

Wednesday 28 May 2014

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Enterprise and Environment

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government when it will publish further projections of the public finances of an independent Scotland.

(S4W-21353)

John Swinney: The Scottish Government has on 28 May 2014 published the report *Outlook for Scotland's Public Finances and the Opportunities of Independence*. The report expands the analysis of Scotland's public finances provided in *Scotland's Future* by demonstrating how they could evolve over a range of time periods and under different assumptions about the division of assets and liabilities held by the UK Government and wider public sector, and Scotland's economic performance. The report is available from:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/Publications/PSFOutlook>

The Scottish Government has also published on 28 May 2014 the latest Oil and Gas Analytical Bulletin which provides a detailed analysis of the outlook for the industry over the next five years. It is available from:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/Publications/oilandgas/May2014>

Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what mitigating measures the Scottish Environment Protection Agency is using to remove nonylphenols from rivers and the natural environment.

(S4W-21091)

Paul Wheelhouse: The Scottish Environment Protection Agency is currently consulting on possible measures for reducing the impacts of toxic substances such as nonylphenol on the water environment. The consultation suggests possible measures such as end-of-pipe treatment by sustainable urban drainage systems for surface water run-off, and wastewater treatment for contaminated trade effluents (though these are potentially costly measures). The consultation also highlights the option of control of imported products containing this substance. As this is a reserved area this would be a matter for the UK Government until such time as Scotland obtains the legislative powers to introduce such controls.

Governance and Communities

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what recent progress it has made on planning reform.

(S4O-3268)

Derek Mackay: I am driving forward a comprehensive package of measures to improve the planning service. This includes our work on National Planning Framework 3 and the revised Scottish Planning Policy, to be published in June 2014, and supporting authorities embed continual improvement activities.

A greater number of development plans are up to date and decision-making timescales for major applications are reducing. Through our consideration of the annual performance framework reports, it is clear that there is a wide range of on-going improvement activity being carried out.

John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support it is giving to high streets in the Scottish Borders to promote local employment and economic growth.

(S4O-3285)

John Swinney: We published the Town Centre Action Plan on 7 November 2013. The plan recognises that Scotland's town centres can be a central component of successful local economies. It

sets out the appropriate conditions for recovery and offers a range of actions which might be tailored to meet both local circumstances and the needs of local communities.

Local authorities remain responsible for local economic development. The action plan is not an end in itself and successful delivery will require positive engagement from the wider public, private and third sectors.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-15301 by Margaret Burgess on 7 June 2013, whether the review of the effectiveness of the home report system has been carried out and, if so, whether it will publish its findings.

(S4W-21089)

Margaret Burgess: The scheduled five year policy review of the Home Report began with a public consultation on 5 December 2013. This consultation, which formed the first stage of the review, closed on 27 February 2014. All responses have now been analysed and the report published on the Scottish Government website on 7 May 2014. The report can be found at the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/05/2311>

The second stage of the review will involve a research study, tenders for which are currently being evaluated and a research company will shortly be appointed to take this study forward. The review is due to be completed by the end of 2014.

Hugh Henry (Renfrewshire South) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many complaints buyers have made each year about the home report system.

(S4W-21090)

Margaret Burgess: These figures are not held centrally by the Scottish Government.

Local authorities' trading standards departments are responsible for enforcing the Home Report legislation. In addition a buyer or seller may make a complaint about the content of a Home Report through the chartered surveyor firm's complaints procedure and/or to the independent ombudsman service, Ombudsman Services: Property.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it has made in relation to the business rates incentivisation scheme.

(S4W-21218)

John Swinney: The Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme (BRIS) was introduced from 1 April 2012 to incentivise councils to maximise their existing business rates income and growing their tax base by providing councils with the potential to retain 50 per cent of any increase in business rates income over and above agreed targets for 2012-13 and future years.

The jointly agreed BRIS guidance sets out clearly that either central or local government can request a change in the annual BRIS targets in the event of a material change in the predicted non-domestic rates income. The 2012-13 mid-year returns from local authorities identified that the loss from revaluation appeals was likely to be significantly lower than predicted and also indicated an increased cost of mandatory rates relief. The Scottish Government considered the net increase in income from these factors as very significant and proposed a revision to the 2012-13 BRIS targets. Without changing the targets councils would have stood to gain a significant windfall without either collecting or attracting new business rates income.

