



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Wednesday 23 January 2019**

**Session 5**



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**Wednesday 23 January 2019**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME</b> .....	1
<b>TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY</b> .....	1
Transport (Discounts for Young People) .....	1
Levenmouth Rail Link .....	2
Active Travel .....	3
Transport Scotland (Support for Tourism) .....	4
A83 Taskforce (Update) .....	5
Caledonian MacBrayne Employees (Western Isles Residents) .....	7
First Bus (Meetings) .....	8
Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Impact) .....	8
<b>JUSTICE AND THE LAW OFFICERS</b> .....	10
Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017 (Compliance) .....	10
Police Strength Statistics .....	11
Scottish Independence Referendum (Authorisation) .....	12
Kurdish Community (Relations with Police) .....	13
Draft Budget (Police Scotland) .....	14
HMP Inverness (Capacity) .....	15
Hate Crime Policy (Input from Women's Organisations) .....	16
Accused Persons (Anonymity) .....	17
<b>REVIEW OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION</b> .....	20
<i>Statement—[John Swinney].</i> The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney) .....	20
<b>CLINICAL WASTE SERVICES</b> .....	31
<i>Statement—[Jeane Freeman].</i> The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman) .....	31
<b>SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b> .....	43
<i>Motion moved—[Kate Forbes].</i> <i>Amendment moved—[Dean Lockhart].</i> <i>Amendment moved—[Rhoda Grant].</i> The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes) .....	43
Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con) .....	46
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab) .....	50
Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD) .....	52
Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP) .....	54
Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con) .....	55
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP) .....	57
Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab) .....	59
Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP) .....	60
Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con) .....	62
Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP) .....	63
Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab) .....	65
Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....	67
Kate Forbes .....	69
<b>POINT OF ORDER</b> .....	72
<b>BUSINESS MOTION</b> .....	74
<i>Motion moved—[Graeme Dey]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS</b> .....	77
<i>Motions moved—[Graeme Dey].</i>	
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	78

<b>ADULT LEARNING</b> .....	87
<i>Motion debated—[Colin Beattie].</i>	
Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP) .....	87
Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP) .....	90
Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con).....	92
Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab) .....	93
The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Richard Lochhead) .....	94
<b>CORRECTION</b> .....	98

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 23 January 2019

*[The Deputy Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]*

## Portfolio Question Time

### Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The first item of business is portfolio questions. I recite the usual mantra: short questions and succinct answers, and we will get through everybody.

#### Transport (Discounts for Young People)

**1. Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it can take to allow young people access to cheaper transport, and what its position is on the discounts that are currently offered by the bus and train operators. (S5O-02789)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** The Scottish Government continues to take positive targeted action to help young people to access cheaper transport through initiatives such as the national concessionary travel scheme for young people, which offers discounts on bus and rail services. We welcome the range of discounted fares that are offered to young people by operators. Discounts are commercial matters for the individual bus operators. On rail, they are offered under the terms of the ScotRail franchise contract.

The Scottish Government is seeking to introduce free bus travel for young modern apprentices, and for young carers who are in receipt of the planned young carers grant, once it comes into force.

**Pauline McNeill:** On turning 16, a young person is welcomed into adulthood by being asked to pay full fares on all public transport. Many young people at 16 are not working but are still at school. The discounts that the minister talks about are not deep enough. I welcome what the minister has said on apprentices and carers, but surely it is time to recognise that teenagers across the board, but especially 16 and 17-year-olds, need a fairer deal on buses, trains and ferries.

**Michael Matheson:** Pauline McNeill will be aware that the national concessionary travel scheme for young people was introduced back in January 2017 and is delivered through the Young

Scot smart card programme. It provides all 16 to 18-year-olds and full-time volunteers up to the age of 25 with discounts on bus travel. A discount rail card is also available for young people.

We are always keen to ensure that we support young people in accessing public transport. On the very specific measure that the member has proposed to provide further discounts over and above what we provide at the present time, no doubt the budget from which she wants that to come will filter through, in the process.

