

S4W-22067 Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):

To ask the Scottish Government whether local authorities or NHS boards will have lead responsibility for data access requests arising from the integration of social care services.

Alex Neil: The changes in health and social care, including the creation of integration authorities, do not make any difference to how data access requests are handled. As at present, both health boards and local authorities will continue to be responsible for answering data access requests in relation to any data for which they are the data controller. Where integration joint boards exist, they will also be responsible for answering any data access requests in relation to any data they are responsible for.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140801.pdf

S4W-22084 Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):

To ask the Scottish Government how it helps deaf people who use British Sign Language to remain in employment.

John Swinney: The Scottish Government recognises the importance of British Sign Language (BSL) to the deaf community in Scotland. BSL is a vital means of communication for deaf people and contributes to their ability to live fulfilled and independent lives. While employment remains reserved to the UK Government, the Scottish Government nonetheless has provided significant funding to the deaf community in Scotland across a range of organisations. Total funding of £2,707,657 is being provided for the period 2012-15.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140805.pdf

S4W-22085 Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Scottish Labour):

To ask the Scottish Government how many communication support workers there are and how it encourages the use of their services.

John Swinney: Communication support workers are not required to be registered therefore exact numbers are not known. Through Principles of Inclusive Communication – an information and self-assessment tool for public authorities, the Scottish Government recognises that a person who requires communication support may need information to be provided in a different format and may require communication support workers to enable them to communicate.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140805.pdf

S4W-22314 Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Scottish Labour):

To ask the Scottish Government what projects it has funded to assist blind and partially sighted adults and children in each of the last three years.

Michael Matheson: The Scottish Government has funded the projects that assist blind and partially sighted adults and children. In addition the Government allocated £1 million in each of the two years 2013-14 and 2014-15 to implement 'See Hear', the National Sensory Impairment Strategy.

It should be noted however that many projects are designed to assist people with sensory impairment and so may also include elements designed to improve the quality of life for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have dual sensory impairment. Total spend on these projects is £3,173,089.

Table 1- 2011-12:

| Organization | Allocation | Project |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| RNIB Scotland | £6,000.00 | |
| Forth Valley Sensory Centre | £26,000.00 | |
| Insight Radio/RNIB Scotland | £4,500.00 | Keep Safe campaign |
| North East Sensory Services | £100,000.00 | Aberdeen City one-stop-shop |
| Fife Society for the Blind | £100,000.00 | 'Just Ask' programme |
| Forth Valley Sensory Centre | £195,000.00 | Prevention strategies |
| RNIB Scotland | £200,000.00 | Lothian one-stop-shop |
| Borders one-stop-shop | £120,000.00 | Sensory champion and prevention |
| RNIB Scotland | £226,996.00 | Ayrshire one-stop-shop Independence, re-enablement and inclusion |
| Glasgow Sensory Centre | £75,000.00 | |
| Deafblind Scotland | £99,826.00 | Develop links for deaf-blind people |
| Sight Action | £200,000.00 | Highland one-stop-shop |
| Total | £1,503,322.00 | |

Table2- 2012-13:

| Organization | Allocation | Project |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| RNIB Scotland | £ 33,357.00 | Bridge to Vision - Dementia |
| RNIB Scotland | £ 125,000.00 | Awareness training |
| Fife Society for the Blind | £ 40,000.00 | Showcase and media resources |
| RNIB Scotland | £ 200,000.00 | Lothian one-stop-shop |
| RNIB Scotland | £ 226,996.00 | Ayrshire one-stop-shop Dumfries & Galloway one-stop-shop |
| Visibility | £ 254,641.60 | |
| | | Production of high-quality CPLD to support teachers of children and young |
| Scottish Sensory Centre | £ 150,000.00 | |
| Sight Action | £ 200,000.00 | Highland one-stop-shop |
| Total | £ 1,229,994.60 | |

Table 3- 2013-14:

| Organization | Allocation | Project |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| RNIB Scotland | £51,189.00 | Bridge to Vision - Dementia |
| RNIB Scotland | £10,000.00 | Technology for life conference |
| Heriot Watt University | £8,164.00 | Assessment of blue light for vision |
| RNIB Scotland | £9,000.00 | Insight Radio Keep Safe campaign |
| SISG (Ayrshire Hearing Support) | £30,000.00 | Ayrshire one-stop-shop Dumfries & Galloway one-stop-shop |
| Visibility | £ 181,420.50 | |
| | | Production of high-quality CPLD to support teachers of children and young |
| Scottish Sensory Centre | £ 150,000.00 | |
| Total | £ 439,773.50 | |

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140820.pdf

S4W-22327 Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Scottish Labour):

To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S4W-21894 by Michael Russell on 16 July 2014, what the (a) eligibility criteria are and (b) application process is.

