

Questions (most recent first)

Census

Bill Wilson (West of Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive how it intends to raise awareness of the Scots language question in the 2011 census. (S3W-33470)

Fiona Hyslop: The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) has, and will continue to, engage with Scots language organisations who can provide guidance on completion of the question on the Scots language in the 2011 census.

The intention is to provide context-specific help which will be available both via the census website www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk and the census helpline, in due course.

The Scottish Government will, with GROS, consider options for raising awareness of the question.

Charities

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when the proposed charitable legal vehicle, the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, will be available to third sector organisations. (S3W-33447)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government recently consulted on policy proposals developed by the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Working Group for the implementation of the SCIO. In light of the responses received and views expressed at consultation events, we will develop draft SCIO regulations, built on the policy foundations of the SCIO Working Group's preferred model. These will be tested in the public arena during a shorter, targeted consultation exercise later in the year, before the provisions are finalised for laying in Parliament.

Working closely with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) we are currently considering options for a phased implementation of the SCIO, to allow OSCR time to develop the systems necessary to discharge its new regulatory responsibilities. This may mean that the SCIO becomes available for use by certain types of charity, such as unincorporated associations, prior to others, such as existing charitable companies, where the conversion process will be different.

Under current plans, we do not anticipate that the SCIO will be introduced before the end of 2010.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when it last met the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations and whether the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation was discussed. (S3W-33449)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government's Third Sector Division, working with government across a number of policy areas. SCVO meets regularly with officials from the Scottish Government and has also met with ministers, often as part of a wider group of third sector partners.

SCVO was represented on the short-life Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs) Working Group, which was set up to advise ministers on designing a regime for SCIOs that is cost-effective, as straightforward as possible and tailored to the needs of charities in Scotland. The final meeting of the SCIOs Working Group was held on 16 March 2010, at which SCVO was represented.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with SCVO and other third sector partners on the development of regulations necessary to implement the SCIO provisions under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what guidance has been issued on the proposed use of the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation for charitable organisations. (S3W-33479)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish Government recently consulted on policy proposals developed by the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs) Working Group for the implementation of the SCIO.

In light of the responses received and views expressed at consultation events, we will develop draft SCIO regulations, built on the policy foundations of the SCIOs Working Group's preferred model. These will be tested in the public arena during a shorter, targeted consultation exercise later in the year, before the provisions are finalised for laying in Parliament.

We will work closely with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) on the development of guidance on the SCIO. Until then, background information on the SCIO and consultation material is available on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/15300/charities/SCIOs>

Gaelic Language

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how Bòrd na Gàidhlig will administer its funds to meet the aims of its action plan to increase the number of Gaelic speakers. (S3W-33409)

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what its position is on the achievability of the aims of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's action plan to increase the number of Gaelic speakers. (S3W-33410)

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it plans to help Bòrd na Gàidhlig meet the aims of its action plan to increase the number of Gaelic speakers. (S3W-33411)

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it considers the aims of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's action plan to increase the number of Gaelic speakers will fit into the Curriculum for Excellence. (S3W-33412)

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it will work with local authorities to implement Bòrd na Gàidhlig's action plan to increase the number of Gaelic speakers. (S3W-33413)

Fiona Hyslop: We need to focus our resources on key areas of Gaelic development in order to increase the numbers of Gaelic speakers and thus secure the future of the language. The bòrd has identified action areas which are key areas of Gaelic development and has identified initiatives that can help make the progress we need to make in these areas.

The Scottish Government is in full agreement with the bòrd's analysis of current needs and we are confident that the focusing of resources is achievable and that the areas selected of early years, school education and adult education have the potential to increase the numbers of speakers.

The key to meeting the aims of the action plan is ensuring that there are effective means of delivery in the key action areas identified. We will continue to work closely with the bòrd to put in place and support the necessary initiatives and to achieve the required outcomes.

In order to achieve the aims set out in the action plan, the bòrd will direct its funding to the action areas identified in the action plan and has already entered into agreements with Gaelic organisations

to begin delivering some of the initiatives identified in the action plan over the course of 2010-11. The bòrd will also ensure that key areas from the action plan are prioritised in the preparation of Gaelic language plans and in the distribution of support to community groups.

Local authorities have a critical role in this and the bòrd will seek to support authorities as they implement the commitments in their Gaelic language plans and extend Gaelic education at all levels. Along with expanding Gaelic education, we also recognise the importance of the quality of Gaelic educational provision.

The aims of Bòrd na Gàidhlig's action plan are complementary to the Curriculum for Excellence. The Curriculum for Excellence guidance on Gaelic for both Gaelic learners and Gaelic speakers recognises Gaelic as being a mainstream subject and a valuable resource for young people to learn about culture, identity and language in Scotland. The Curriculum for Excellence guidance will provide an effective and supportive framework to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's plans for an increase in Gaelic speakers.

