

Five things you need to know today



Air Canada rouge launch new route direct to Toronto – UK Minister uses wrong figures on Bedroom Tax – Commonwealth War Graves – Around in a Grand – Advertising with The Edinburgh Reporter

Air Canada rouge have started flying from Edinburgh direct to Toronto. The first flight took off just after 11:00am complete with festive water cannon from the firefighters at Edinburgh Airport.

We will have video and more photos for you soon.

Mark Lazarowicz MP has attacked a Minister for seeking to minimise the impact the bedroom tax is having by quoting figures for the year before it started.

People whose housing benefit is cut because they are assessed as under-occupying their home under the new rules can apply for a discretionary housing payment from the council to cover the gap between their housing benefit and their rent.

However, once the limited funding in the pot from central government runs out this coming year people hit by the bedroom tax will be left to fend for themselves.

The Minister, LibDem Steve Webb MP, said that in the year **ending this April** councils in England, Scotland and Wales had returned unspent over **£11 million** in discretionary housing payments – but the bedroom tax only **started** this April. The figures for 2012/3 cannot therefore take account of the bedroom tax.

In Edinburgh alone, around 3,800 council tenants are believed to be affected by the bedroom tax putting **£2.7 million in rental income at risk.**

Mark said:-“I was angry when the Minister attempted to sidestep my question about how hard the bedroom tax has hit tenants and councils, by quoting statistics for the year ending this April when the bedroom tax had yet to start.

“Rental income is vital for councils to maintain, improve and build more affordable housing which is in desperately short supply.

“Their ability to do that will be severely stretched if the number of tenants in arrears increases and they also have to place people who can no longer afford their rent in short-term accommodation which is inevitably more expensive.”

The Minister was replying to questions from Mark Lazarowicz and from Willie Bain, Labour MP for Glasgow North East, on the effect of the bedroom tax on council finances as increasing number of tenants fall into arrears.

In addition to 3,800 council tenants in Edinburgh another 1,400 tenants of housing associations will be affected as well. However, at the end of June there were only 23 one-bedroom properties available in the city if people under-occupying tried to move.

Here is the full question and answer exchange between Mark and the Minister:

Mr William Bain (Glasgow North East) (Lab): *The bedroom tax is causing councils enormous financial strain, as it is for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people across the country. On 11 June the pensions Minister told me that the Government are not making monthly checks on how much discretionary housing payment money councils are spending. What will happen to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable*

people when the money runs out?

Steve Webb: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman mentions the support we give to local authorities through discretionary housing payments. We constantly hear that it is not enough, so he may be startled to learn that in the year just ended, 2012-13, over 300 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales sent us back money totalling over £11 million because they could not spend it.

Mark Lazarowicz (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab/Co-op): The pensions Minister's answer a couple of minutes ago on discretionary housing payments was quite frankly absurd, because he knows full well that the bedroom tax was not in operation in the last financial year.

To return to the question of impact, local authorities throughout the country, including my own, now find that arrears are going up because people cannot afford the bedroom tax that is being imposed on them. What does the Minister expect local authorities to do about this, because it is affecting their overall budgets as well?

Steve Webb: Just to be clear, when we made reductions in housing benefit for 2012-13 we were told that the support was not enough, but the hon. Gentleman's local authority, Edinburgh, returned to us £162,000 of help that it could not spend. We have increased the support to Edinburgh council this year compared with last year.



Queensferry Community High School is helping with a University of Edinburgh project to identify the 180 men who are buried in the South Queensferry cemetery Commonwealth War Graves section.

Local councillor Norman Work said:-“”It is fantastic that the pupils of QHS are getting involved in this type of study but even better that they are joining up with the local History group in Queensferry.”

The school's website has these comments from the headteacher and the researcher in charge of the work:-

Gordon Hunter, Head of Social Subjects said: “This is a unique and incredibly valuable opportunity for our students to work with the Queensferry community and The University of Edinburgh. We are delighted to be helping to bring this important part of our history to life for the students and the community by learning about the men and women that fought the War from our very shores.”

Project leader Yvonne McEwen said: “We are pleased to embark on this ambitious project ahead of next year's Centenary of the First World War. Although the names of the men in the cemetery are recorded, much of what they achieved and the stories behind their names are not. We believe the project is a fitting tribute to the fallen.”

There is also a great website here called [Edinburgh's War](#) which seeks to tell the story of the First World War from the point of view of people from Edinburgh who took part. This has been a collaborative project among Edinburgh Libraries, University of Edinburgh and the National Library of Scotland.

Two young men from Edinburgh are cycling around the world with only £1000 in their saddle bags...

Currently they are in Berlin. They have had some difficulties with bikes and so have had a couple of days rest. One of them, John Campbell, was formerly a skier of some note, and then studied at Durham University. He now does fitness training so we were intrigued by his Day Off routine.....[Have a look](#)

[here!](#) We think this is a mix of stretching and yoga....

They are cycling to raise money for The Big Issue Foundation and you can donate to give them some encouragement. They hope to get to Malaysia – all the way by bike...

[Advertising](#) with us is very effective, and very reasonably priced. Our visitor numbers are increasing daily. In May 2013 the number of unique visitors to our site was 63,614 and there were more than 1 million pages viewed.

For a mere £30 you could have 10 separate advertising slots in the middle of our daily article 'Five things you need to know today' giving you complete control over your advertising spend.

Read the rates below, but if you would like to try out an ad space then we will be happy to do that for you and then give you the exact statistics at the end of a trial period. Just tell us what you would like to do. We are very flexible, but we need the advertising revenue to keep the website going.

Our readers are in the main based in Edinburgh, so if that is your target audience then you could use us to reach your new customers.

You can either cap your spend by time or spend, and we keep an eye on the number of views for you. There are various other kinds of ads available on The Edinburgh Reporter:-

The Super Banner position is across the top of the header. This space costs £6 per thousand views. (CPM)

There are two spaces to the right of the Super Banner and a single space below. These are charged at £3 per thousand

views.

The adverts on the right hand margin of the site are priced at £120 per 3 months.