Michael Russell: The Access to Education Fund is a £1.5 million fund which aims to reduce the barriers to learning experienced by pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The fund, which will be administered by Education Scotland, will be open to applications from schools, from the week commencing 18 August 2014. Applications can be made for up to £5000 per school for a range of activities, including, funding to support pupils and their families for additional school materials, trips, uniforms, IT, coaching and mentoring and parental engagement programmes. Further guidance for schools and the application form can be found on the Education Scotland website:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/accesstoeducationfund.asp

The deadline for applications is 10 October 2014 at 5.00pm. Officials from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland will consider all applications and schools will be notified with a decision by the end of November 2014.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140820.pdf

S4O-3500 Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Scottish National Party):

To ask the Scottish Government what the implications for justice in Scotland would be if the UK Government were to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights.

Roseanna Cunningham: If the UK Government were to withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights, to prevent the Convention having an effect on justice in Scotland it would need to amend the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scotland Act 1998, in which it is an embedded principle. The Convention is increasingly embedded in EU law as well. EU law is, of course, binding in Scotland. The UK Government would need to leave the EU to prevent the Convention being applied by this means.

A disruption on this scale would inevitably cause a great deal of upheaval and uncertainty for justice in Scotland and, despite the best efforts of our courts, would be likely to cost us opportunities to improve further the protection of human rights in this country.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_ChamberDesk/WA20140820.pdf

Motion S4M-10860: Claudia Beamish, South Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 21/08/2014

Skills Partnerships

That the Parliament recognises what it considers the important role of Skills Partnerships in South Scotland and across the country; believes that the partnerships illustrate successful collaboration between colleges and local employers, which is in line with the recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, particularly for college courses, to meet the changing needs of local and regional economies; understands that Skills Partnerships allow particular sectors to share knowledge and best practice; recognises the value of skills partnerships across a range of sectors, including energy, finance and creative arts; considers that skills development is a crucial factor in career progression and that skills partnerships can play a major role in contributing to development; recognises that the partnerships operate throughout Scotland, which shows that the model can be applied to any college sector collaboration and is sustainable beyond the life of the project; believes that skills partnerships are a vehicle through which collaboration between colleges for outreach work can take place, especially in rural areas where courses can be inaccessible, and considers that, in the case of energy skills partnerships, this approach ensures that the right skills

are being delivered and Scotland has the workforce, skills and competence required by all sectors and ensures that the industry can grow to meet increased demand and embrace new technologies, as well as offering transferrable skills courses to allow Scotland to move toward a low-carbon economy.

Supported by: Hanzala Malik, Anne McTaggart, Rhoda Grant, John Pentland, Neil Findlay, Cara Hilton, Margaret McCulloch, Richard Simpson, Ken Macintosh

Current Status: Eligible for Members' Business, Pending Cross Party Support

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S4M-10860&ResultsPerPage=10>

Question S4W-22443: Siobhan McMahon, Central Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 21/08/2014

To ask the Scottish Government what projects supporting deaf and hard of hearing adults and children it has funded in each of the last three years.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 18/09/2014

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Simple&DateChoice=2&SortBy=DateSubmitted&ResultsPerPage=10>

Question S4W-22334: Jenny Marra, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 11/08/2014

To ask the Scottish Government how many people teaching deaf pupils (a) have and (b) do not have the appropriate qualifications to do so, broken down by local authority.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 08/09/2014

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Simple&DateChoice=3&MSPIId=5034&SortBy=DateSubmitted&ResultsPerPage=10>

Question S4W-22333: Jenny Marra, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 11/08/2014

To ask the Scottish Government how many people who teach deaf pupils are not formally registered to do so, broken down by local authority.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 08/09/2014

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Simple&DateChoice=3&MSPIId=5034&SortBy=DateSubmitted&ResultsPerPage=10>

Question S4W-22332: Jenny Marra, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 11/08/2014

To ask the Scottish Government how many people are registered to teach deaf pupils and how many are in post, broken down by local authority.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 08/09/2014

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Simple&DateChoice=3&MSPIId=5034&SortBy=DateSubmitted&ResultsPerPage=10>



HL872 - Housing: Disability

Lord Swinfen

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that estate agents are trained to help disabled people find suitable accommodation.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Baroness Neville-Rolfe) Conservative: The Government has no plans to provide training in this specific area. However, we understand the National Association of Estate Agents provides customer services training for those employed in this field including understanding the customer's needs. It is in the interests of Estate Agents to understand the needs of all their potential customers, including the disabled customers, so that they can compete effectively to win new business and grow. The Government sets the open, market framework in which companies can compete for business on fair terms.

