



Marlyn Glen Scottish Labour MSP for North East Scotland

2 May 2008

“Promise of unknown cost,” says MSP

Marlyn Glen said today that the Scottish Government has “failed ” to provide her with details about its promise to extend the entitlement for free school meals to families in Dundee and Angus to those who are in receipt of maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit by August 2009.

Ms. Glen had asked in a series of parliamentary questions how much this promise to extend free school meals in Dundee and Angus would cost, and whether the Scottish Government would fully fund the cost of this extension.

In reply the Minister for Education, Adam Ingram, said,

“We will be providing local government with record levels of funding over the period covered by the spending review 2008-11.

“The vast majority of the funding will be provided by means of a block grant.

“It is the responsibility of each local authority to allocate the total financial resources available to it on the basis of local needs and priorities having first fulfilled its statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities including the Scottish Government’s key strategic objectives and the full terms of the concordat.

“This includes extending entitlement to free school meals to all primary school and secondary school pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit from August 2009, subject to the necessary legislation being passed by the Scottish Parliament.”

Ms. Glen commented,

“ This is another example of a promise that has never been properly costed by an SNP government whose inadequate funding of councils continues to unravel by the week.

“Last October, the Minister could not tell me how much it would cost to carry out the SNP election promise to provide access to a fully qualified teacher for every nursery age child in Dundee and Angus.

“Last month, this promise was finally abandoned, and the councils were left to decide the level of nursery provision with no extra money.

“ Parents and pupils deserve better than these promises of unknown cost.”

340 words
ends

Source of information :

(1) Parliamentary questions and answers

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

WRITTEN ANSWER

16 April 2008

Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what estimate it has made of the cost of extending the entitlement to free school meals in 2009 to pupils from families in (a) Dundee and (b) Angus receiving maximum child and working families tax credit.

(S3W-11245)

Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will provide (a) Dundee City Council and (b) Angus Council with additional funding in 2009 to pay for an extension of the entitlement to free school meals to pupils from families receiving maximum child and working families tax credit.

(S3W-11246)

The same answer was given to both questions

Mr Adam Ingram:

We will be providing local government with record levels of funding over the period covered by the spending review 2008-11. The vast majority of the funding will be provided by means of a block grant. It is the responsibility of each local authority to allocate the total financial resources available to it on the basis of local needs and priorities having first fulfilled its statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities including the Scottish Government's key strategic objectives and the full terms of the concordat. This includes extending entitlement to free school meals to all primary school and secondary school pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit from August 2009, subject to the necessary legislation being passed by the Scottish Parliament.

(2) Abandonment of the promise to provide access to a nursery teacher for every nursery age child

Parliamentary questions

Pre-School Education

Marlyn Glen : To ask the Scottish Executive what the estimated cost is in Dundee of fulfilling the 2007 SNP manifesto commitment to provide access to a fully qualified teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (29 October 2007): No estimate of costs have been made for individual local authority areas. The overall cost of implementing this and other commitments is the subject of discussion with local government as part of negotiations on outcome agreements.

Marlyn Glen : To ask the Scottish Executive how many General Teaching Council for Scotland registered teachers will be required in Dundee to implement the 2007 SNP manifesto commitment to provide access to a fully qualified teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (29 October 2007): No estimate has been made of the number of teachers required in individual local authority areas. The latest statistics show that almost 63% of pre-school education centres in Dundee have at least one General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered member of staff. The figures vary between types of provider. On purely numerical grounds, approximately 34 centres do not employ a teacher. However, children in some of these centres may have access to a teacher by other means such as a peripatetic teacher visiting on a regular basis or some other flexible teaching support service.

Marlyn Glen : To ask the Scottish Executive what the estimated cost is in Angus of fulfilling the 2007 SNP manifesto commitment to provide access to a fully qualified teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (29 October 2007): No estimate of costs have been made for individual local authority areas. The overall cost of implementing this and other commitments is the subject of discussion with local government as part of negotiations on outcome agreements.

Marlyn Glen : To ask the Scottish Executive how many General Teaching Council for Scotland registered teachers will be required in Angus to implement the 2007 SNP manifesto commitment to provide access to a fully qualified teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (29 October 2007): No estimate has been made of the number of teachers required in individual local authority areas. The latest statistics show that around 48% of pre-school education centres in Angus have at least one General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered member of staff. The figures vary between types of provider. On purely numerical grounds, approximately 63 centres do not employ a teacher. However, children in some of these centres may have access to a teacher by other means such as a peripatetic teacher visiting on a regular basis or some other flexible teaching support service.

Pre-School Education

S3W-11418 - Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab) (Date Lodged Thursday, March 27, 2008): To ask the Scottish Executive how it defines "access" in its commitment to deliver access to a fully qualified nursery teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (Wednesday, April 16, 2008): The Scottish Government expects that local authorities will deliver the commitment to ensure each pre-school child has access to a teacher using flexible models of teacher deployment, based on local needs and circumstances.

S3W-11417 - Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab) (Date Lodged Thursday, March 27, 2008): To ask the Scottish Executive what minimum number of hours of teacher contact each nursery age child must have to satisfy the commitment to deliver access to a fully qualified nursery teacher for every such child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (Wednesday, April 16, 2008): Research evidence indicates that greater levels of teacher involvement lead to improved outcomes for children but there is little research on the minimum level of teacher involvement needed to do so. The Scottish Government is, therefore, focused on improving the overall level of teacher involvement rather than setting minimum thresholds.

S3W-11416 - Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab) (Date Lodged Thursday, March 27, 2008): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers that local authorities using peripatetic nursery teachers in all pre-school establishments meet its commitment to deliver access to a fully qualified nursery teacher for every nursery age child.

Answered by Adam Ingram (Wednesday, April 16, 2008): Local circumstances will vary and it is essential that local authorities are given the flexibility to make decisions on how best to deploy teachers. It may be, therefore, that various models of teacher deployment, including peripatetic models, are part of the solution at local level.

ends

WEBSITE LINK

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