



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 5, No. 38, Session 6

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 8 October 2025

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

The meeting opened at 2.00 pm.

1. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, and Parliamentary Business, and then on Justice and Home Affairs, were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. Stopping Illegal Immigration and Recognising its Impact on Housing: Russell Findlay moved S6M-19252—That the Parliament believes that illegal immigration must be stopped because of the damaging impact on public finances and local communities; recognises that the Scottish Government's decision to suspend local connection rules in relation to homelessness provision back in 2022 has contributed towards attracting asylum seekers to Scotland at an unsustainable level, and calls on the Scottish Government to immediately reverse this decision.

The Cabinet Secretary for Housing (Màiri McAllan) moved amendment S6M-19252.5—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19252 in the name of Russell Findlay (Stopping Illegal Immigration and Recognising its Impact on Housing), leave out from "believes" to end and insert "notes that the suspension of local connection referrals in 2022 did not change the rights of newly recognised refugees to choose where they settle in Scotland, nor did it prevent Scottish local authorities from referring households presenting as homeless to an English or Welsh local authority with which they have a local connection; reaffirms that Scotland is a welcoming nation to people fleeing persecution, seeking safety and who have been granted refugee status, ensuring that they can rebuild their

lives in the country through the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy; highlights action in Scotland to tackle homelessness and destitution, including new prevention measures in the Housing (Scotland) Bill, increased investment in affordable homes and the £4 million investment in homelessness prevention pilots, alongside the extension of rapid rehousing transition plan funding of £8 million into 2026-27, and calls again on the UK Government to urgently uphold the European Convention on Human Rights, 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol."

Mark Griffin moved amendment S6M-19252.4—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19252 in the name of Russell Findlay (Stopping Illegal Immigration and Recognising its Impact on Housing), leave out from "because" to end and insert "; regrets that the previous UK Conservative administration left the immigration system in a state of collapse; recognises the progress made by the UK Labour administration to clear the backlog of asylum claims, and believes that the failure to tackle the challenges facing Scotland's local authorities, public services and housing system, for which the Scottish Government has devolved responsibility and has received record levels of funding from the UK Government, is the root cause of the housing emergency."

After debate, amendment S6M-19252.5 was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 51 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0). As a result, amendment S6M-19252.4 was pre-empted.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 51 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament notes that the suspension of local connection referrals in 2022 did not change the rights of newly recognised refugees to choose where they settle in Scotland, nor did it prevent Scottish local authorities from referring households presenting as homeless to an English or Welsh local authority with which they have a local connection; reaffirms that Scotland is a welcoming nation to people fleeing persecution, seeking safety and who have been granted refugee status, ensuring that they can rebuild their lives in the country through the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy; highlights action in Scotland to tackle homelessness and destitution, including new prevention measures in the Housing (Scotland) Bill, increased investment in affordable homes and the £4 million investment in homelessness prevention pilots, alongside the extension of rapid rehousing transition plan funding of £8 million into 2026-27, and calls again on the UK Government to urgently uphold the European Convention on Human Rights, 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol.

3. Backing Scotland's Colleges and Apprenticeships: Murdo Fraser moved S6M-19253—That the Parliament recognises that future economic growth is reliant on providing the right opportunities to create good jobs that allow businesses to expand; notes with concern the findings of the recent Audit Scotland report,

highlighting a 20% real-terms cut in funding to the college sector over the past five years, and believes that this has a negative impact on the economy and limits opportunities for young people to get ahead; acknowledges the concern from business representative groups about the future of apprenticeships, and the harm that a restriction in apprenticeship numbers causes to job creation in Scotland, and calls on the Scottish Government to restore funding to Scotland's colleges and raise the number of modern apprenticeship places from 25,507 in 2024-25 to at least the 34,000 identified by Skills Development Scotland as necessary to meet Scottish economic growth ambitions.

The Minister for Business and Employment (Richard Lochhead) moved amendment S6M-19253.3—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19253 in the name of Murdo Fraser (Backing Scotland's Colleges and Apprenticeships), leave out from "with concern" to end and insert "the Audit Scotland report entitled, Scotland's colleges 2025, and the importance of continued investment in Scotland's colleges and skills system to support inclusive economic success, prosperity and job creation, including provision of around three quarters of a billion pounds in Scotland's colleges in 2025-26, and an additional £3.5 million for skills, through the Scottish Budget; acknowledges that this is particularly important in the thriving sectors, like those critical to realising the transition to net zero, and the shared opportunities of this; recognises the key role that colleges, employers and training providers have played in ensuring that 93% of school leavers have a positive destination, and providing apprenticeships and training to a record 39,000 individuals, and notes, however, concern about the impact of Brexit and the UK Government's migration system, which is contributing to key skills gaps and labour market shortages."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 51 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Lorna Slater moved amendment S6M-19253.2—

