

**Question S4W-19717: Kezia Dugdale, Lothian, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 12/02/2014**

To ask the Scottish Government how many prisoners in each year since 2007 (a) with a special educational needs profile or (b) who identified as having problems with reading, writing or communication (i) have had moderate learning difficulties, (ii) have had language and communication support needs, (iii) have been physically disabled, (iv) have been visually or hearing impaired, (v) have had autism spectrum disorders and (vi) have had any other special educational needs.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 12/03/2014

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**Question S4W-19716: Kezia Dugdale, Lothian, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 12/02/2014**

To ask the Scottish Government how many prisoners there are who have a special educational needs profile or have identified as having difficulties with reading, writing or communication and how many (a) have moderate learning difficulties, (b) have language and communication support needs, (c) are physically disabled, (d) are visually or hearing impaired, (e) have autism spectrum disorders and (f) have any other special educational needs.

Current Status: Expected Answer date 12/03/2014

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**Question S4O-02919: Stewart Maxwell, West Scotland, Scottish National Party, Date Lodged: 12/02/2014**

To ask the Scottish Government what support it provides to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. (**S4O-02919**): Taken in Chamber 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil):** Last summer we consulted widely on a new sensory impairment strategy, which we will be publishing shortly. The strategy, which will apply to people with a hearing impairment, visual impairment or dual sensory impairment, aims to deliver the seamless provision of assessment, care and support to people with a sensory impairment and the same access to education, employment, healthcare, social care and leisure as everyone else. Funding is being made available to local partnerships to support implementation of the strategy, and close partnership working between statutory and third sector agencies will be crucial to its success.

**Stewart Maxwell:** The cabinet secretary is probably aware that under the disability reduction scheme, people with disabilities are, rightly, able to apply for a council tax reduction so that they do not have to pay more council tax as a result of adaptations to their home. One of my constituents has alerted me to a lack of consistency among local authorities over whether deaf people are eligible for a reduction in council tax under the scheme. Can the cabinet secretary clarify whether deaf people are able to apply for a council tax reduction and under which circumstances they should do so?

**Alex Neil:** Statutory responsibility for the implementation and administration of council tax, including eligibility for reductions or exemptions, lies with the relevant local authority. Ministers have no power to intervene in individual cases or comment on potential entitlement in specific circumstances, although obviously I would wish, as the cabinet secretary with responsibility for health and social care, that local authorities would be empathetic and sympathetic to any such applications.

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**Question S4W-18535: Jenny Marra, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 22/11/2013**

To ask the Scottish Government how it will ensure that deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users have continued access to the NHS 24 service beyond the current three-month funded period.

Answered by **Alex Neil** (03/12/2013):

I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-18534 on 3rd December 2013. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

That answer was:

Answered by **Alex Neil** (03/12/2013):

The pilot online British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting service is still in operation.

The online service is part of the NHS24 led BSL pilot project which was introduced in April 2012 to improve linguistic access to health service for members of the deaf community in Scotland.

The report of an independent evaluation of the pilot commissioned by NHS 24 is currently being considered.

The British Sign Language service will continue in the interim and both the Scottish Government and NHS 24 are clear that the outcome of considerations should secure the best possible future service to the deaf community.

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