COSLA leaders took the decision in May 2013 that they did not want to consider the review of the 2012-13 BRIS targets until the final non-domestic rates audited figures for 2012-13 became available in March 2014. I made it clear at that time that until the 2012-13 targets had been agreed I would not be publishing any future years' targets.

COSLA leaders reconsidered their position at their 25 April 2014 meeting, following receipt of the audited returns, but did not consider that a significant event had occurred and as a result they were unable to agree the revised 2012-13 targets.

I have agreed to meet with COSLA President Councillor David O'Neill to discuss a possible joint review of the Scheme and the arrangements for taking that forward. This meeting has been arranged for 4 June 2014 and the outcome will help inform what action is required in relation to the 2012-13 targets, including any payments to councils, and a review of the future of BRIS to ensure lessons are learnt from the first year of operation.

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to make payments for 2012-13 under the business rates incentivisation scheme.

(S4W-21219)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21218 on 28 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>

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to set targets for 2013-14 under the business rates incentivisation scheme.

(S4W-21220)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21218 on 28 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>

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it decided not to set targets for the 2013-14 business rates incentivisation scheme during 2013-14.

(S4W-21221)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21218 on 28 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>

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the main (a) successes and (b) failures have been of the business rates incentivisation scheme.

(S4W-21222)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21218 on 28 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>

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to set targets for the 2014-15 business rates incentivisation scheme.

(S4W-21223)

John Swinney: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21218 on 28 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>

Health and Social Care

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to suspend the use of transvaginal mesh implants.

(S4W-21077)

Alex Neil: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-20950 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>

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will reclassify transvaginal mesh implants to heightened risk status.

(S4W-21078)

Alex Neil: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-20950 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>

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to suspend the use of transvaginal mesh implants to treat stress urinary incontinence.

(S4W-21079)

Alex Neil: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-20950 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>

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it is monitoring legal cases in the USA and elsewhere about the use of transvaginal mesh implants.

(S4W-21080)

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government is aware of legal cases in the USA regarding the use of transvaginal mesh implants.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to suspend the use of all transvaginal mesh implants until further research into the safety and efficacy of these procedures is carried out.

(S4W-21081)

Alex Neil: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-20950 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>

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government as the current Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework is due to expire in 2015, when it will update or renew the framework and whether it will continue its focus on hepatitis C.

(S4W-21125)

Michael Matheson: The Scottish Government is working with NHS boards, local authorities, third sector partners and other key stakeholders to produce an updated Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework to be published in 2015 once the existing framework period comes to an end.

The refreshed framework will continue to incorporate sexual health, HIV and viral hepatitis and will maintain the focus on the five high level outcomes contained within the current framework.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what is being done to ensure that people with the hepatitis C virus continue to be treated.

(S4W-21127)

Michael Matheson: As a result of the Hepatitis C Action Plan and, subsequently, the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework the numbers of people being initiated onto treatment for hepatitis C in Scotland has increased significantly in recent years. A total of 1,052 individuals were newly initiated onto treatment in 2012-13. This compares with only 468 treatment initiations in 2007-08.

The diagnoses and treatment of hepatitis C infections continues to be a priority for the Scottish Government, as reflected in the high level priorities within the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what efforts are being made to ensure that new treatments are made available to patients with the hepatitis C virus.

(S4W-21128)

Michael Matheson: The National Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Advisory Committee, which is chaired by myself, has established a subgroup to look at hepatitis C treatment and therapies in light of the rapidly developing treatment landscape. The subgroup, which is chaired by Professor David Goldberg from Health Protection Scotland, will report back to the National Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Advisory Committee at the end of 2014. The group will set out principles and priorities for the use of Government funding under the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework in relation to hepatitis C therapies.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to help support the development of new hepatitis C treatments.

