

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

Monday 04 May 2020

Written questions lodged on 4 May 2020 can be found on page 24 of this document.

There were no oral questions asked on 4 May.

ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (Received on 4 May)

Government initiated questions

George Adam (Paisley) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will set out its strategy for the introduction of Test, Trace, Isolate in Scotland.

(S5W-28832)

Jeane Freeman: *COVID-19: A Framework for Decision Making* set out the approach and principles that will guide us as we make decisions about transitioning out of the current lockdown arrangements. One of the range of public health measures we will deploy in order to ensure low levels of community transmission is the “Test, Trace, Isolate, Support” approach.

The Scottish Government today published a paper titled *Test, Trace, Isolate, Support - a Public Health approach to maintaining low levels*. The paper sets out the Government’s approach and the extensive work that is now underway to prepare for its implementation. This paper can be accessed here:

www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839607271

The framework and paper describes the steps we are taking, and the steps we are asking the public to take, to return as much normality to daily life.

Ministerial portfolio: Economy, Fair Work and Culture

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much it has allocated to Creative Scotland in relation to COVID-19 financial support.

(S5W-28429)

Fiona Hyslop: As of 21 April the Scottish Government has allocated £1.1 million of repurposed grant in aid and a further £1 million to Creative Scotland in financial support relating to COVID-19.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much Creative Scotland has allocated

to the (a) Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund and (b) Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund to support practitioners impacted by COVID-19.

(S5W-28430)

Fiona Hyslop: (a) Creative Scotland allocated £4 million to the Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary (Arts and Creative) Fund.

(b) Creative Scotland has allocated £1.5m to the Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund to support practitioners impacted by COVID-19.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government who has been awarded funding from the (a) Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund and (b) Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund, broken down by how much each was awarded.

(S5W-28431)

Fiona Hyslop: As set out in the guidance supporting (a) the Creative Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund and (b) the Screen Scotland Bridging Bursary Fund, awards from these funds will be published as part of Creative Scotland's monthly listings, published every month, one month in arrears, on their website at the following link: <https://www.creativescotland.com/funding/latest-information/awards-listings>.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what action it has been taking to tackle scams since the announcement in the 2019 Programme for Government of a scams prevention strategy; whether it is on track to publish this strategy before September 2020, and what estimate it has made of the scale in any increase of scams during the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28666)

Jamie Hepburn: The Scottish Government recognises that fraudulent activities such as scams can have significant, and long term effects on consumers, especially those whose circumstances mean they are more vulnerable. Tackling this criminal behaviour cannot be achieved through enforcement practices alone. That is why we remain committed to introducing a more coordinated, longer term strategic approach to scams prevention, which emphasises the importance of education and awareness raising alongside direct intervention.

At the heart of this is collaboration. That is why we have created a Scams Partnership Working Group, which brings together a diverse range of key stakeholders with relevant knowledge and expertise. The group has met four times since October 2019 – these discussions have informed our evidence base, and enabled us to gather good practice examples from across different organisations that will help shape next steps in the strategy's development. Due to the current pandemic we have had to postpone further meetings, but continue to keep all partners informed and up to date on key response activities.

Our immediate priority at this time is to ensure that consumers – especially the most vulnerable – have access to the right information and support to identify, avoid and

mitigate impacts of Covid-19 related scams activities. We know there are individuals who are looking to take advantage of the current situation to profit through illicit activities – Police Scotland has recently reported a 10% increase in fraud levels.

We are working across enforcement, resilience, cyber and consumer advice organisations to monitor the situation and proactively respond. This includes providing emergency funding to some third sector organisations – such as Citizens Advice Scotland and Advice Direct Scotland – in order to enable them to continue to provide quality, tailored advice. We are also continuing to fund partners – including Crimestoppers Scotland, Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, Trading Standards Scotland and Police Scotland – to deliver key initiatives ranging from national doorstep campaigns to nuisance calls prevention and improved cyber protection capabilities.

Covid-19 has created new challenges in terms of protecting people living in Scotland against fraudulent activities such as scams. We will share learnings from this experience in order to strengthen Scotland’s collective approach to scams prevention; and will fulfil our commitment to deliver a Scams Prevention Strategy at the earliest opportunity when it is safe and practical to do so.

