

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



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Dear Mr Pearson

Scottish Parliamentary Questions - S4W-28700 & S4W-28701

In his response to the above PQs the Cabinet Secretary indicated that they relate to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service corporate body. I am now writing to you in response to the matters you have raised. I also address the related points raised in your letter dated 25 November 2015.

S4W-28700: *To ask the Scottish Government how many court cases have been adjourned (a) as a result of lack of court time and (b) ex proprio motu (on the court's own initiative) in each year since 2011?*

The information you requested is set out in the following table which includes additional information detailing the number of trials called and the percentage of lack of court time adjournments and ex proprio motu adjournments. This is related to all business within the High Court, Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court.

	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	Apr- Oct 2015
Trials Adjourned lack of court time – The majority by ex proprio motu (% of trials called)	2608 (4%)	3412 (6%)	3639 (6%)	3948 (6%)	2489 (5%)
Trials adjourned ex proprio motu - for reason other than lack of court time (% of trials called)	735 (1%)	749 (1%)	579 (1%)	1024 (1%)	465 (1%)
Trials called	61423	59790	60189	70217	45988

Court programming is complex by its nature with a need to constantly predict and re-adjust the number of cases likely to go ahead on the day of the trial. A high 'lack of court time' figure could reflect too many cases being allocated to trial diets and equally, having no lack of court time adjournments could reflect an inefficient system with too few cases being allocated to trial diets. We judge the optimum point to be around 5%.

S4W-28701: *To ask the Scottish Government whether the Scottish Courts Service rewards staff who deliver on targets and, if so, (a) which targets and (b) what rewards?*

The SCTS does not provide any additional rewards or bonuses to staff who deliver on targets.

We do have an "Instant Rewards" scheme to enable managers to instantly reward staff or teams who perform "above and beyond" the expected standard. The instant rewards are in the form of vouchers and generally of low value (between £20 and £50). Examples of the sort of circumstances under which individual staff members or a team might qualify for an instant reward are:

- providing exceptional and very sensitive support to vulnerable court users
- carrying out analysis or research on own initiative to highlight an area in which resources could be used more effectively
- acting as a role model to other staff in a way that creates positivity and inspires others
- highlighting local Health and Safety/ Security issues to protect colleagues and other court users
- making an exceptional contribution to a project or local objective
- offering expertise or time to support community outreach activity that enhances the reputation of the SCTS.

I hope that this information is helpful. A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service website.

Yours sincerely



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