

## Parliamentary questions

Parliamentary questions can be oral or written. MSPs have a weekly opportunity to lodge questions, and also to direct oral questions to the First Minister and his ministerial colleagues. Written questions may be lodged at any time and will receive a written answer.

Six topical questions, put forward by opposition party leaders and backbench MSPs, are selected by the Presiding Officer and are asked during First Minister's Question Time on a Thursday. MSPs can also enter their names in a ballot to ask general and themed questions to Scottish ministers on a Thursday. Thirty members, randomly selected in the ballot, submit their questions in advance for publication in the *Business Bulletin*. At General and Themed Question Time the relevant minister provides an answer to the published question, and to any related supplementary questions (about which no notice has been given).

Any question that has not been reached by the end of the time allocated for oral questions receives a written answer which will then appear, along with all other written answers, in the weekly *Written Answers Report*. This can be accessed through the Parliament's website.



Annabel Goldie MSP

## Parliamentary questions answered from 9 May 2009 to 8 May 2010

	Answered in Chamber	Received written answer
First Minister's Question Time	214	2
General and Themed Question Time	787	193

9,744 questions were also lodged for written answer in the same period, and 699 for First Minister's Question Time. First Minister's questions not selected by the Presiding Officer are not published and do not receive an answer.

## Motions

MSPs use parliamentary motions for a number of purposes – to highlight an issue or event, to generate support for a cause, or to stimulate debate on a subject. Motions lodged by MSPs appear in the following day's *Business Bulletin*, along with the names of other members who support their terms.

Motions for debate in the Chamber are lodged on the basis of the business programme agreed by the Parliament. Amendments to these motions can also be lodged and the Presiding Officer selects which amendments will be debated. The vast majority of motions are not intended for debate, however.

2,379 motions and amendments were lodged this year, on a range of topics. Those lodged but not debated dealt with a wide variety of issues, including:

- Haiti earthquake disaster
- Purple Day – raising awareness of epilepsy
- housing budget cuts
- WWF's Earth Hour 2010.