#### Levenmouth Rail Link

**2. Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made in advancing the case and funding for a new Levenmouth rail link. (S5O-02790)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** Transport Scotland is leading the transport appraisal work for the Levenmouth sustainable transport study, in close collaboration with Fife Council. The findings from the transport appraisal work will identify whether there is a rationale for progressing the Levenmouth rail link.

Since I last spoke in Parliament about the study, the initial appraisal report has been published and stakeholders were updated on the findings of the report at sessions last November. Stakeholders continue to be updated monthly by email and with information on Transport Scotland's website.

The draft preliminary options appraisal report, which includes rail link options, is being reviewed by Transport Scotland and Fife Council. The final stage is the detailed appraisal, the timescale for which very much depends on the outcome of the current stage.

**Alex Rowley:** I welcome the progress that is now being made, and I hope that we will see that progress continue. There is strong community support for the proposal and recognition of the economic and social opportunities that the rail link would bring. Is the cabinet secretary willing to meet the community organisation that is behind the campaign and come to Levenmouth? I understand that he is meeting one of the constituency MSPs today to discuss the issue, but will he come to Levenmouth?

The one thing that those people are clear about is that this should be—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** No—questions should be short, please.

**Alex Rowley:** —a non-partisan campaign, so will the cabinet secretary come and meet that organisation?

**Michael Matheson:** I have already given agreement to the constituency member's request to visit Levenmouth. Last week, when I was in Fife, I was approached by a member of the Levenmouth rail campaign. When I was asked whether I would visit, I confirmed that I was more than happy to do so.

I recognise the cross-party support for the proposal. No doubt we will, as the work is taken forward, be able to identify the best option to progress it.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** Like Alex Rowley, I have an invitation to put to the cabinet secretary. Will he come to my constituency to meet members of the Levenmouth rail campaign and see the potential economic benefits that a rail link would bring to what is an area of high deprivation?

**Michael Matheson:** Yes.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Excellent. Question three has been withdrawn.

### Active Travel

4. **Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it promotes active travel. (S5O-02792)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** The Scottish Government has doubled the active travel budget from £39.2 million in 2017-18 to £80 million in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The majority of that funding is allocated to local authorities to deliver high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure that enables people to walk and cycle more.

The funding also includes more than £10 million to support local authorities and communities to deliver behavioural change programmes including cycle training and increased access to bikes and facilities, to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

We also recently appointed Scotland's first active nation commissioner, Lee Craigie, who will become the national advocate for the benefits of walking and cycling, including for everyday short journeys.

**Annie Wells:** It is estimated that it will, at the current rate of progress, take about 239 years to reach the Scottish Government's target of 10 per cent of journeys being made by bike by 2020. Although setting an ambitious target is positive—I welcome the steps that the cabinet secretary has set out—how will the Scottish Government ensure that the necessary support is in place to achieve it?

**Michael Matheson:** When Annie Wells said "239 years", I thought that she was talking about the Brexit negotiations, given that state of affairs.

We have an ambitious programme for driving up active travel. We set an ambitious stretch target and we are seeing progress being made towards it. However, progress is clearly not being made at the speed that we would all like. That is why we doubled the budget in order to drive progress forward in the coming years. I am committed to doing everything that we can do to increase the number of people who choose active travel options when making journeys.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the doubling of the budget and highlight to the cabinet secretary that I visited the south city way CLPLUS—community links plus—project, which was supported on a cross-party basis. Its accessibility and visibility are inspiring. Can the cabinet secretary tell us more about how it will be ensured that marginalised communities have affordable options in such travel opportunities?

**Michael Matheson:** Claudia Beamish raises an important issue. I have on a number of occasions made the point that in promoting and encouraging active travel, we must reach out to hard-to-get-at communities, and to individuals who might not initially think that they will take up an active travel option.