(S4W-21129)

Michael Matheson: The Scottish Government is supportive of the development of new treatments for a wide range of health conditions. The Chief Scientist Office (CSO) funds high quality research, including clinical trials, of relevance to the health and well-being of the people of Scotland.

The Scottish Government is currently funding the ViaDUCT study researching whether vitamin D supplementation can improve hepatitis C cure rates. The CSO welcomes any new research proposals linked to the development of novel treatments for hepatitis C. These would be evaluated according to standard peer-review processes.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4T-00695 by Michael Matheson on 13 May 2014 (Official Report, c.30814), when the working group was established; what its membership is, and who selected the members.

(S4W-21134)

Alex Neil: The Scottish Government established the short life working group in December 2013. Membership of the short life working group includes:

Four Scottish Government staff, three clinical staff and one providing secretariat support;

Two patient representatives;

Five NHS clinical and research staff;

One NHS healthcare planner (member selected by NHSScotland); and

Two other patient representatives who have been consulted separately regarding the patient information and consent leaflet (selected by the clinical staff on the Group).

Except where noted, members were selected by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Frances Elliot.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4T-00695 by Michael Matheson on 13 May 2014 (Official Report, c.30814), what funding (a) has been and (b) will be made available for the removal of surgical mesh implants for the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse.

(S4W-21135)

Alex Neil: There has been no specific funding made available to NHS boards to fund the removal of surgical mesh implants for the treatment of pelvic organ prolapse. It is for individual boards to carry out this type of surgery from within existing budgets.

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what improvements it has made in tackling health inequalities since 2007.

(S4W-21152)

Michael Matheson: The Government has brought a clear focus on health inequalities signalled by the publication in 2008 of *Equally Well*, the report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities and the subsequent reviews in 2010 and 2014 which are enhanced by the publication of annual indicators.

Together with the *Early Years Framework* and our poverty strategy *Achieving Our Potential* we have provided strategic direction and a clear set of principles to address the underlying causes of Scotland's health and other inequalities.

To maintain a focus on reducing health inequalities last year we made it one of six areas for action set out in the Single Outcome Agreements with Community Planning Partnerships and to drive delivery we have agreed that the Health and Community Care Delivery Group will consider how best to implement that change.

However our work is at a disadvantage as we lack the ability to use the full range of levers to promote good health and grow Scotland's economy for the benefit of all.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how much has been allocated each year to the Person-Centred Health and Care Collaborative.

(S4W-21157)

Alex Neil: £289,809 was allocated to Healthcare Improvement Scotland to implement the Collaborative in 2012-13, with £175,000 allocated by the Scottish Government and £114,809 by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

£518,082 was allocated to Healthcare Improvement Scotland to implement the Collaborative in 2013-14, with £482,843 allocated by the Scottish Government and £35,239 by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

The allocation to Healthcare Improvement Scotland for 2014-15 has yet to be agreed, but is likely to be similar to the 2013-14 allocation.

Further allocations have been made to NHS boards to support their participation in the person-centred portfolio, including the Person-Centred Health and Care Collaborative. Allocations have also been made to NHS Education for Scotland for a national training and workforce development plan to support the portfolio, and to the Health and Social Care Alliance for the People Powered Health and Wellbeing programme, which brings third sector expertise to the implementation of the Collaborative.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the aims are of the Person-Centred Health and Care Collaborative and how its success will be measured.

(S4W-21158)

Alex Neil: The aims of the Person-Centred Health and Care Collaborative are as follows:

Raise the profile of person-centred approaches to care across Scotland including staff health and wellbeing.

Develop and test a range of evidence-based interventions and approaches designed to improve person-centred care.

Focus on what can be done now to improve services.

Provide reliable opportunities to personalise support for every person all of the time.

Encourage sharing of ideas and approaches between people who use services and people who provide them.

Promote the use of approaches for obtaining feedback from people who use services.

Use feedback from people who use services to drive improvement.

Provide a framework to measure improvement.

Participating staff from across NHS Scotland will be able to demonstrate how they have introduced new approaches to health and care and how they are using feedback from people to identify and implement improvements to care. The Scottish Care Experience Survey Programme will also be a measure of change and improvement.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-20958 by Michael Matheson on 12 May 2014, whether any plans were available from April 2014.

