30 June 2020 (Holding Reply Issued 5 May 2020)

Index Heading: Economy

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what support has been made available to private dentists during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Fiona Hyslop: The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to support NHS dentistry, as the majority of practices see mainly NHS patients.

Whilst we do have dental practices in Scotland that see only or mainly private patients, the significant expansion in NHS dental provision in recent years means that the majority of practices see mainly NHS patients.

For those practices that do provide some private dentistry, the Scottish Government has already confirmed NHS financial support should not be a bar for practices to claim from other funding sources more appropriately aligned with private dentistry.

On 18 March 2020 I announced a package of support worth £2.3 billion to limit the impact of COVID-19 on the business community. The new measures will be delivered during the 2020-21 financial year for non-domestic properties only. They include a 1.6% rates relief for all the properties across Scotland, effectively reversing the planned below inflation uplift in the poundage for 2020-21.

On 26 May I announced that we will extend eligibility for the current small business grants to small businesses that occupy shared premises where the landlord is the ratepayer. Eligible small businesses could apply for a £10,000 small business grant, administered by local authorities from 8 June.

Private dentists as self-employed individuals are subject to the same eligibility criteria to the support schemes put in place as any other self-employed individual in Scotland. They could have claimed grants under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if they are paid via PAYE. There is other support available including deferring VAT and deferring self-assessment payments on account, as well as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.