

Questions (in reverse chronological order)

Up to: 29/01/10

### Voluntary Sector

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what organisations successful in seeking funding from the Third Sector Resilience Fund and how much each was allocated. (S3W-30280)

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive how many organisations applied to the Third Sector Resilience Fund and how much was applied for in total. (S3W-30281)

**Jim Mather:** One hundred and eighty-nine organisations applied to the Third Sector Resilience Fund but a significant proportion of these applications did not meet the eligibility criteria. A final decision has not yet been made as to which applications have been successful and an announcement will be made shortly.

### People with Learning Disabilities

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive, further to the answer to question S3W-27265 by Fiona Hyslop on 23 September 2009, when the task group on employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities will report.  
Holding answer issued: 28 January 2010 (S3W-30284)

**Keith Brown:** The Strategic Task Group on Supported Employment completed its work in October 2009. Scottish Government and COSLA are currently considering the findings and will be publishing a Supported Employment Framework for disabled people in early 2010. A copy of the framework will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (Bib. number 50135).

### Census

**Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether the 2011 census will contain questions on an individual's health and finances and, if so, what the reasons are for including such questions. (S3W-30843)

**Jim Mather:** We will shortly be asking Parliament to approve the draft Census (Scotland) Order which will set out the proposed 2011 census questions. In line with Scotland's Census 2011: A Government Statement, laid before Parliament in December 2008 (Bib. number 47152), we will be recommending that the census asks the same two questions as the last census about an individual's health (health over the last 12 months and long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work). We will also be recommending a new question about whether an individual has a long-term health condition (such as deafness) and a question about the total income of the household (but not individual incomes).

Information relating to general health provides a good indication of the demand for health services, while also contributing to the monitoring of delivery of health care and the assessment of progress towards better population health. It is also an important variable in analyses of deprivation. The question on long-term health problems or disabilities provides the only measure of disability in small areas and contributes to policy development on improving healthy life expectancy. It also helps allocate resources for the care of elderly people. The new question on health conditions will enable more specific policy and service planning and provision than has been previously been possible in relation not only to health services but also to social justice and housing. It will potentially be used in the development and monitoring of policies for tackling inequality and social exclusion, as well as in analyses of the effect of different conditions on the likelihood of economic activity. It also has potential for use in matching reported conditions with take up of services. Household income information will provide a measure of deprivation and affluence for small geographic areas. This in

turn will provide a useful indication of living standards and allow identification of areas of poverty. Such data will inform decisions about resource allocation and service delivery as well as identifying areas in need of investment. Analysis of income data alongside other census information will allow better understanding of the characteristics of people with differing levels of income. It may also provide a more detailed insight into the need for affordable housing, the relationship between disability and poverty, the reasons for differences in financial welfare across Scotland and the links between take up of benefits and social inclusion.

### **Concessionary Travel**

**Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive how many holders of entitlement cards for local concessionary travel schemes who were in receipt of the lower rate of disability living allowance were admitted initially to the free bus travel scheme when it commenced. Holding answer issued: 27 January 2010 (S3W-30701)

**Stewart Stevenson:** During April 2006, when the National Concessionary Travel scheme started, approximately 820,000 existing local concessionary scheme cardholders "passported" into the Scotland-wide scheme without undergoing a formal re-assessment of their entitlement. This included people aged 60 and over and those eligible on the grounds of disability.

The exact number of those people specifically in receipt of lower rate disability living allowance at that time was not made available.

### **Audiology**

**Gil Paterson (West of Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive how many people aged over 60 were given NHS hearing aids in each of the last five years, broken down by NHS board. (S3W-30732)

**Gil Paterson (West of Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive how many people aged 30 to 60 were given NHS hearing aids in each of the last five years, broken down by NHS board. (S3W-30733)

**Shona Robison:** The information requested is not held centrally.

**Gil Paterson (West of Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive how many people aged under 30 were given NHS hearing aids in each of the last five years, broken down by NHS board. (S3W-30734)

**Shona Robison:** The information requested is currently not held centrally.

### **Deaf and Hearing Impaired People**

**Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive, further to the answer to question S3W-29132 by Shona Robison on 2 December 2009, for what reason Scotland cannot lead the world in gathering statistics on deaf, deafblind, deafened and hard of hearing people. (S3W-30053)

**Shona Robison:** The Scottish Government Statistician Group is committed to meeting user and provider needs as well as possible. It aims to provide relevant and reliable statistical information, analysis and advice to government, business and the people of Scotland.