The Government does however encourage companies to make their businesses more accessible to disabled people and embrace the positive business opportunities presented by disabled customers; guidance is available on the gov.uk website for both employees and employers. It covers what businesses must do to comply with the law, to ensure that everyone they employ or serve is treated equally and according to their needs.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/140728w0001.htm#1407288000556>

HL1491 Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reasons why, according to their recent Evaluation of Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy: Interim Report, 4.5 per cent of people affected have downsized to smaller accommodation, compared with the 25 per cent estimated in the impact assessment Housing Benefit: Under occupation of social housing, published in 2012

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Lord Freud) Conservative: Across the social sector as a whole there are a total of around 1.4 million one-bedroom properties (GB). Managing that stock efficiently is part of the challenge that social landlords must embrace. Landlords were given three years notice to start to prepare for this change and during that time were encouraged to take account of local needs and demographic trends when allocating properties and developing their building programmes.

There is turnover of properties in the social sector, and with suitable management and prioritisation by social landlords this should provide a means of allowing many of those affected by the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy to move to suitable properties over time.

The 2012 Impact Assessment: stated there was little robust evidence on which to base an assessment of behavioural responses and so did not predict the likely extent of downsizing. The 25 per cent figure within the Impact Assessment reflected research which asked a hypothetical question about what people thought they might do in response to a reduction, but this was undertaken some time before the full details of the policy were finalised.

The Impact Assessment did look at the potential sensitivity of the estimated savings to moves by affected claimants. This sensitivity testing was based on an assumption that around 50,000 affected claimants moved (around 8 per cent). This was not a prediction, but both the interim evaluation report and ad-hoc analysis show that people are downsizing. The ad-hoc report shows around 19,000 had downsized in the Social Rented Sector between May and December 2013, broadly within the bounds of the Impact Assessment sensitivity analysis.

It was never assumed that downsizing was a remedy for everyone and we were not in a position to predict how many people would choose to move.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/140728w0001.htm#1407288000556>

HL1125 Social Security Benefits: Voluntary Work

Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the recent Joseph Rowntree Foundation study of neighbourhood approaches to loneliness, whether they will set out, and if necessary reconsider, the rules governing volunteering while on benefits.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Lord Freud) Conservative: We recognise that volunteering in the local community can be invaluable in helping benefit claimants, including inactive people, gain new skills and experience that will help them back into work.

In Jobseekers Allowance, claimants are able to volunteer so long as they meet the conditions of claiming, namely looking for and being available for work.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants can do unlimited, voluntary work, it will not affect ESA.

For Universal Credit claimants, advisers will be able to reduce a claimant's expected hours of worksearch and work preparation activities by up to 50 per cent in order to accommodate voluntary work. However the claimant can continue to do as much voluntary work as they feel they are able to, as long as they continue to meet their other work-related requirements.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/140728w0001.htm#1407288000585>

HL1588 Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mitigate the impact of the under-occupancy charge on household debt.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Lord Freud) Conservative: The removal of the spare room subsidy was a necessary change in order to get the housing benefit bill under control, return fairness to the system and make better use of social housing stock.

For those that are vulnerable and who may require more time to make the transition to change, the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme administered by local authorities is available. Money management and budgeting and debt advice is also provided by many local authorities and social sector landlords.

Additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding has been made available to local authorities to help them support vulnerable claimants to cope with the changes. For 2014/15 this totals £165m. At

the end of 2013/14 £21m of the £180m central Government funding remained unspent. This included £7m from a bidding scheme fund that was available during the second half of the year and which all local authorities were encouraged to apply for.

Recently published data from the Homes and Communities Agency shows housing association arrears in England falling for the two quarters to the end of March 2014 compared to the same period in the previous year. Rent collection remained at 99 per cent during the same period. We are continuing to monitor and evaluate the policy. The final report of the two year independent evaluation will be published during 2015.

HL1589 Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the under-occupancy charge on child poverty.

Lord Freud: This cost of providing this information is disproportionate.

This Government has made good progress in tackling the root cause of child poverty and has recently published its 2014-17 child poverty strategy which outlines the actions being taken. The latest figures from 2012/13 show that the number of children in relative income poverty has fallen by 300,000 since 2009/10 representing the lowest level since the mid-1980s.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/140730w0001.htm#14073053000609>

205815 Personal Independence Payment

Caroline Lucas, Brighton Pavilion, Green:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to publish the personal independence payment application form on his Department's website in an interactive form; what assessment he made of the difficulties claimants have in completing those forms in long hand; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions:

The Personal Independence Payment application form is normally completed by telephone although we are committed to providing an on-line PIP claim and the Department is working with disability representative organisations to develop a secure and accessible on-line service. More information about the Department's Digital Strategy launched in December 2012 is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-digital-strategy>

Once we have established the claimant has met basic entitlement conditions relating to age and residence, a form called 'How your disability affects you' and an information booklet will be issued by post. The claimant can use this form to describe in their own words how their health condition or disability affects their daily life using a combination of free text and tick boxes, and has one calendar month to return it. The 'How your disability affects you' questionnaire was tested with claimants who have a range of health conditions and impairments, to ensure it was easier to complete than the DLA claim form.

