

At Holyrood today – First Minister's Questions

Perhaps the most exciting thing that happened at First Minister's Questions was the appearance of two environmental protesters who were removed from the Chamber by the police.

Apparently there were others in the public gallery ready to have their say, but they did not take the opportunity today to talk about the perils of oil and gas to members of the Scottish Parliament gathered below them.

One Edinburgh MSP who was notably missing from the benches was Ruth Davidson MSP who represents Central Edinburgh. Jackson Carlaw has stepped into the breach as interim leader pending a vote on who will take over permanently. Nominations close on 17 January 2020 and Mr Carlaw has cast his hat into the ring.



Jackson Carlaw the day before the General Election 2019 in Edinburgh speaking to Conservative Party activists PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter

There was little in FMQS about Edinburgh. although Lothians MSP Miles Briggs asked a question about the Sick Kids in General Questions which takes place just before.

Alex Cole- Hamilton MSP for Edinburgh Western raised the matter of his constituent Malcolm Muirhead who died after losing a stone and a half in a month while resident at the Drum Brae Care Home which is run by The City of Edinburgh Council.

Mr Cole-Hamilton said that a social work report raised concerns that Mr Muirhead was only being washed once a week in a sink, he had bloated, infected feet and overgrown nails. The MSP said : "The home was closed to new admissions and this week an unannounced visit by the Care Inspectorate found serious concerns about staff competence, distribution of medication and treatment of residents. It will be deregistered in February if improvements are not made."

He asked the First Minister if she agreed that this was symptomatic of a crisis in social care in Scotland, and that constituents have the right to higher standards of care from public sector homes.

The First Minister said that she certainly agreed in parts with Mr Cole-Hamilton's statement. She said : "What he has described here is completely unacceptable. I do agree that residents of care homes and their families have an absolute right to better standards than those outlined in the tragic case of Malcolm Muirhead. But I don't agree this is symptomatic of a crisis in social care."

The First Minister went on to say that she knew social care and healthcare are both under pressure as are public services because of austerity. She promised that she would continue within a very constrained budget to protect social care and health.

The City of Edinburgh Council issued this statement :

A spokesperson for the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership said: "We take the care, safety and support of our care home residents very seriously. Work is ongoing with the Care Inspectorate to make sure Drumbrae Care Home is safe and comfortable and that we deliver the improvements required by the Improvement Notice.

"We took immediate action following feedback from our inspection in December, a highly experienced and longstanding care home manager from within the Partnership has been put in place to oversee this work and monitor progress being made and they are being supported by the HSPC's senior management to drive the improvement we need to see."

