish Government recently responded to the UK Government's consultation on proposed changes to the ECO. We raised the importance of this issue and requested that the impacts are mitigated as much as possible and that the UK Government's final plans following consultation address this. We also gave councils greater flexibility on our HEEPS: ABS (Area Based Schemes), including increasing the maximum grant available, to ensure they could continue to deliver more expensive measures to hard to treat properties.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how it monitors the effectiveness of the delivery of the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland.

**(S4W-21011)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** With regard to the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS), local authorities complete quarterly reports on activity which will cover work completed in the previous months, works started on site and works committed but not yet started. This will include an analysis of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) for committed and

completed homes. Local authorities will also provide details of the measures completed to homes which will be cross-referenced to the data Ofgem provides on ECO delivery in Scotland.

With regard to the HEEPS: Affordable Warmth Scheme, participating energy suppliers provide a performance scorecard to the Scottish Government on a monthly basis which forms the basis for monthly discussion of delivery, quality and service issues. Similarly, with regard to the HEEPS: Energy Assistance Scheme, Scottish Gas provides a performance scorecard to the Scottish Government on a monthly basis which forms the basis for monthly discussion of delivery, quality and service issues. Additionally, data from invoices for installations completed under the Energy Assistance Scheme allow a fuller report to be compiled for each financial year.

We intend to publish a monitoring report on all the HEEPS schemes later in the year, subject to receiving satisfactory performance data from councils and utility companies.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has undertaken research on the relationship between health, fuel poverty and excess winter deaths.

**(S4W-21013)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The Scottish Government has not undertaken research specifically into this. However, this is an area we are keen to explore further. We are developing firm links with health colleagues and this has already assisted in establishing contact with the Deep End practices through the Link Worker programme.

We are also seeking to secure replacement NHS representation on the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum to inform our discussions around the health and fuel poverty links. We will continue to work with the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum and consider any recommendations they may make around this.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has undertaken research on changes to the definition of fuel poverty and, if so, whether it will publish that research.

**(S4W-21014)**

**Nicola Sturgeon:** There are no plans to change the definition of fuel poverty in Scotland.

In its final report on the Scottish Government's fuel poverty strategy, published in March 2014, the independent Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum recommended, "that the definition currently used in Scotland is still relevant, but that it needs to be reviewed and updated to reflect a more accurate assessment of the energy demands with in homes in a modern age."

Research into the robustness of the assumptions underpinning the current definition of fuel poverty was commissioned by the Scottish Government on behalf of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum. Members of the Forum are currently considering the results of this research and will make recommendations to Scottish Ministers in due course.

The Forum led on the research and is responsible for the final report and its publication.

#### **Health and Social Care**

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the US Food and Drug Administration's announcement that mesh implants should be reclassified as "high risk", whether it will reclassify mesh implants and suspend their use pending an investigation of how many women are affected.

**(S4W-20950)**

**Alex Neil:** Regulation of medical devices, including implants, is a reserved matter dealt with by the UK Government.

I have written to both the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the European Commission asking that they urgently consider the US Food and Drug Administration's proposed reclassification of surgical mesh for treatment of pelvic organ prolapse.

The European Commission is seeking further research and expert opinion. I have asked for assurance that it will act quickly once the research is available to reclassify these devices if the evidence points to that requirement.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on how many women in Scotland have been implanted with the Johnson & Johnson Ethicon TVT-O implant.

**(S4W-20951)**

**Alex Neil:** The Scottish Government does not hold this information centrally.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing has written to GPs informing them of the potential adverse effects associated with mesh implants.

**(S4W-20953)**

**Alex Neil:** The Chief Medical Officer wrote to all GPs, through Medical Directors, on 11 July 2013 and 20 December 2013 regarding the investigation and management of patients being treated for urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse, including the management of patients with vaginal mesh and tape products.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide funding to set up a helpline to assist women who have been given a defective Johnson & Johnson Ethicon TVT-O implant.

**(S4W-20954)**

**Alex Neil:** NHS Inform provides a health information service which is able to respond to enquiries regarding transvaginal mesh surgery. They can be contacted online or by telephone.

The Scottish Government will write to NHS Inform following publication of the patient information booklet, currently being developed by the expert working group set up to address the issues affecting women who have undergone transvaginal mesh surgery.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many people (a) have participated in and (b) are expected to complete the NHS programme, Life Begins at 40; what evaluation it has made of it, and what feedback has been received from (i) GPs, (ii) patients and (iii) other programme users.

**(S4W-20991)**

**Alex Neil:** Between September 2011 and March 2013 a total of 10,902 new users accessed the Life Begins at 40 website.

An evaluation was carried out by Ipsos MORI between August 2011 and February 2012. This showed that only 8% of those invited to access the service chose to do so. Fewer than half (48%) of those who logged on between February and June 2011 completed each section of the online questionnaire.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much has been (a) allocated to and (b) spent by the NHS programme, Life Begins at 40, and where any unspent money will be reallocated.