In recent discussions, I challenged the stakeholders who are responsible for taking forward the promotion of active travel to demonstrate in greater detail how they are reaching out to our more deprived communities and ensuring that they are supported to consider active travel options. We are, for example, looking at how we can build the provisions that are necessary to support active travel into the infrastructure of social housing provision. That could include cycle and walking routes, work with housing associations, the creation of e-bike hubs and provision of electric vehicles through a car-club model. Those could be delivered through social housing. I have challenged stakeholders to develop all those in a more detailed way.

I am clear about the need to ensure that active travel is about not just people who are predisposed to being active, but is about reaching out to communities that are more deprived and difficult to get at in order to ensure that they, too, get the benefits of the investment.

### Transport Scotland (Support for Tourism)

5. **Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how Transport Scotland supports and promotes tourism. (S5O-02793)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** Working with partners, Transport Scotland supports tourism by investing in our transport network to promote Scotland as an accessible and attractive place to visit. For example, Transport Scotland works closely with Scotland's airports to help to secure new routes that improve business connectivity and inbound tourism, such as the Edinburgh to Beijing international route, which was introduced in 2018 and is operated by Hainan Airlines.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** Another area in which Transport Scotland has direct involvement is the use of brown tourist signs on roads. VisitScotland research shows that those signs are valued and play a role in enabling visitors to reach tourist destinations safely by car. However, a small business in the Highlands and Islands region has recently been quoted almost £50,000 by Transport Scotland to erect just four signs for its business.

Does the cabinet secretary think that that valued scheme is sufficiently affordable and accessible for tourism-focused businesses? If not, what action will he take to support those businesses for which cost is a prohibitive factor?

**Michael Matheson:** Obviously, there are clear criteria for the use of road signage, but if Jamie Halcro Johnston would like to furnish me with the specific details of the matter to which he refers, I would be more than happy to get Transport Scotland officials to look into it.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Does the transport secretary believe that Transport Scotland's sanctioning of the replacement of the MV Hamnavoe on the Stromness to Scrabster route with a freighter vessel with a passenger capacity of only 12 meets the needs of tourists or the local Orkney community?

**Michael Matheson:** I recognise that there are challenges with some of the vessels, particularly at key points in the year when visitor numbers significantly increase. We continue to look at how we can expand and improve the ferry network in Scotland and improve the vessels that are under construction at present. I recognise that there are challenges in certain parts of the network as a result of increasing demand in freight and passenger numbers. Through the ferries plan, we will continue to address those issues appropriately.

### **A83 Taskforce (Update)**

**6. Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update following the last meeting of the A83 taskforce. (S5O-02794)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** I chaired a meeting of the A83 taskforce on 15 November 2018. There was a full and frank discussion and I appreciated the opportunity to listen to local concerns.

At the meeting, I made a commitment that the Argyll and Bute region would be prioritised in the forthcoming strategic transport projects review 2. I also announced that we will review the potential for additional physical landslide mitigation measures at the Rest and Be Thankful. I asked Transport Scotland officials to report back to me by mid-February with the findings of the review to enable discussion of the findings at the next taskforce meeting with local and regional stakeholders on 27 March 2019.

Since 2007, we have invested £70 million in the maintenance of that trunk road, including £11 million on landslide mitigation measures at the Rest and Be Thankful and on the local Old Military Road diversion. Those measures have worked, having already successfully stopped landslip material from reaching the road and keeping that important route open for an estimated 50 to 60 days when it would otherwise have been closed.

**Donald Cameron:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that, as the winter snap begins to hit, routes in the Highlands and Islands region, such as the Rest and Be Thankful stretch of the A83, will inevitably become more treacherous. Given that there is some scepticism about the mitigation measures, what assurances will he give to frustrated residents and businesses that they will be able to travel that route without fear of major delays or road closures?

**Michael Matheson:** I am surprised about Donald Cameron's reference to scepticism, because the mitigation measures that have been taken follow those that were recommended by the taskforce, which includes local stakeholders. That work continues to be implemented and the sum of almost £4.5 million has been spent on additional measures that are being put into place.