(S4W-21174)

Michael Matheson: All NHS boards are required to include chronic pain in their Local Delivery Plans for 2014-15 and should ensure that these are published on their local websites by the end of June 2014. The NHSScotland 2020 Local Delivery Plan guidance is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/4395>

As advised in my response to the earlier question (S4W-20958) to which the member refers, the local chronic pain Service Improvement Groups/Managed Clinical Networks have also made a commitment to publish plans on their relevant page of the national chronic pain website.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-20958 by Michael Matheson on 12 May 2014, whether it considers the requirement for a member's login to be a barrier to public and patient access.

(S4W-21175)

Michael Matheson: The only incidence where a member login is required is for those who have permission to update the website, which is otherwise fully accessible to all.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government which of its directorates contribute to the answers by the Minister for Public Health to parliamentary questions on chronic pain.

(S4W-21176)

Michael Matheson: Dependent on the issues raised as parliamentary questions arise, the policy directorate(s) contribution is determined on a case by case basis.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the finding in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland report, *Chronic Pain Services in Scotland: Where are we now?*, that shortages in staffing complements in chronic pain clinics are not caused by vacancies but by understaffing and under resourcing by NHS boards.

(S4W-21177)

Michael Matheson: The Scottish Service Model for Chronic Pain recommends a multidisciplinary approach to the delivery of care and treatment for people with chronic pain. As part of the data collection exercise carried out by Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), boards were asked to provide information on current staffing in line with the specialities recommended within the model. The findings of the HIS report, *Chronic Pain Services in Scotland: Where are we now?* note that in some board areas not all of the recommended specialities were provided within a dedicated pain team.

While the Scottish Government provides the policies, frameworks and resources for high quality healthcare in Scotland, it is for each NHS board to decide how best to deliver those services to meet the needs of the population. This includes how best to utilise funding and staff, taking account of national and local priorities to meet local health needs.

It is essential that clear care pathways are in place to ensure that people with chronic pain receive all elements of the care they need.

All NHS boards are required to include chronic pain improvement within their Local Delivery Plans for 2014. Progress will be monitored by the Scottish Government through the Annual Review process. The HIS report provides a benchmark from which boards can measure improvement and boards should take cognisance of the findings and its recommendations in the planning and delivery of services for people living with chronic pain.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-20957 by Michael Matheson on 12 May 2014, whether all NHS boards have submitted plans to deal with the staff and resource shortages, beyond vacancies, in chronic pain clinics as identified in the Healthcare Improvement Scotland report, *Chronic Pain Services in Scotland: Where are we now?*.

(S4W-21178)

Michael Matheson: I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-21177 on 28 May 2014 which sets out the Scottish Government position on staffing for chronic pain services. 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>

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, broken down by NHS board.

(S4W-21179)

Michael Matheson: There is no national or NHS board data gathered on the number of people with alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

Information has been gathered by National Services Scotland through the Practice Team Information programme which can provide estimates of the conditions recorded as the focus of a GP consultation. However, estimates from this programme for conditions where incident rates are known to be small are considered to be unreliable and are therefore not published.

Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the findings of recent research carried out by YouGov and Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center regarding the prevalence and rate of use of e-cigarettes, whether it will consider commissioning research into their effects.

(S4W-21184)

Michael Matheson: There are currently no plans for the Scottish Government to commission its own research into the effects of e-cigarettes.

However, the Scottish Government will consider the publicly available evidence which underpinned the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency report, *The Regulation of Nicotine Containing Products*

(<http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/groups/comms-ic/documents/websiteresources/con286834.pdf>),

the Tobacco Products Directive

(http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/products/revision/index_en.htm)

and any emerging evidence in considering future policy on e-cigarettes.

Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to update its (a) advice and (b) guidelines on the use of e-cigarettes in its buildings.

(S4W-21185)

Michael Matheson: There are no plans to update existing guidance material.

While electronic cigarettes are not covered by the ban on smoking within enclosed spaces, individual organisations may still put in place policies to restrict their use.