These forms can be filled in with the support of friends, carers and family members. Claimants can approach support organisations to help them. Additional support is available through the DWP Visiting Service for claimants who are in vulnerable situations and do not have anyone to help them.

206121 Personal Independence Payment

Rosie Cooper, West Lancashire, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

(1) what assessment his Department made of the staffing levels required to efficiently process the transfer of employment and support allowance claimants to the personal independence payments claims;

(2) what assessment he has made of the main reasons for the time taken to process personal independence payment claims;

(3) what steps he is taking to reduce the time taken to (a) process claims for personal independence payments and (b) receive a work capability assessment appointment.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: Claimants to employment and support allowance (ESA) are not being asked to claim personal independence payment (PIP). PIP was introduced in April 2013 to replace disability living allowance (DLA) for working age people (between 16 and 64-years-old) and operates an entirely separate assessment from the work capability assessment used for ESA claims. From October 2013 we have begun inviting some existing claimants of DLA to claim PIP. The current arrangements for this can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-personal-independence-payment-toolkit-for-partners/the-personal-independence-payment-pip-toolkit-for-partners>

We are continuously looking at ways to increase the number of decisions made on PIP claims and to improve the claims process.

Internal DWP processes and the assessment part of the process are taking longer than expected and some claimants are taking longer than anticipated to return their claim forms but we are working closely with both PIP assessment providers as part of our plans to speed up the end to end claimant journey. We have introduced improvements in communications to claimants about the type of evidence they can supply to speed up their claim and we are taking action to support the assessment providers in clearing backlogs of work.

206201 Roger Godsiff, Birmingham, Hall Green, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 7 July 2014, *Official Report*, column 110W, on personal independence payment, if he will estimate the number of people who do not currently claim disability living allowance who go into debt while their claims for personal independence payment are pending.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: We have no plans to carry out such an estimate. As referenced in the earlier answer from the former Minister for Disabled People, my right hon. Friend the Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning), most people claiming personal independence payment (PIP) will already be receiving some element of financial support to meet day-to-day living expenses. If entitlement to PIP is established, payment will be backdated.

206342 Alex Cunningham, Stockton North, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 8 July 2014, *Official Report*, column 278W, on personal independence payments, what his Department's definition is of a mature system; and how he proposes that the maturity of the system will be measured.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: The publication of any new statistics series needs to ensure that it is based on robust data and the measures reflect the system that is being delivered and latest performance. The Department's statisticians are currently looking at developing measures around clearance times and will pre-announce future publication in line with the UK Statistics Authority protocols.

206501 Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will publish the guidance issued by his Department to Atos Healthcare on Part 2, Regulation 7 of the Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) Regulations 2013.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: The PIP Assessment Guide for Health Professionals carrying out assessments includes guidance on the assessment criteria and how they should be applied. This guidance can be accessed on the gov.uk website: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210722/pip-assessment-guide.pdf

206502 Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new claims for personal independence payments that were refused on application were subsequently allowed on appeal in the last 12 months.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: The information requested is not available. The Personal Independence Payment statistics release strategy, which the Department has made available on Gov.Uk, explains how DWP will manage the release of statistics and related information on Personal Independence Payment. This document explained that future releases may be extended to include numbers of reconsideration and appeals.

The Ministry of Justice publish Tribunal quarterly statistics on Gov.Uk, this includes information on appeals against PIP decisions.

206503 Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new claims for personal independence payments are outstanding.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: Statistics on the number of claims outstanding are not routinely derived or published.

PIP statistics published on 5 June 2014 showed that by the end of March 2014, 349,000 PIP new claims had been registered and 83,900 PIP new claim decisions had been made. There are several reasons why a registered claim may not yet be determined. For example, the claimant has not yet returned their additional information form or is awaiting their assessment date, DWP have not yet made a decision on their claim or the claimant has advised that they wish to withdraw their claim.

206504 Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Labour:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new claims for personal independence payments have been successful since April 2013.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: The available information on successful claims to personal independence payment was published on 5 June and is available from the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-official-statistics-june-2014>

206505 Diana Johnson, Kingston upon Hull North, Labour: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new claimants of personal independence payment have not received a decision within 26 weeks of the date of their claim.

Mr Harper, Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions: Statistics on clearance times are intended for future publication and the Department's analysts are currently considering what information will be included in the release.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm140722/text/140722w0001.htm#14072281000044>