The history of the site is clear—there have been significant problems as a result of landslides. The mitigation measures have had a positive impact. They had not eliminated all the material but, for example, the catch-pits that continue to be installed will provide additional resilience and assurance. The review work that is being undertaken at present by Transport Scotland and its expert advisers will inform us whether there are further measures that we can put into place to mitigate landslide risk on that route.

### **Caledonian MacBrayne Employees (Western Isles Residents)**

**7. Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how many staff employed by Caledonian MacBrayne are resident in the Western Isles. (S5O-02795)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** CalMac Ferries Ltd is a major employer in our island and coastal communities, employing 242 staff who reside in Skye, Raasay, Lewis, Harris, the Uists and Barra.

**Dr Allan:** Will the cabinet secretary commit to examining ways to encourage more staff who work for CalMac or the Government's ferry division to be given the option in the future of living and working in the communities that they serve?

**Michael Matheson:** Alasdair Allan will be aware that CalMac proactively undertakes work in schools and at career fairs in our island communities to encourage people to think about doing an apprenticeship with the company; it also has a cadet programme. CalMac is always keen to encourage island-based locals to apply for jobs at the company.

I am always more than happy to encourage more of the people who reside in our island communities to consider applying for those posts and to look at ways to support that further. I will ensure that my ministerial colleague Paul Wheelhouse, the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, gives further consideration to the issue and to whether further measures can be taken, as Alasdair Allan has suggested, to increase the number of people who live in our island communities and are employed by CalMac.

**Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary confirm that, notwithstanding the valid point that my good friend and colleague Alasdair Allan has made, the CalMac headquarters will remain in Gourrock in my constituency?

**Michael Matheson:** CalMac gave me a firm commitment in its bid for the Clyde and Hebrides ferry service contract to retain its head office in Gourrock, and it is an integral part of the community in Inverclyde, where it employs 266 people. I assure Stuart McMillan that we are keen to ensure that communities with close links to CalMac maximise the benefits from them, not only in his constituency but in those of his parliamentary colleagues in our island communities.

### **First Bus (Meetings)**

**8. James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met First Bus. (S5O-02796)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** The last meeting that Scottish Government officials held with First Bus was on Monday 14 June this year.

**James Dornan:** The cabinet secretary may be aware that a growing number of my constituents have complained about the quality of the bus service from the south of Glasgow into the city centre. I asked First Bus to attend a public meeting that I had arranged, only for it to refuse. Does the cabinet secretary agree that, as First Bus receives substantial amounts of public money, it should be more accountable to the public and be prepared to listen to their needs?

**Michael Matheson:** Presiding Officer, I have got ahead of myself. To correct the record, the last meeting that officials had was on 14 January this year, not in June.

I regret that First Bus did not agree to attend the meeting that was organised by James Dornan, and I encourage the member to continue to pursue it on that issue. It is important that First Bus engages with the communities to which it delivers services, and I know of particular areas in the member's constituency, such as Castlemilk, in which access to bus transport is extremely important to access the city centre. I encourage First Bus to engage with James Dornan and his constituents to address issues of concern and ensure that services are run in a way that reflects the needs of the local community.

### **Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Impact)**

**9. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its initial assessment is of the impact of the Aberdeen western peripheral route on north-east transport. (S5O-02797)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson):** Transport Scotland will undertake an evaluation of the AWPR project, in line with the Scottish trunk road infrastructure project evaluation guidance, against both the transport planning objectives and wider evaluation criteria. The evaluation will consider the impact of the scheme by comparing conditions in year 1, year 3 and year 5 after opening with forecasts made during scheme design and development.

**Maureen Watt:** The cabinet secretary will be pleased to note that we are already seeing a significant reduction in heavy goods vehicles traffic



in the Peterculter and Torry parts of my constituency and in Market Street in Aberdeen city centre, which has had unacceptable pollution and emissions levels. When will those next be measured, so that we can see the environmental as well as economic benefits of the Government's delivery of the AWPR?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I ask the cabinet secretary to keep his answer brief, please.