In order to meet the needs of users and providers, it is proposed that the forthcoming 2011 Census in Scotland will contain a question on long-term health conditions with the aim of gathering statistics on the prevalence of certain broad types of condition in the population. The proposed question contains response categories for deafness and partial hearing loss and blindness or partial sight

loss, so it will be possible to obtain accurate statistics on the number of deaf and hard of hearing as an overall category and also the number of people who responded to both the deafness and partial hearing loss and the blindness or partial sight loss category.

It is also proposed that the forthcoming 2011 Census in Scotland question on languages used at home will contain a category on British Sign Language.

Work is also ongoing to develop a harmonised question to collect detailed information on disability groups through social surveys. Space is not as restricted in social surveys as it is in the census, which may provide an opportunity to collect more detailed information, on specific categories, in certain surveys. The major social surveys carried out by the Scottish Government have large sample sizes which allow for the provision of accurate, reliable information and can be used to provide population estimates. The Scottish Government will continue to consult with stakeholders throughout this programme of work.

## Scottish Executive

### Access for Disabled People

**Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive what requirements there are for traffic regulation orders to comply with disability discrimination legislation. (S3W-29799)

**Stewart Stevenson:** Local authorities are under a duty to comply with disability discrimination legislation and should take this into account when promoting traffic regulation orders.

### Awaiting Answer:

**S3W-30554 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers that the new Framework Contract for the Provision of Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Services has improved the quality of interpretation services offered in courts.

**S3W-30555 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive how much the Scottish Court Service has spent on interpretation services in each month of the last three years.

**S3W-30556 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive what the average cost to provide interpretation by a single interpreter in a court case (a) was prior to and (b) is under the new Framework Contract for the Provision of Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Services.

**S3W-30557 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers that the new Framework Contract for the Provision of Interpreting, Translation and Transcription services will save the Scottish Court Service money and, if so, how much.

**S3W-30558 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether the introduction of the new Framework Contract for the Provision of Interpreting, Translation and Transcription services was motivated by a desire to reduce costs.

**S3W-30559 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive what benefits it considers that the introduction of a national register of public service interpreters similar to that in operation in England and Wales would bring.

**S3W-30560 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it would support the introduction of a national register of public service interpreters similar to that in operation in England and Wales.

**S3W-30561 Richard Baker:** To ask the Scottish Executive how many interpretation assignments have been undertaken by the Scottish Court Service in each month of the last two years, broken down by interpreters (a) with and (b) without a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/businessBulletin/bb-10/bb-01-11e.htm>

**NHS 24 (Free Calls from Mobile Phones) (PE1285)**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/petitions/pdfs/PE1285.pdf>

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/or-09/pu09-1502.htm#Col2078>

**The Convener:** PE1285, by Caroline Mockford, calls on the Parliament to urge the Government to make arrangements for all calls from mobile phones to NHS 24 to be free of charge to users. Do members have any comments?

**Nanette Milne:** The petition makes some valid points, particularly about the more disadvantaged people who use NHS 24. We should take the matter forward, perhaps by writing to the mobile phone companies and the Scottish Government to find out whether some arrangement can be made so that such calls are free of charge.

**John Wilson:** I support the petition as a parent who has just paid the phone bill for his daughter, who spent some time in communication with NHS 24 in Scotland regarding the possibility of having swine flu. I noted from the bill that the call was charged at a higher-than-usual rate.

The mobile phone companies should bear some responsibility for addressing the issue. If we view NHS 24 as an emergency service, I would hope that the mobile phone companies would view it as such when it comes to charging.

The range of mobile phone companies that we might contact for their views includes T-Mobile, Orange, Vodafone and O2. I suggest that we also write to the Office of Communications to find out its views on how NHS 24 operates its service—not just in Scotland but throughout the United Kingdom—and to ascertain whether it has had any deliberations about how telephone companies should charge for such services.

**Marlyn Glen:** I was interested in the consideration that is being given to a three-digit non-emergency health number. That seems a really good idea, rather than have a more expensive option. I do not think that most people are aware of all the details of the split in the cost between the caller and the NHS for land-line calls, rather than mobile phone calls. That seems strange to me. The rules do not seem to have been thought out; they seem simply to have grown.

NHS 24 will phone back if somebody asks it to or if their credit has run out. I wonder if the service responds to text messages, which we might think are much less expensive. People could text first and get a call back. Could we inquire about that, too?

**The Convener:** There are some good suggestions there. We need to keep ahead of the impact of developing technology. Let us get answers to those questions, and we will bring the petition back to the committee in due course.