



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 1, No. 27, Session 7

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 17 September 2026

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 1.30 pm.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. First Minister's Questions (Party Leaders): Questions were answered by the First Minister (John Swinney).

3. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic (Màiri McAllan) made a statement and answered questions on Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025.

4. Addressing the Harms of Health Misinformation: The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Care (Angela Constance) moved S7M-01200—That the Parliament notes with concern the increasing risk of the global spread of misinformation relating to public health on social media, including through the use of AI-altered content; recognises that accessible, science-based and trustworthy health information is essential to supporting people to make informed decisions about their health, maintaining confidence in public health interventions and improving health outcomes; acknowledges the importance of taking an ethical approach to information integrity, and that misleading or false health information has a detrimental impact on society; notes with concern the rise in vaccine misinformation that has been spread in society since the COVID-19 pandemic; agrees that anyone who is eligible for life-saving vaccinations should be able to access the care that they need without the risk of harmful misinformation causing unnecessary concern or fear; further agrees that every Member of the Scottish Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that they use

factual, science-based and trusted sources of health information from the NHS, public bodies and academia to protect public health, and that members should collaborate to tackle the rise of harmful online misinformation.

Helen McDade moved amendment S7M-01200.3—

As an amendment to S7M-01200 in the name of Angela Constance (Addressing the Harms of Health Misinformation), insert at end "; agrees that in addition to being factual and evidence-based, information must be unbiased and balanced to allow people to make fully informed decisions and calls on the Scottish Government, in its own decision-making, to follow the example it expects others to; notes that a 2023 study, commissioned by the Scottish Government, found that only 29% of the public believed that its own current COVID-19 guidance was trustworthy, demonstrating the need for the Scottish Government to understand the role that it has played in the public losing trust in health information that it issues; believes that health information covers everything related to health, and considers statements that the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital was safe, when some wards were known and later found not to be, to constitute misinformation."

After debate, the amendment was disagreed to ((DT) by division: For 18, Against 95 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Jackie Baillie moved amendment S7M-01200.1—

As an amendment to Motion S7M-01200 in the name of Angela Constance (Addressing the Harms of Health Misinformation), insert at end "; is concerned by declining childhood vaccination rates and continuing barriers to access to vaccination programmes, and believes that additional flexibility is required for trusted primary care teams to improve vaccination uptake."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 96 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 17, Abstentions 0).

Miles Briggs moved amendment S7M-01200.2—

As an amendment to Motion S7M-01200 in the name of Angela Constance (Addressing the Harms of Health Misinformation), insert at end "; supports the development of a new national approach to health literacy, that enables people to find, understand and use public health information to make informed decisions about their health and to support others to do so; notes the recent Movember report on men's health in Scotland and its call for a public health approach to addressing the online harms and disinformation affecting boys and young men, building on the Scottish Government's Online Safety Taskforce Action Plan; further notes that such an approach should be adopted as a cross-government priority, and calls on the Scottish Government to review how all public health information can build trust, improve health literacy and open routes into support and services, as part of a more coherent national approach to service redesign and public policy."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to (DT).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 109 (including 1 proxy vote), Against 2, Abstentions 1).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament notes with concern the increasing risk of the global spread of misinformation relating to public health on social media, including through the use of AI-altered content; recognises that accessible, science-based and trustworthy health information is essential to supporting people to make informed decisions about their health, maintaining confidence in public health interventions and improving health outcomes; acknowledges the importance of taking an ethical approach to information integrity, and that misleading or false health information has a detrimental impact on society; notes with concern the rise in vaccine misinformation that has been spread in society since the COVID-19 pandemic; agrees that anyone who is eligible for life-saving vaccinations should be able to access the care that they need without the risk of harmful misinformation causing unnecessary concern or fear; further agrees that every Member of the Scottish Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that they use factual, science-based and trusted sources of health information from the NHS, public bodies and academia to protect public health; that members should collaborate to tackle the rise of harmful online misinformation; is concerned by declining childhood vaccination rates and continuing barriers to access to vaccination programmes; believes that additional flexibility is required for trusted primary care teams to improve vaccination uptake; supports the development of a new national approach to health literacy, that enables people to find, understand and use public health information to make informed decisions about their health and to support others to do so; notes the recent Movember report on men's health in Scotland and its call for a public health approach to addressing the online harms and disinformation affecting boys and young men, building on the Scottish Government's Online Safety Taskforce Action Plan; further notes that such an approach should be adopted as a cross-government priority, and calls on the Scottish Government to review how all public health information can build trust, improve health literacy and open routes into support and services, as part of a more coherent national approach to service redesign and public policy.

5. Ministerial Statement: The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport (Stephen Flynn) made a statement and answered questions on Ferguson Marine: Planned Investment and Future Business.

6. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on item 4 as noted above.

7. Policing, Crime Prevention and the Response to Mental Health Crisis in Mid Scotland and Fife: The Parliament debated S7M-01039 in the name of Stephen Kerr—That the Parliament notes the findings of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland's report, *Thematic review of policing mental health in Scotland*, which was published in October 2023 and reported that at least half of deployable frontline uniformed officers are regularly engaged in mental health-related calls, a single such call can engage two officers and a vehicle for a full shift and Police Scotland "is filling gaps in the health and social care system in Scotland";

further notes the evidence provided to the Criminal Justice Committee that mental health calls rose from just under 400 per day in 2018 to an average of 666 by the first quarter of 2024, that the officer time absorbed by mental health incidents in 2023-24 was equivalent to 612 full-time constables, which is more than the staffing complement of five local policing divisions, and that approximately 70% of such incidents occur at NHS hospitals; acknowledges the views of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents that present arrangements amount to "mission creep", and of the Scottish Police Federation that handover of mental health crises to the most appropriate service is at best delayed and at worst non-existent; considers that communities across Mid Scotland and Fife are best served by officers who are free to prevent and detect crime, and believes that an individual in mental health crisis is entitled to a response from health professionals with the training, powers and facilities to help them, rather than from the police.

8. Motion without Notice: Stephen Kerr moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.

The motion was agreed to.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
17 September 2026

Appendix
(Note: this Appendix does not form part of the Minutes)

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 17 September 2026—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 4th Report, 2026 (Session 7):
Subordinate Legislation considered by the Delegated Powers and Law
Reform Committee on 15 September 2026 (SP Paper 5)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 5th Report, 2026 (Session 7):
Delegated Powers in the Scottish Local Government Elections (Candidacy
Rights of Commonwealth Citizens) Bill at Stage 1 (SP Paper 7)

Subordinate Legislation

Affirmative Instruments

The following instrument was laid before the Parliament on 17 September 2026 and
is subject to the affirmative procedure—

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Transfer of Functions and Members of the Police
Appeals Tribunal) Amendment Regulations 2026 [draft]
laid under section 79(2)(b) of the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014

Laid Only Instruments

The following instruments were laid before the Parliament on 17 September 2026
and are not subject to any parliamentary procedure—

Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Act 2026
(Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/261 (C. 26))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform
(Scotland) Act 2010

Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Act 2025 (Commencement No. 2
and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2026 (SSI 2026/262 (C. 27))
laid under section 30(2) of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform
(Scotland) Act 2010

Legislative Consent Memorandum

The following memorandum was lodged on 17 September 2026—

Stephen Flynn, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport:
Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Civil Aviation
(Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill (UK Parliament legislation)
(LCM-S7-11a)

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