Ministerial portfolio: Education and Skills

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the University and College Union’s sixpoint set of proposals for supporting further and higher education institutions through the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28477)

Richard Lochhead: The Scottish Government’s response to each of the University and College Union's points is as follows:

Work around the financial impact of COVID-19 is being progressed as a priority and we are working with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to build as full an understanding as possible of the scale of the risk facing the further and higher education sector.

The Deputy First Minister has highlighted that the Scottish Government will do everything possible to ensure Scotland’s institutions remain world leaders and key drivers of the economy in the wake of the disruption around COVID-19. We have also committed that whatever Barnett consequential comes to Scotland through funding announcements for particular sectors due to the impacts of Covid 19, will be passed on in full.

Ministers will also continue to ask the UK Government to recognise the scale of the impact of Covid-19 on the higher education sector, and for HM Treasury to ensure appropriate fiscal support is made available.

Requiring institutions to work cooperatively and cross-sectorally to protect the interests of students and local communities:

I have established the Further and Higher Education Covid-19 Ministerial Leadership Group to provide collective leadership to the FE and HE sectors' responses, highlight and communicate action underway, agree and progress priority areas, and discuss longer-term impacts and recovery planning. This group is comprised of representatives from Scottish Government, its agencies, sector representatives from community learning, colleges, universities and unions, including the UCU.

The Group provides a forum for a collective view to be taken on both challenges and solutions, and allows us to take a collaborative approach to planning for the future of tertiary education in Scotland following this crisis.

Ensure access to properly resourced lifelong learning which ensures people of all ages can access the learning they need:

The Scottish Government is supporting the Community Learning and Development (CLD) sector - youth, adult learning and community development workers - to continue providing services and offer support to learners most affected by the pandemic.

To support people who have been furloughed or made redundant as a result of Covid-19 and are seeking to develop new and existing skills, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Open University have designed and established a new My World of Work portal, linked to a coordinated programme of open learning materials, which launched on Monday 27 April: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/find-free-online-courses>. This site will join up with the Welsh and UK Government sites and its material will be further developed with learning providers over the coming weeks.

Ensuring that staff working for outsourced companies providing services to higher education institutions receive the same protections as directly employed staff:

Central to our Fair Work approach is the expectation that employers should work to ensure workers are treated fairly and that concerns from employees are taken seriously. However, universities have autonomy on all staffing issues. Furthermore the bulk of employment law is reserved to Westminster and therefore cannot be changed by Scottish Ministers.

Protecting educational capacity by confirming that furlough arrangements will apply to all staff currently employed by universities, including those on insecure contracts:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is reserved to Westminster and operated by HMRC on behalf of HM Treasury. The Scottish Government has welcomed the scheme, as it potentially helps to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and we encourage institutions to give full consideration to making an application to the CJRS. However, it is for each university to determine whether to apply and the nature of its own application.

Lobbying the UK government to extend the one-year visa extension scheme being offered to NHS staff to all current visa holders:

The Scottish Government recognises the crucial importance of non-UK citizens to Scotland's economy and society.

On 24 March the Home Office announced updated guidance for visa holders both in the UK and abroad, in light of Covid 19 circumstances. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>. The Scottish Government is continuing to engage with the Home Office and the devolved administrations regarding a range of migration issues, including extending leave to remain to all migrants, regardless of their immigration status.

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what additional financial support it is putting in place during the COVID-19 outbreak for Scotland-domiciled students studying at universities in England, including the University of Cumbria.

(S5W-28741)

Richard Lochhead: As announced on 8 April 2020, we have introduced a £5 million package of emergency financial support to help students facing hardship as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. This £5 million includes an additional £2.2 million for Scotland's Higher Education (HE) Discretionary Funds specifically to address COVID-19 related hardships, which has been made available to colleges and universities immediately.

University and college students are able to apply for any emergency discretionary payments directly to their own institutions. This support is also available to students from the rest of the UK (rUK) currently studying at Scottish institutions.

The UK Government have confirmed that they are working with the Office for Students, the regulator in England, to help English higher education providers reallocate funding towards their hardship funds for all students in need of additional support.

It may also be helpful to note that the University of Cumbria's hardship fund for students who are experiencing financial difficulty is available to all UK students. I have included a link to the relevant page of their website below:
<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/support-funds/>

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to reported concerns that the letter sent to people who it advised should be shielded during the COVID-19 outbreak was too lengthy and complex.