Young People

Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what specific support is available to young adults who have recently left special education. (S3W-33561)

Keith Brown: The Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) makes provision for improving the transition from school for young people leaving special education, and mainstream education, with a view to ensuring that there is a continuum of support available to them.

There is a statutory duty on appropriate agencies - Skills Development Scotland, NHS boards, colleges, local authority education departments and other local authority services - to assist with preparation, planning and support for transition from school for those young people with additional support needs. This should take place 12 months prior to the student leaving school.

Within the Scottish Government's More Choices More Chances Team, a new post is focusing on supporting local authorities and their partners to implement the Additional Support for Learning Act.

Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether part of its More Choices, More Chances strategy is designed to assist young adults who have recently left special education. (S3W-33562)

Keith Brown: Our More Choices, More Chances strategy aims to assist all young people to move into positive and sustained destinations.

Specifically, through 16+ Learning Choices we are ensuring every young person has an appropriate offer of post-16 learning before leaving school or any subsequent episode of learning. This is a universal model, but gives particular attention to those who require additional support for their learning.

Every local authority in Scotland is implementing 16+ Learning Choices and has committed to universal delivery by this December.

Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive how many individuals who have left special education are not in (a) employment, (b) education or (c) training, also expressed as a percentage, and what the comparable figures are for those who have left mainstream education. (S3W-33563)

Keith Brown: In 2008-09, 384 (43.3%, from a total of 886) leavers from special schools entered an initial destination which was not employment, education or training. This compares to 7,652 (14.3%, from a total of 53,532) leavers from publicly funded secondary schools.

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how many young people from Scotland have participated in a European Union Youth in Action Programme since 2007. (S3W-33597)

Keith Brown: One thousand, five hundred and forty-one young people from Scotland took part in the Youth in Action Programme from 2007-09. Figures for 2010 are not yet available.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when it plans to enact the provisions in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 that will allow parents to make placing requests for provision in other local authority areas. (S3W-33687)

Adam Ingram: The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 is scheduled to commence on 16 August 2010 and will allow parents of children with additional support needs and young persons with additional support needs, including those with co-ordinated support plans, to make placing requests for provision in other local authority areas.

It is for individual local authorities to interpret the legislation and discharge their duties in line with it.

Mental Health

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive, further to motion S3M-4797.1 as agreed by the Parliament on 9 September 2009, when it expects the Scottish Dementia Strategy to be published. (S3W-33480)

Shona Robison: The National Dementia Strategy will be published by early June.

The Convener of the Health and Sport Committee has already been informed of an extension from the initial end-April deadline. The extension is in order to finalise details of the strategy and to ensure that all key partners, notably COSLA, have ample time to consider and endorse it.

Libraries

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what the opening hours are in (a) primary, (b) secondary and (c) special school libraries, broken down by local authority area, and what they were (i) two and (ii) four years ago. (S3W-33397)

Keith Brown: This information is not held centrally.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it is aware of any plans to merge school libraries with public libraries. (S3W-33398)

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it is aware of any plans to merge school libraries with public libraries in the Edinburgh area. (S3W-33399)

Keith Brown: Library services, whether public or school, are a matter for the local authorities, who must comply with Section 163 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, which places a duty on local authorities to make adequate provision for library services within their area.

The Scottish Government does not collect specific details on plans for school or public libraries.

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how much is spent on (a) school and (b) public libraries, broken down by local authority area. (S3W-33405)

Keith Brown: Local authority expenditure details collected by the Scottish Government provides details of expenditure on public libraries. However, expenditure on school libraries is not separately identified.

The following table provides details of local authority 2008-09 net revenue and gross capital expenditure on library services, which covers: permanent libraries; mobile lending libraries and service to housebound library users; hire of rooms for local clubs and meetings and provision of reference material and, acting in the capacity as an information service, archives and records not kept under the Local Government and Planning Act 1982.

Library Services 2008-09	Net Revenue Expenditure (£000)	Gross Capital Expenditure (£000)
Scotland	119,022	6,822
Aberdeen City	4,254	52
Aberdeenshire	4,448	204
Angus	2,185	19
Argyll and Bute	1,389	1
Clackmannanshire	1,042	0
Dumfries and Galloway	2,897	0
Dundee City	5,269	206
East Ayrshire	2,676	169
East Dunbartonshire	3,084	22
East Lothian	2,064	690
East Renfrewshire	2,402	62
Edinburgh, City of	11,509	890
Eilean Siar	953	0
Falkirk	3,306	637
Fife	9,061	242
Glasgow City	15,461	283
Highland	4,443	269
Inverclyde	1,338	115
Midlothian	1,483	0
Moray	2,156	10
North Ayrshire	2,654	23
North Lanarkshire	6,978	222
Orkney Islands	1,053	0
Perth and Kinross	3,923	44
Renfrewshire	4,542	131
Scottish Borders	1,901	8
Shetland Islands	1,186	67
South Ayrshire	2,176	308
South Lanarkshire	5,669	360
Stirling	1,983	128
West Dunbartonshire	3,033	612
West Lothian	2,504	1,048