As an amendment to motion S6M-19253 in the name of Murdo Fraser (Backing Scotland's Colleges and Apprenticeships), leave out from "that future" to end and insert "the transformative power of education and training, and the vital roles that colleges and apprenticeships play in supporting young people and building resilient communities, including in a just transition away from fossil fuels; acknowledges the importance of having college facilities located close to where people live, ensuring accessibility and inclusion; believes that improved college governance is essential to prevent poor management decisions and to safeguard the quality of provision; acknowledges the work of EIS-FELA and UNISON in campaigning for better further education provision and supporting college staff across the country who face uncertainty about the future; calls for enhanced outcomes for women, students and apprentices, to ensure that they are not disproportionately channelled into low-waged sectors; urges colleges to align their skills offerings with the ambitions of the National Performance Framework; supports the introduction of regulated minimum training hours

and standards for apprenticeships; believes that colleges must be living wage employers and exemplars of fair work practices, and calls for all apprentices to be paid a living wage."

After debate, the amendment was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 60 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 51 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

The motion, as amended, was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 61 (including 2 proxy votes), Against 51 (including 1 proxy vote), Abstentions 0).

Accordingly, the Parliament resolved—

That the Parliament recognises the transformative power of education and training, and the vital roles that colleges and apprenticeships play in supporting young people and building resilient communities, including in a just transition away from fossil fuels; acknowledges the importance of having college facilities located close to where people live, ensuring accessibility and inclusion; believes that improved college governance is essential to prevent poor management decisions and to safeguard the quality of provision; acknowledges the work of EIS-FELA and UNISON in campaigning for better further education provision and supporting college staff across the country who face uncertainty about the future; calls for enhanced outcomes for women, students and apprentices, to ensure that they are not disproportionately channelled into low-waged sectors; urges colleges to align their skills offerings with the ambitions of the National Performance Framework; supports the introduction of regulated minimum training hours and standards for apprenticeships; believes that colleges must be living wage employers and exemplars of fair work practices, and calls for all apprentices to be paid a living wage.

4. Ministerial Statement: The Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise (Natalie Don-Innes) made a statement and answered questions on Secure Accommodation – Capacity and Future of Secure.

5. Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Scottish Carbon Budgets) Amendment Regulations 2025: The Parliament debated Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Scottish Carbon Budgets) Amendment Regulations 2025.

6. Business Programme: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19267—That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 28 October 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

10.00 pm Decision Time

Wednesday 29 October 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Deputy First Minister Responsibilities, Economy and Gaelic; Finance and Local Government

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

10.00 pm Decision Time

Thursday 30 October 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Climate Action and Energy, and Transport

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

followed by Financial Resolution: Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Tuesday 4 November 2025

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Social Justice and Social Security Committee Debate: Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship

followed by Stage 3 Proceedings: Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 5 November 2025

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; Health and Social Care

followed by Scottish Labour Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Approval of SSIs (if required)

5.10 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 6 November 2025

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Social Justice and Housing

followed by Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee Debate: Strengthening Committees' Effectiveness

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 27 October 2025, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.

The motion was agreed to.

7. Suspension of Standing Orders: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19268—That the Parliament agrees, for the purposes of consideration of the supplementary legislative consent memorandum on the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill, Rules 9B.3.5 and 9B.3.6 of Standing Orders are suspended.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 85 (including 3 proxy votes), Against 0, Abstentions 26).

8. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19269—That the Parliament agrees that the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Scottish Carbon Budgets) Amendment Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 51 (including 1 proxy vote, Against 25, Abstentions 33 (including 2 proxy votes).

9. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19270—That the Parliament agrees that the Social Security (Cross-border Provision, Case Transfer and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

10. Approval of SSI: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19271—That the Parliament agrees that the Winter Heating Assistance (Pension Age) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025 [draft] be approved.

The motion was agreed to (DT).

11. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19272—That the Parliament agrees that the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Contract (Formation and Remedies) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

The motion was agreed (DT)

12. Designation of Lead Committee: The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey), on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S6M-19273—That the Parliament agrees that the Economy and Fair Work Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

The motion was agreed (DT)

13. Decision Time: The Parliament took decisions on items 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 as noted above.

14. Bowel Cancer Screening: The Parliament debated S6M-18931 in the name of Edward Mountain—That the Parliament congratulates the Scottish Government in taking the lead in bowel cancer screening; understands that Scotland has the most sensitive level of screening in the whole of the UK; notes calls on the Scottish Government to continue to lead the way by working with bowel cancer charities to ensure that Scotland remains at the forefront of UK bowel cancer screening; congratulates all bowel cancer charities on their continued work, and notes that Stoma Aware Day/World Ostomy Day is on 4 October 2025, which, it believes, is vital in continuing to raise awareness.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

David McGill
Clerk of the Parliament
8 October 2025

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

Committee Reports

The following reports were published on 8 October 2025—

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 73rd Report, 2025 (Session 6): Legislative Consent Memorandum: delegated powers exercisable within devolved competence in the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill (SP Paper 886)

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee, 74th Report, 2025 (Session 6): Delegated Powers in the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1 (SP Paper 887)

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