(S5W-28368)

John Swinney: The letter issued by the Chief Medical Officer to those who are recommended to shield contains important information advising how people in this group should keep themselves safe, what support is available to them, a range of

references to sources of further information or help, and information about key issues which are likely to arise. It is essential that those being asked to shield have this information available to them in order to keep themselves safe.

Advice is also available through each local authority's shielding helpline, or through the new national helpline.

The information contained in the letter is broadly the same as letters issued by the other Chief Medical Officers across the UK in relation to shielding.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many people (a) it has centrally-identified and (b) have been identified by clinicians (i) before and (ii) on or since 10 April 2020 as requiring shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak; how many it has written to regarding this; what the reasons are for any delays in making this contact, and by what date it expects all will have been contacted.

(S5W-28370)

John Swinney: Public Health Scotland identified 105,277 people from central sources before 10 April. As of 24 April, it has identified a further 6,301 people on or since 10 April.

37,838 people were identified from non-central sources before 10 April. As of 24 April a further 9,710 have been identified on or since 10 April. It is not possible to categorise people as being identified specifically by clinicians.

As of 24 April 159,126 people have been written to. People are written to on an ongoing basis as they are identified. 132,379 were written to before 10 April, and as of 24 April a further 26,747 have been written to on or since 10 April.

This process will continue - if people are newly diagnosed, or if clinicians feel it is required, people will continue to be added to the central list to ensure they can be supported to shield.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how regularly it is updating (a) local authorities, (b) GPs and (c) NHS boards regarding people in their area being added to the list of those requiring shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak, and how many updates have been issued so far.

(S5W-28373)

John Swinney: Local Authorities and NHS Boards receive an update of people on the shielding list in their area weekly. As of 24 April four extracts have been sent to each of these organisations.

GPs receive an update of people on the shielding list in their area approximately weekly. The updates will be received at different points depending on what software GPs use. As of 24 April four extracts have been sent to GPs.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what types of support and assistance local resilience partnerships offer to people shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak; whether the partnerships provide contact details, and how regularly it communicates with each partnership.

(S5W-28374)

John Swinney: The Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs) bring together a range of strategic local partners and, working with local community groups, provide support to people who are shielding including organising food deliveries, for example for people who do not have mobile phones, as well as assistance with prescription medication deliveries.

Any contact to LRPs in respect of shielding should be made through the relevant Local Authority. The Scottish Government and Local Authorities communicate on shielding on a daily basis.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many people shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak registered with its text-messaging service (a) before and (b) on or after 10 April 2020; what support the service offers, and for what reason this service is not being made automatically available.

(S5W-28375)

John Swinney: By 24 April 2020, 76,888 people had registered with the SMS shielding service. Of these, 27,000 people registered before 10 April, and 49,888 people registered on or after 10 April.

The SMS shielding service offers information and support to people who have been advised to shield because they are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- People who sign up to the SMS service can use it to request free weekly boxes of basic groceries, if they don't have another way of getting food and household items.
- The SMS service asks people if they would like their details to be passed to the supermarkets, so that they can access priority delivery slots.
- The SMS service signposts people to their local authority if they need prescription medications delivered.

All of these services are available to anyone in the shielding group who needs them, including people who do not have access to a mobile phone. The services can all be accessed through each local authority's shielding helpline, or through the new national helpline.

Many people who are shielding will not require access to these services as they will have existing support networks they can use to access food and medicine.

People who are shielding are encouraged to register for the SMS service so that they can be contacted with further updates as the situation around COVID-19 develops.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether any problems have been reported since 10 April 2020 with its text-messaging service for people shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak and, if so, what information it has regarding how many people were unable to register with the service because of this, and what action it has taken to inform these people that it is now operational.

(S5W-28376)

John Swinney: There have been two interruptions to the service. On both 11 April and 21 April the SMS service was unable to send outgoing messages for a period of time. However, all inbound messages were received.

In each case people will have experienced a delay between sending their message to register and receiving a response from the SMS service confirming their registration, but no one will have been unable to register as a consequence.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what each local authority's telephone number is for people shielding from the COVID-19 outbreak to contact them; how many staff each council is employing to deal with these calls, and what information it has regarding waiting times to speak to someone.