It is the decision of the Scottish Government that our workforce smoking policy also applies to electronic cigarettes. This means the use of electronic cigarettes is not permitted within Scottish Government buildings.

Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on the terms of reference for the (a) Project Liaison Committee and (b) Performance Review Committee referenced in the Key Terms of the project agreement for the new Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, dated 20 August 1998.

(S4W-21192)

Alex Neil: The functions of the Project Liaison Committee are:

- a) to provide a means for the joint review of all aspects of the performance of the agreement
- b) to provide a forum for joint strategic discussion considering actual and anticipated changes in the market and business of the board and the University, and possible variations of the agreement to reflect those changes or for the more efficient performance of this agreement.

The functions of the Performance Review Committee are:

- a) to provide a means for the joint review of issues relating to all day to day aspects of the performance of the agreement
- b) to discuss and seek to agree the service performance score for each of the services pursuant to the performance monitoring procedures
- c) to review plans for programmed maintenance in the contract months following each meeting
- d) to agree in advance of each contract year the schedule of small works rates for that contract year
- e) to agree in advance of each contract year a schedule of rates and prices for any ad hoc parts of the services for which the service company is entitled to charge the board in terms of the relative service requirements
- d) to discuss and seek to agree the information contained in pro forma payment certificates as contemplated pursuant to clause 23.5(e) of the contract.

These functions are set out in the project agreement, which is available on NHS Lothian's website, at:

<http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/OurOrganisation/KeyDocuments/Pages/RIE-PFI-Agreements.aspx>

Documentation related to these committees, such as agendas and minutes, is held by NHS Lothian.

The management and monitoring of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh private finance initiative contracts is the responsibility of NHS Lothian. Scottish Government officials meet regularly with representatives of NHS Lothian to discuss capital planning, property, asset management and performance issues. Any significant issues relating to the contract are raised by this route.

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people in the NHS Grampian area were (a) diagnosed with and (b) discharged from hospital after treatment for malnutrition in 2013.

(S4W-21211)

Alex Neil: (a) The term ‘malnutrition’ can be used to mean a range of different conditions. The definition used here comprises a specific group of diagnoses which would be used to identify cases of protein/energy malnutrition (ICD-10 codes E40-E46 only). Therefore, the information presented is not comparable with figures which have been previously provided in relation to the number of patients discharged from hospital following a diagnosis of malnutrition, broadly defined.

The recording of a malnutrition diagnosis for these patients indicates that malnutrition was part of the reason for hospital admission and was diagnosed at some point before or during the hospital episode. Information is not available on whether the condition was fully resolved by the time the patient was discharged.

The provisional number of patients that were discharged from hospitals in the NHS Grampian area following a diagnosis of malnutrition in 2013 is shown in the following table:

Number of patients diagnosed with malnutrition in NHS Grampian	
Year	Count
2013 ^p	29

Source: SMR01

p – provisional. Data submissions for NHS Grampian are over 95% complete to December 2013. The figures provided above have been marked provisional until all patient records held on Grampian’s new IT Patient Management System have been fully updated.

Date: May 2014

(b) Data on procedures and treatments specific to malnutrition are not centrally held. There are no procedures or treatment explicitly used for malnutrition therefore these cases cannot be identified.

Transport Scotland

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the suggestion in the report, *Gourock-Dunoon Ferry Service: Feasibility Study of a Future Passenger and Vehicle Service with the Vehicle Portion being non-Subsidised*, that vessels on the service should be at least 40 metres long in order to provide optimum weather reliability.

(S4W-21097)

Keith Brown: The terms of reference for the report commissioned by the Scottish Government stated that: “the revenue and costs assumed for vehicle carrying should be for vessels optimal for the route in terms of design, manning levels, speed and vehicle and passenger capacity”.

The report states (paragraph 4.1.3) that: “this [vessel] specification required for the study needs to be proportionate to the task, i.e. we are not designing vessels but attempting to establish outline specifications and associated broad and typical costs”.

The outline specifications, including the proposed vessel dimensions, provided in the report provide a useful starting point for the development of detailed specifications for reliable vessels for the Gourock-Dunoon town centre service.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether vessels on the Gourock-Dunoon ferry route must carry vehicles in order to be considered economically viable.