**(S4W-20992)**

**Alex Neil:** The budget allocation to NHS 24 for the delivery of the Life Begins at 40 programme was £670,000 between October 2010 and December 2012.

In 2014-15, part of the budget has been allocated to redeveloping the website to provide a more accessible service targeted at working age people in collaboration with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives. This is expected to go live in 2015. Additional funding has been provided to programmes providing targeted support for people in communities with high levels of inequalities in health.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made on delivering the 2007 SNP manifesto commitment to introduce “health checks and individual health plans for all men and women when they reach the age of 40 with the aim to extend this initiative to Scots reaching retirement age.”

**(S4W-20993)**

**Alex Neil:** This Government believes in preventative action on health.

We are targeting scarce resources on those most at risk. We have introduced Anticipatory Care Plans through the GP contract and have launched the Links Worker pilot programme in selected Deep End Primary Care practices to support those with complex and multiple needs.

Work is being taken forward by NHS 24 and the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives to develop a web-based resource that will be targeted at people of working age providing advice on health and wellbeing as well as on returning to work from sickness absence.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has decided to discontinue the NHS programme, Life Begins at 40 and, if so, who made this decision; when it was taken, and for what reason.

**(S4W-20994)**

**Alex Neil:** The Life Begins at 40 programme was discontinued at the end of March 2013. The decision was taken by me in January 2013 on the basis of advice on the conclusions from the evaluation of the programme that showed low levels of uptake and completion, and no evidence of benefits to health.

The Life Begins at 40 website is included in a scoping exercise to develop a web-based resource for working age people that will provide a range of advice for employees, employers and GPs on health and wellbeing in the workplace and on managing and returning to work from sickness absence.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many excess winter deaths there were in each year from 2007-08 to 2013-14.

**(S4W-21012)**

**Alex Neil:** The seasonal increase in the mortality in the winter is the difference between the number of deaths in the four ‘winter’ months (December to March) and the average number of deaths in the preceding four months (August to November) and following four months (April to July).

Seasonal increase in mortality in the winter; 2006-07 to 2012-13:

	Seasonal increase in mortality (Dec to Mar)
2006-07	2,750
2007-08	2,180
2008-09	3,510
2009-10	2,760
2010-11	2,450
2011-12	1,420
2012-13	2,000

Source: GRO

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.  
2012-13 is provisional.

The seasonal increase in mortality has been calculated for every winter since 1951-52. The long-term trend over the last 60 years or so has clearly been downward and Scotland is in line with the EU average in terms of excess winter mortality.

The General Register Office for Scotland publish an annual report on winter mortality in Scotland. The 2012-13 report is available via the following link:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/stats/winter-mortality/2012-2013/winter-mortality-2012-13.pdf>

The 2013-14 report, which will include mortality in the winter 2013-14, will be published in autumn 2014.

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many people in the NHS Grampian area were screened for bowel cancer in (a) 2012 and (b) 2013.

**(S4W-21028)**

**Alex Neil:** The number of eligible people in the NHS Grampian area who have taken part in the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme in the latest three years available (up to 31 October 2012) is provided in the table. Data up to 31 October 2013 will be available when the annual bowel screening Key Performance Indicators Report is published at the end of August 2014.

The number of eligible people taking part in the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme, 2010-2012<sup>1</sup>:

NHS Grampian	2010	2011	2012
Males	23,249	25,449	20,937
Females	26,520	29,052	23,385
Total	49,769	54,501	44,322

<sup>1</sup>Only includes data up to 31 October 2012.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much each NHS board has spent on dermatology waiting list initiative clinics in the last two years.

**(S4W-21049)**

**Alex Neil:** Information on waiting list initiatives is not routinely collected nationally for any specialty, including dermatology patients.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's letter to the Public Audit Committee dated October 2013, *Managing early departures from the Scottish Public Sector*, what guidance it has issued to NHS boards regarding the use of compromise/settlement agreements and confidentiality clauses.

**(S4W-21073)**

**Alex Neil:** Since October, the Scottish Government has prepared and consulted on revised guidance on settlement agreements for public bodies, including health boards. This includes guidance on the use of confidentiality clauses. The guidance is currently being finalised and will be made available publicly when it is completed. Notwithstanding that, public bodies have been required, since 1 April 2014, to consult the Scottish Government on any proposal to enter into a settlement agreement.

I announced on 27 February 2014 that I expected there to be a presumption against the use of any confidentiality clauses in NHSScotland settlement agreements unless there are clear and transparent reasons for inclusion.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many compromise/settlement agreements it has been consulted on since the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's new procedures were set out in the *Scottish Public Finance Manual* in October 2013.