(S5W-28377)

John Swinney: The local authority telephone numbers for people seeking support with shielding can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding/pages/contacts/>

The Scottish Government does not hold information on either the numbers of staff taking calls or the waiting times across local authority areas.

Ministerial portfolio: Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what action it will take to reduce the reportedly increased number of people roaming through livestock farms during the COVID-19 outbreak, and whether it will consider temporarily revoking the right to roam, particularly during lambing season.

Holding answer issued: 01 May 2020

(S5W-28236)

Roseanna Cunningham: A holding answer was provided.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak are for public rights of access to farmland.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28248)

Roseanna Cunningham: A holding answer was provided.

Ministerial portfolio: Health and Sport

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the potential impact on the sector of the outbreak of COVID-19, whether it will carry out an immediate independent review of social care.

(S5W-27947)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government has made additional funding available to local authorities to increase the capacity of social care support and ensure fair working conditions for our key workers. A range of actions have been taken to focus our collective response to this pandemic.

Scottish Government launched a reform of adult social care in June 2019 with a range of local and national partners. We remain absolutely committed to reform, and learning from the COVID-19 emergency will help to inform and progress many of the reform objectives. You may also be aware that the Health and Sport Committee were due to hold an inquiry into adult social care in Scotland. They have paused this in light of the crisis, but I understand their intention to hold this inquiry remains.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to increase the number of hospital beds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-27961)

Jeane Freeman: I refer the member to the answer to S5W-27963 on 15 April 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>.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will ensure that the list of aerosol generating

procedures requiring full personal protection equipment (PPE) in healthcare settings that is contained in existing guidance in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is not treated as an exclusive list, so that procedures carried out by respiratory physiotherapists and other allied health professionals are also covered and that all staff are provided with the appropriate protective equipment.

(S5W-28222)

Jeane Freeman: The Scottish Government takes the health and safety of all our staff very seriously. The guidance published by the Department of Health and Social Care, Health Protection Scotland (HPS), Public Health Wales, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England on 2 April 2020 is the official and fully comprehensive guidance on the matter of the use of PPE in the context of COVID19.

The guidance includes clarification that - professionals can use their judgement to assess their risk based on what task they are undertaking and where it is taking place, this includes aerosol generating procedures.

The guidance can be found at: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/#guidelines>.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish the scientific advice that it is using to inform its current testing strategy for COVID-19, and the advice it used for the period (a) up to 20 February and (b) from 21 February to 20 March 2020.

Holding answer issued: 01 May 2020

(S5W-28234)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what advice it can give to volunteers with facilities to make personal protective equipment, such as industrial sewing machines, to enable them to produce supplies that can assist their local health and care providers.

(S5W-28239)

Jeane Freeman: We have established a single point of contact for businesses, third sector or voluntary organisations who wish to offer support at Covid-19NHSsupplychain@gov.scot.

Advice on how individuals can help their community through volunteering can be found at www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/helping-your-neighbours-friends-and-family.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the comments by its National Clinical Director on Channel 4 on 16 March 2020,

whether it will confirm how many key workers (a) overall and (b) in the nuclear sector had been tested for COVID-19 by the end of each week since that date.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28246)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what protocols it has put in place for care homes in response to the COVID-19 outbreak; what action it is taking to ensure that the homes (a) are providing appropriate palliative care and (b) have sufficient protective equipment, oxygen and other essential supplies, and how it is supporting them with the recruitment of additional staff where required.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28249)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its efforts to procure additional ventilators for the NHS in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and when it expects this equipment to be available.

(S5W-28268)

Jeane Freeman: The international standard for an appropriate pandemic response is to double ICU capacity. NHS Scotland has more than trebled its adult ICU capacity, from a base of 173 beds to a surge capacity of 585. These beds will be brought into use as needs dictate, on a daily basis. Given the scale of the current emergency, we have asked Health Boards to go further by preparing to quadruple the base ICU capacity; bringing the total number of adult beds to over 700.

To deliver that increase, we have ordered ventilators from a range of manufacturers and these are beginning to arrive with more deliveries to arrive over the coming weeks. To bridge any gaps between now and the delivery of new ventilators, Health Boards have been working to repurpose operating theatre anaesthetic machines for use as ventilators. That is not a long-term solution, but it is allowing us to rapidly increase our capacity of intensive care beds.