(S4W-21098)

Keith Brown: The Gourock-Dunoon vehicle ferry feasibility study published in July 2013 found that a vehicle carrying service could be commercially viable if it received the same level of passenger subsidy as that estimated to be required for the provision of a passenger-only service using optimal vessels to deliver a high level of reliability.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government on what date the Dunoon harbour breakwater and linkspan became operational; how much it cost to develop, and whether it has been used for the transport of vehicles.

(S4W-21100)

Keith Brown: The contract for the Dunoon harbour breakwater and linkspan was completed on 24 March 2005 and these facilities were commissioned directly after that date.

The contract value was approximately £5.4 million.

Dunoon linkspan has never been used for the transport of vehicles.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether Transport Scotland will put out a tender for the contract for the new roll-on/roll-off vessels on the Gourock-Dunoon ferry route; whether the vessels will be expected to meet the specifications set out in the report, *Gourock-Dunoon Ferry Service: Feasibility Study of a Future Passenger and Vehicle Service with the Vehicle Portion being non-Subsidised*; how much the vessels will cost, and what its position is on whether they should be rented at full-market value in order to ensure that they do not breach EU rules.

(S4W-21102)

Keith Brown: The Scottish Government's working assumption is that new build vessels are likely to be required for the route. Decisions on whether these vessels will be procured by the operator of the next competitively tendered contract, or by the Scottish Government through Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd, have yet to be taken. Either way, vessels will have to meet specifications set out to deliver the policy objective of "a safe, reliable, frequent, commuter ferry service... able to operate reliably throughout the year in the weather and sea conditions experienced on the Firth of Clyde". The outline specifications provided in the Gourock-Dunoon feasibility study report provide a useful starting point for the development of detailed specifications for reliable vessels.

It is too soon to say how much vessels will cost although the report of the Gourock-Dunoon feasibility study estimated £3 million per vessel for passenger-only ferries and £6 million per vessel for vehicle-passenger ships.

The observation of all applicable EU rules will be an important consideration when developing long-term solutions for the Gourock-Dunoon ferry service.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the annual public subsidy will be for vessels on the Gourock-Dunoon ferry route, and whether this will be offset by the enhanced berthing costs being paid to the bodies responsible for the respective harbours.

(S4W-21105)

Keith Brown: A subsidy will be provided for the provision of the contracted ferry service rather than for vessels. Vessel costs and harbour costs (berthing dues and pier dues) will form part of the overall operating costs. Each bidder for the ferry service contract will need to make their own forecast of the costs and revenues and their subsequent grant requirement.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether ferry services for vehicle crossings on the Cowal peninsula-Inverclyde route is operated by a

private monopoly; what the operator's gross profit margin is, and what its position is on the appropriateness of the size of the margin.

(S4W-21106)

Keith Brown: The carriage of vehicles between the Cowal peninsula and Inverclyde is currently provided by a private company, Western Ferries, who operate services between terminals a short driving distance from the town centres of Gourock and Dunoon. Cowal is also connected by road although it is widely recognised that the ferry crossing is a more attractive option for many journeys.

Western Ferries' annual accounts are publicly available from Companies House (www.companieshouse.gov.uk).

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to introduce a ferry regulator; whether the regulator would have the power to control ticket prices, and what impact a passenger-only service on Dunoon-Gourock route would have on these plans.

(S4W-21107)

Keith Brown: As noted in the *Ferries Plan*, published in December 2012, we have no plans to establish an independent ferry regulator.

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on progress with the development of plans for the rail system.

(S4W-21330)

Keith Brown: I can confirm that after rigorous evaluation it is the intent to award the Caledonian Sleeper franchise to Serco Caledonian Sleepers Limited. The London Stock Exchange was notified by the successful bidder prior to markets opening on 28 May 2014. The franchise will be of 15 years duration and will commence on 1 April 2015.

The following questions received holding answers:

S4W-21113

S4W-21114

S4W-21115

S4W-21116

S4W-21117

S4W-21118

S4W-21119