**(S4W-21074)**

**Alex Neil:** The Scottish Government has been consulted on one agreement since the requirement to consult was introduced on 1 April 2014.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many finalised settlement agreements it has been notified of since the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's new procedures were set out in the *Scottish Public Finance Manual* in October 2013 and what costs were involved.

**(S4W-21075)**

**Alex Neil:** The Scottish Government has been informed of no finalised settlement agreements since the requirement to consult was introduced on 1 April 2014. We have undertaken to report annually to Parliament on settlement agreements reached.

### **Learning and Justice**

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the attainment gap for deaf learners set out in the National Deaf Children's Society Scotland's report, *Close the Gap*, and whether it will commit to closing that gap.

**(S4W-20974)**

**Alasdair Allan:** The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people with additional support needs, including those who are deaf, are provided with the support they need to reach their full potential.

To support this commitment, the Scottish Government is involved in a number of measures and programmes, these include:

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended, which places a duty on education authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the additional support needs of all their pupils and to tailor provision according to their individual needs. The Act also provides parents with the right to be involved in decision making. To ensure this happens, the Act introduced a range of mechanisms for dealing with disagreements, including mediation and independent adjudication.

The Scottish Government has funded a number of organisations to ensure that parents get the help and support they need. These include Enquire and the Govan Law Centre's Education Law Unit. Also, under the Act, each education authority must have a named contact who will be responsible for providing information and advice on the local arrangements for children and young people with additional support needs.

The Scottish Government also funds the Scottish Sensory Centre to provide high-quality continuous professional learning and development to teachers of children and young people with sensory impairments, including those with hearing impairments.

Skills Development Scotland, along with the Deaf Children's Society and Donaldson's school, have developed *A Template for Success* for supporting young people with hearing impairments to move into positive and sustained destinations. All 32 Scottish local authorities have been encouraged to use *A Template for Success*.

We are seeking to raise attainment for every child and close the inequity gap through our key implementation programmes for children and young people - including the *Early Years Framework*, *Getting it right for every child*, Curriculum for Excellence and *Opportunities for All* - which set out what needs to be done to support a child's/young person's successful learning journey from early years, through school and post-16 learning - including university and college - and on into positive destinations. We are also working to ensure that teachers and school leaders have the right skills and experience in the right numbers to deliver improved outcomes for all children and young people, including those who are most disadvantaged. We have developed a range of integrated policies and programmes to help realise our ambition of making Scotland the best place to go to school.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to identify innovative solutions to further improve the educational system. We know the reasons for the attainment gap are complex and require partnership working over a range of related policy areas in order to make progress in this vital area.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what measures and programmes it (a) has supported in each year from 2007 and (b) supports that address the education difficulties experienced by deaf pupils.

**(S4W-20976)**

**Alasdair Allan:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-20974 on 19 May 2014. All answers to Written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how it will address the potential (a) 15% decrease in the number of teachers of deaf pupils and (b) 23% decrease in the number of qualified teachers of deaf pupils over the last two years.

**(S4W-20977)**

**Alasdair Allan:** The Scottish Government conducts an annual teacher workforce planning exercise, in consultation and discussion with all relevant stakeholders, to ensure that teacher supply and demand are kept broadly balanced at an all-Scotland level.

It is for local authorities to employ adequate numbers of teachers in the schools under their management, with the appropriate professional skills and knowledge necessary to enable those teachers to undertake the teaching duties allocated to them. In the case of teachers who are employed to wholly or mainly teach pupils with a hearing impairment, a visual impairment or both a hearing and visual impairment it is a requirement that they have an additional appropriate qualification to teach such pupils. Alternatively, it is acceptable that they are in the process of obtaining such a qualification providing they do so within five years.

The Scottish Government also funds the Scottish Sensory Centre, Scotland's main provider of specialist continuous professional learning and development training, and qualifications for teachers of pupils with sensory impairments, to:

Provide high quality continuous professional learning and development (CPLD) training. The Centre consults with all levels of professionals, including non-specialist mainstream teachers and teachers of the deaf, to identify the CPLD requirements needed to achieve the Scottish Government's outcomes for all children and young people; and

Extend its role in supporting specialist teachers to enhance their critical knowledge and understanding of issues relating to their work in supporting classroom teachers and the children and young people themselves.

It is for local authorities to ensure that their teachers of deaf pupils have or are in the process of obtaining appropriate qualifications.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it will take to review education provision for deaf learners to ensure that it is achieving the best possible outcomes.

**(S4W-20978)**

**Alasdair Allan:** In November 2010, Education Scotland published the *Review of the Additional Support for Learning Act: Adding Benefits for Learners* which noted that children with sensory impairments continue to have their additional support needs identified and addressed at an early stage through well-established partnership working between health and education and through the implementation of early intervention strategies.