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

(S5W-28330)

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

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many tests for COVID-19 have been carried out each day, and when testing started.

(S5W-8354)

Jeane Freeman: Live COVID-19 testing started on 10 February 2020.

The number of people tested and results that were positive or negative are reported daily as part of the COVID-19 data and trend charts for Scotland from 2 March 2020. The figures for the number of people tested are reported as a cumulative number rather than as a daily number of tests.

The link to the daily data update is: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/trends-in-number-of-people-in-hospital-withconfirmed-or-suspected-covid-19/>.

The information comes from different administrative systems and so there may be variations in the quality of the data; it is subject to revision if new information becomes available.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the reported comments of a former chief medical officer in response to the COVID-19 outbreak that it should "Test, test, test. Trace the contacts and isolate them".

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28534)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many of the planned 1.2 million COVID-19 tests in sentinel practices have been carried out.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28535)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

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.

Holding answer issued: 04 May

(S5W-28537)

2020

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will instigate an immediate programme of mass testing and tracking following the COVID-19 lockdown period.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28538)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

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

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28539)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many care home residents have been tested for COVID-19 in each week since 23 March 2020.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28541)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many care home residents have been hospitalised with suspected COVID-19 in each week since 23 March 2020.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28542)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many care homes (a) were issued with an improvement notice, (b) had

conditions applied to their registration and (c) had their registration cancelled by the Care Inspectorate between 1 January and 30 April 2019, and how this compares with the same period in 2020.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28544)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what impact the COVID-19 outbreak is having on the capacity of the Care Inspectorate to visit care homes, and how the number of visits in (a) March and (b) April 2020 compares with the same period in 2019.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28547)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been tested for COVID-19 via the community hub model since it began operating.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28551)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

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.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28552)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (Scottish Liberal Democrats): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on the number of people who have died at home from heart failure each day since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, and how this compares to figures prior to the outbreak.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28556)

Jeane Freeman: A holding answer was provided.

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Scottish Green Party): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on covering the cost of the 2020 annual registration fees to the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a token of appreciation for the efforts of nurses and midwives during the COVID-19 outbreak.

(S5W-28657)

Jeane Freeman: The COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact and we salute and are hugely grateful for the extraordinary hard work, dedication, skill and commitment of everyone who is working across Scotland's health and social care sectors during this emergency.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is a professional regulatory body with a legal responsibility to protect the public. Being independent of government, it is self-funded by the fees of its registrants and has powers to determine those fees from time-to-time at a level which enables it to carry out its statutory functions. The NMC has constrained its fees at their present level since February 2015.

Payment of registration fees would, in effect, cross-subsidise a UK-wide independent regulator. The Scottish government has, however, implemented significant measures to support staff at this difficult time. Steps taken include full access to enhanced overtime pay and ensuring that anyone working for NHS Scotland who becomes ill due to COVID-19 will receive sick leave on full pay, irrespective of their length of service, until they have recovered, and for as long as they are contracted to NHS Scotland. We have also stepped in to suspend parking charges for staff working at hospitals with privately-operated car parks for the next three months.

We continue to work closely on a daily basis with employers and staff side organisations to identify how we can continue to support all staff throughout this challenging time.

Ministerial portfolio: Finance

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what information it has regarding whether churches and religious bodies in Scotland will be eligible to apply for support from the funding package for charities that has been announced by the UK Government in light of the COVID-19 outbreak,

(S5W-28299)

Kate Forbes: The Third Sector Resilience Fund (TSRF) is a £20 million emergency fund for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations

working in Scotland. The fund will support organisations that already deliver services and products but find themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The primary intention of the fund is to help third sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flows over this difficult period.

The Fund is being delivered by Firstport, Social Investment Scotland and the Corra Foundation and will provide grants between £5,000-£100,000. In addition there will be up to a further £5 million available in fully flexible, 0% interest loans starting at £50,000. The fund will be complemented by specialist business advice from Just Enterprise to help grant recipients maximise the impact of the financial support.

More information about Covid-19 related support available to third sector organisations, including the Third Sector Resilience Fund is available at: <https://scvo.org.uk/support/coronavirus>.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide a breakdown of all spending related to COVID-19 since 1 March 2020.

