



Alison McInnes MSP
The Scottish Parliament
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12 December 2011

Dear Ms McInnes

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS S4W-04054, S4W-04055, S4W-04056, S4W-04057 and S4W-04058 – OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN

The Cabinet Secretary in his response to the above Parliamentary Questions indicated that they relate to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Court Service corporate body. I am now writing to you in response to the matters you have raised.

By way of background I should explain that a power of attorney for the majority of people is part of effective lifestyle planning and the time taken for registration while important for good customer service, does not delay the critical protection of vulnerable adults. As a result of improved public awareness from the benefits of having a power of attorney in place, there has been a steady increase in the number of applications in recent years. This accelerated during 2011 with the number of registrations increasing from a historical average of around 200 per day to the current level of around 250 per day. Administering a 25% increase would have been challenging at any time, but more so as it coincided with the pressures on public sector expenditure. In recognising that power of attorney registration is largely about lifestyle planning the Public Guardian has rightly prioritised staffing resource directly to the protection of incapable adults, ensuring there is no delay to the proper safeguarding of these vulnerable people.

As at the end of September 2011, 17% of powers of attorney registrations were achieved within a 30 day period, 82% were achieved between 31 and 70 days, with less than 1% taking between 71 and 84 days.

However, the Public Guardian recognises that the increased registration times experienced recently has the potential to cause difficulties in a small number of urgent cases and therefore offers an expedited registration service where these cases are given prioritised registration. Between April and September 2011 almost 90% of expedited requests were registered within 2 days.

Clearly we wish to deliver the best possible service in all cases and the Public Guardian is developing an on-line power of attorney registration system which will significantly reduce the timescales for registration. The on-line system will be rolled out from April 2012.

In response to your specific questions:

PQ S4W-04054 asks: *how many full-time-equivalent staff the Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland has employed in each of the last five years?* The numbers are as follows:

2010 – 2011	70.7
2009 – 2010	77.5
2008 – 2009	70.7
2007 – 2008	67.9
2006 – 2007	67.9

PQ S4W-04055 asks: *what the staffing costs of the Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland have been in each of the last five years.*

Staff costs, including salaries, national insurance and pension costs were:

2010 – 2011	£1,984,015.36
2009 – 2010	£1,946,494.56
2008 – 2009	£1,731,742.47
2007 – 2008	£1,598,977.11
2006 – 2007	£1,485,939.00

PQ S4W-04056 asks: *what percentage of powers of attorney the Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland has registered within 30 days in each of the last four quarters?*

The figures are:

July 2011 – Sept 2011	17%
April 2011 – June 2011	34%
Jan 2011 – March 2011	99.9%
Oct 2010 – Dec 2010	99.9%

PQ S4W-04057 asks: *what average time the Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland has taken to register powers of attorney in each of the last four quarters?*

July 2011 – Sept 2011	This information is not available without a manual review and calculation of individual cases.
April 2011 – June 2011	
Jan 2011 – March 2011	
Oct 2010 – Dec 2010	

PQ S4W-04058 asks: *what maximum time the Office of the Public Guardian in Scotland has taken to register powers of attorney in each of the last four quarters?*

July 2011 – Sept 2011	84 days
April 2011 – June 2011	56 days
Jan 2011 – March 2011	28 days
Oct 2010 – Dec 2010	26 days*

* one case took 48 days but save for this case maximum was 26 days

* One case took 48 days but save for this case maximum was 26 days

The Public Guardian has worked to keep people apprised of the current registration times, the development of the on-line facility and the expedited service for urgent cases.

I hope this response gives you the re-assurance that the protection of vulnerable adults remains, as always, our top priority and that urgent steps are being taken to provide a swift service for all powers of attorney registrations.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Court Service website.

Yours sincerely



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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

Mr. J. H. Smith	123 Main St.	Springfield, Mass.
Mr. W. D. Jones	456 Elm St.	Springfield, Mass.
Mr. R. L. Brown	789 Oak St.	Springfield, Mass.
Mr. T. K. Green	101 Pine St.	Springfield, Mass.
Mr. S. P. White	202 Cedar St.	Springfield, Mass.

The purpose of this committee is to study the various aspects of the problem and to report to the board of directors.

The committee has held several meetings and has received many suggestions from the members of the board.

The committee has also conducted a survey of the situation and has found that there are many factors which contribute to the problem.

Very truly yours,



J. H. Smith

Chairman

Committee

Springfield, Mass.