As part of its core objectives, the Scottish Sensory Centre continues to inform the Scottish Government about the types of effective educational provision offered to children and young people

with hearing impairments in Scotland. These findings help to inform current and future Scottish Government policy development.

The Scottish Government will also meet with the National Deaf Children's Society to discuss the findings from their *Close the Gap* report, published on 30 April 2014.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how much it has spent in each year from 2007 on programmes that target or contribute to the reduction of the attainment gap between deaf children and children with no additional support requirements, also broken down by programme.

**(S4W-20980)**

**Alasdair Allan:**

2006-07	Scottish Sensory Centre – Core grant - £201,310
	Scottish Sensory Centre - British Sign Language glossary - £25,375
2007-08	Scottish Sensory Centre - £215,550
	Scottish Sensory Centre - Development of Early Support journal: <i>Developmental journal for babies and children with visual impairment</i> - £3,000
	Scottish Sensory Centre - in partnership with the National Deaf Children's Society to undertake a scoping study to record the current state of linguistic access for deaf pupils and students - £10,000
2008-09	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £219,861
2009-10	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £219,861
2010-11	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £200,074
2011-12	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £150,000
2012-13	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £150,000
2013-14	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £150,000
2014-15	Scottish Sensory Centre - Core grant - £150,000

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-16416 by Alasdair Allan on 31 July 2013, how the Autism Toolbox is being promoted (a) in schools and (b) to teachers.

**(S4W-21016)**

**Alasdair Allan:** The Autism Toolbox website was launched on 29 April 2014 at Grangemouth High School, by the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages. The delegates included teachers, educational support staff and pupils.

Scottish Autism has used part of its funding to produce the Autism Toolbox website to promote it in (a) schools and (b) to teachers, including:

Contacting all education authorities with the offer of awareness sessions about the Autism Toolbox website. Sessions have already taken place in nine authorities and have reached over 1,000 delegates, including teachers and educational support staff.

An awareness session about the website at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2013. There will be an information stand at this year's festival.

A learning community has been set up on Glow. A Glow meet about the Autism Toolbox website took place on 1 May 2014.

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-16416 by Alasdair Allan on 31 July 2013, whether it encourages education authorities to provide autism awareness training for teachers and educational support staff as part of their continuous professional development.

**(S4W-21017)**

**Michael Russell:** To help teachers and educational support staff meet the needs of pupils with autism, the Scottish Government funded Scottish Autism to produce the Autism Toolbox website. This

online national tool will encourage best practice for all education staff in schools to support pupils with autism. The Toolbox website will also provide a forum for continually updating and disseminating good practice.

In addition, Scottish Autism have contacted all education authorities with the offer of awareness sessions about the Autism Toolbox website. Sessions have already taken place in nine authorities and have reached over 1,000 delegates, including teachers and educational support staff.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many schools use portable cabins as classrooms, broken down by (a) school, (b) local authority and (c) number of classrooms.

**(S4W-21059)**

**Alasdair Allan:** The Scottish Government does not hold this level of information. The information is held by individual education authorities as it is their statutory responsibility to provide and maintain school buildings as outlined in Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

#### Transport Scotland

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what the cost is of David MacBrayne Limited's bid to operate ferry services between the Swedish mainland and Gotland, and whether permission to make the bid was granted at ministerial level.

**(S4W-20999)**

**Keith Brown:** The cost of bidding for this and any future contracts will be met from David MacBrayne Ltd's own reserves and any financial returns that may have accrued from these contracts would have been reinvested in the company. It is considered that these costs are commercially sensitive.

The bid had the full backing of Scottish Ministers.

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many road traffic collisions there were in (a) Aberdeen and (b) Aberdeenshire in (i) 2012 and (ii) 2013.

**(S4W-21024)**

**Keith Brown:** The following table shows the number of injury road traffic accidents in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The figures for 2013 are still being processed and those in the table are only for the period from January to September 2013. Provisional figures for the whole of 2013 will be published in Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland on 25 June 2014.

	Aberdeen City		Aberdeenshire	
	2012	2013*	2012	2013*
Fatal	7	4	16	14
Serious	94	72	170	96
Slight	284	186	350	252
All accidents	385	262	536	362

\* Figures for 2013 are provisional and cover January to September

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government how many (a) fatal and (b) serious road accidents involving heavy goods vehicles there were in North East Scotland in (i) 2012 and (ii) 2013.

**(S4W-21025)**

**Keith Brown:** The following table shows the number of fatal and serious road traffic accidents involving heavy goods vehicles in the legacy Grampian police force area. The figures for 2013 are still being processed and those in the table are only for the period from January to September 2013.

Provisional figures for the whole of 2013 will be published in Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland on 25 June 2014.

	2012	2013*
Fatal	5	2
Serious	14	11

\* Figures for 2013 are provisional and cover January to September

*The following questions received holding answers:*

S4W-20972

S4W-20973