(S5W-28440)

Kate Forbes: Decisions on allocations of COVID-19 consequential funding are ongoing. Scottish Ministers plan to publish a Summer Budget Revision by the end of May for consideration by the Scottish Parliament prior before summer recess. The Budget Revision will detail all funding allocations made to date in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what (a) financial and (b) people resources have been provided to each local authority to assist in the processing of applications to the COVID-19 Business Support Fund.

(S5W-28457)

Kate Forbes: The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government wrote to local authorities on 20th March committing additional resources of £50 million for a Hardship Fund with no restrictions. Local authorities have flexibility in how they use the funding as part of their overall response to COVID-19, including any additional costs they incur in administering the Business Support Grant fund.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has imposed a limit on the number of additional properties that eligible business ratepayers can apply for COVID-19 grant support.

(S5W-28510)

Kate Forbes: Following my announcement of Phase 2 of the Business Grants Funding Scheme on 15 April, there is no fixed limit on the number of eligible multiple properties that a business can claim grant support for under either the £10,000 or

£25,000 business support grant schemes. The expansion of the scheme will open for applications from 5 May.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether retail, hospitality and leisure business ratepayers that are eligible for the £25,000 COVID-19 business support grant and have more than one property will also be eligible to apply for the 75% grant for each additional property.

(S5W-28511)

Kate Forbes: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-28510 on 4 May 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how much has been allocated to the additional property grant support for businesses that are eligible for the £25,000 COVID-19 business support grant.

(S5W-28512)

Kate Forbes: The package of support for businesses now totals £2.3 billion, which is more than the consequentials we received from the UK Government.

The total cost of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Scheme is £275 million - this includes £30 million to extend the support and provide grants of £18,750 to any additional qualifying Retail, Hospitality and Leisure properties that a ratepayer may have.

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will accelerate investment in infrastructure construction projects once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

(S5W-28548)

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government is committed to its National Infrastructure Mission which will increase investment by £1.5 billion per annum by end 2025/26. The economic case for this increase is only strengthened by current circumstances. Infrastructure Investment will be instrumental in supporting the economy and offering stimulus for resilience and recovery of the Scottish Economy in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Of course the full impact of Covid 19 will take time to emerge. We will consider how best to restart those elements of infrastructure investment which have been affected when restrictions are able to ease, including possible options to accelerate spending.

Within the constraints of available capital grant and borrowing powers, the forthcoming Infrastructure Investment Plan and Capital Spending Review will

support Scottish industry to remain resilient through the initial stages of the crisis and provide the most positive impact in the medium and long term.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it has asked the UK Government not to provide COVID-19 business support to companies that (a) pay out dividends, (b) buy back shares and (c) are registered in tax havens.

Holding answer issued: 04 May

(S5W-28558)

2020

Kate Forbes: A holding answer was provided.

Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what business relief in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is offered to proprietors of guest houses that are not eligible for small business support grants because their businesses are also domestic properties.

(S5W-28562)

Kate Forbes: Eligibility for the grant scheme is linked to the non-domestic rates system because it is the fastest, most effective way to reach businesses. However, it is important to note that it is not the only form of support that is available.

The Scottish Government recently announced a £100 million fund to support the newly self-employed and SMEs. This includes a £20 million Creative, Tourism & Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund. The fund will be managed by the Enterprise Agencies in partnership with Creative Scotland and VisitScotland for creative, tourism and hospitality companies of up to 50 employees not in receipt of support grants based on non-domestic rates.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme is also available and helps small and medium-sized businesses, with an annual turnover of up to £45 million, affected by coronavirus to access finance of up to £5 million for 6 years. The UK Government will also make a Business Interruption Payment to cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any lender-levied fees, and will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on each loan (subject to pre-lender cap on claims).

In circumstances where income has changed, these businesses may also be eligible for a reduction in their council tax through the Council Tax Reduction scheme (CTR). CTR, for which the Scottish Government provides £351m of funding a year, assesses a household's income and other factors, and can reduce council tax liability by up to 100%.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide public money to support companies that are being affected by COVID-19 and are registered in tax havens.

Holding answer issued: 04 May 2020

(S5W-28536)

Kate Forbes: A holding answer was provided.

Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (Scottish National Party): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, what flexibility will be given to local authorities regarding the submission of their annual accounts.

(S5W-28672)

Kate Forbes: The Scottish Government has advised local authorities that it considers the provisions made in Schedule 6 of The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 to be sufficient to allow each local authority to determine its own revised timetable for Annual Accounts.

Ministerial portfolio: Justice and the Law Officers

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether wills are still being processed by the court system during the COVID-19 outbreak, and whether there are any barriers to this work being carried out remotely.

(S5W-28513)

Humza Yousaf: This question relates to operational matters that are the responsibility of the Scottish Court and Tribunals Service (SCTS) corporate body. The question has been passed to the Chief Executive of the SCTS who will reply in writing within 20 days

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government how many people have been cautioned under provisions in the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 for contravening social distancing measures.

(S5W-28529)

Humza Yousaf: Information has been published by Police Scotland on the number of arrests made and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued (as well as other enforcement actions) using the new coronavirus powers. This reports that between 27 March and 23 April police officers made 78 arrests and issued 1,637 FPNs. It is important to note that an individual may be arrested more than once or issued with more than one FPN during this period. As such this figure relates to the number of

times coronavirus powers have been used rather than the number of people affected.

More information on these figures, including a breakdown by Police Division, is available at the following link:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2020/april/continuedpublic-support-needed-to-save-lives>

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment Police Scotland has made of the percentage of compliance with social distancing measures.

(S5W-28530)

Humza Yousaf: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable of Police Scotland.

Police Scotland have advised that the vast majority of people are complying with the social distancing measures because they understand it is the best way to protect the NHS and to save lives.

Police Scotland welcomes this continued co-operation and support by the public in supporting the national effort by making the lifestyle changes needed to combat the spread of coronavirus. They have advised that between 28 March and 26 April there have been just over 6000 Compliant Dispersals.

Written questions lodged on 4 May 2020

(Expected answer date: 18 May)

[S5W-28825](#) Jeremy Balfour: To ask the Scottish Government what impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on the timetable for the introduction of (a) new legislation regarding pet selling and (b) the modern licensing system for dog, cat and rabbit breeders and pet sellers, which was set out in its Programme for Government.

[S5W-28827](#) Daniel Johnson: 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-28830](#) Mark Ruskell: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-28294 by Michael Matheson on 30 April 2020, how many vehicle trips it estimates have been made on each day since 9 March 2020, broken down by the percentage of vehicles making these trips that it estimates travelled above the speed limit on (a) roads managed by Transport Scotland and (b) other roads.

[S5W-28831](#) Alexander Burnett: To ask the Scottish Government what measures are in place to support home owners whose home reports expire during the COVID-19 lockdown period. **R**

[S5W-28833](#) Liam Kerr: To ask the Scottish Government how many Aberdeen-based businesses qualify for business grants because of the COVID-19 response, and how many would have done so prior to the rates revaluation.

[S5W-28834](#) Miles Briggs: To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it publishes a daily list of COVID-19-related deaths for hospitals only, and whether it plans to publish a daily list of such deaths across all settings, similar to the approach in England.

[S5W-28843](#) Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide rates relief to general dental practitioners that are unable to see patients due to the COVID-19 crisis.

[S5W-28844](#) Lewis Macdonald: To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-28265 by Fiona Hyslop on 21 April 2020, whether a person can register for support with access to IT, and if so, how.

[S5W-28845](#) Claudia Beamish: To ask the Scottish Government how its economic recovery plan in response to the COVID-19 outbreak will gather input on issues related to (a) climate change and (b) the wellbeing economy.

[S5W-28846](#) Claudia Beamish: To ask the Scottish Government whether the remit for the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, which has been set up in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, includes (a) advising on decarbonising the economy and (b) moving towards a wellbeing economy.

[S5W-28847](#) Mary Fee: To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to support the mental health of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak, and what plans it has to further support the mental health of children and young people (a) during and (b) after the current lock-down.

[S5W-28850](#) Mary Fee: To ask the Scottish Government what support it has offered to third sector and voluntary organisations dealing with the mental

health of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak, and what further support it can offer.

S5W-28856 Monica Lennon: To ask the Scottish Government how it is ensuring the provision of free period products to people in (a) school, college and university and (b) community settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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](#).