**Michael Matheson:** I am pleased to hear that Maureen Watt's constituents are already seeing the benefits on the ground of that scheme. The feedback that I have received certainly reflects that.

The Government's project evaluation will include consideration of the impact of the AWPR against a number of criteria, which will include economic, safety and environmental matters. The local authority has a responsibility to consider issues that relate to local air quality monitoring, and to report periodically on the Aberdeen air quality management areas as to the levels in areas where there has been monitoring.

Air quality monitoring at a local level will be undertaken by the local authority, but I can assure Maureen Watt that we will continue to work with Aberdeen City Council to progress the introduction of a low-emission zone in the city by 2020. That is in line with our programme for government commitment to help to improve air quality in our city centres because of its potential impact on individuals who may have preconditions that are related to problems that are associated with taking in contaminated air.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** Can the cabinet secretary update Parliament on when this delayed project will be fully open to traffic, and, for the record, what the total estimated cost of the project will be?

**Michael Matheson:** The member will welcome the fact that 85 per cent of the road has now opened and that the north-east economy is getting the benefits of that. The contractors have advised that they have completed the remedial work on the crossing over the River Don. They have still to provide assurances about the remedial work that has been undertaken and the enhanced monitoring arrangements that are being put in place for that. Once they provide that information, it will be passed to Transport Scotland, which will then consider it in relation to the opening of the final section of the road.

The cost still stands at £745 million, as was set out in the contract. The member will recognise that the contractors have stated that they have made a claim, which is not unusual for a major infrastructure project of this nature. As I have made clear, any claim has to be substantiated and

evidence based. To date, the contractors have not provided evidence to substantiate any claim. Therefore, the present financial cost still stands.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We must now move on to the next item. I apologise to Gail Ross for not reaching her question.

## Justice and the Law Officers

### Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017 (Compliance)

1. **Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government how many proceedings have been raised against Scottish limited partnerships for failure to comply with the Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017, and how many convictions there were. (S5O-02799)

**The Lord Advocate (James Wolfe QC):** As of last Friday, the Crown has received no reports of alleged offences under the 2017 regulations. Accordingly, the Crown in Scotland has not raised any proceedings under those regulations.

**Andy Wightman:** As of 10 December 2018, according to work that was undertaken by investigative journalist Richard Smith, just more than 2,700 of the 18,000 active SLPs had not submitted any information. As the Lord Advocate is aware, that is an offence.

In a written answer to a question I lodged on 19 March 2018, the Lord Advocate said that, over the past 10 years, there have been no prosecutions for failure to meet statutory provisions. He also said that the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

"has recognised Companies House as a Specialist Reporting Agency"

and is working with it

"to facilitate the reporting of alleged offences".—[*Written Answers, 17 April 2018; SW5-15385.*]

What progress has been made on that work, and are any prosecutions anticipated as a consequence, given the fact that the offences are very evident?

**The Lord Advocate:** A number of cases have been reported to the Crown since that question was asked and answered. They have been reported by Companies House under section 451 of the Companies Act 2006 and are currently being considered. The Crown has continuing engagement with Companies House with a view to facilitating the reporting of other alleged offences, including those under the 2017 regulations.

It is a matter for Companies House, as a specialist reporting agency, to determine its approach to enforcement of the regulations.

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** All steps to improve transparency around SLPs are, of course, welcome. Does the Lord Advocate agree that the proposed reforms that were announced by the United Kingdom Government in December last year, snuck out under the cloud of Brexit chaos, still fall far short of what is necessary to close the many loopholes that exist?

**The Lord Advocate:** It would be more appropriate to direct that question to Derek Mackay. Questions of substance about the proposed reforms to the law are matters for him. I can deal with issues that relate to the investigation and prosecution of alleged offences under the regulations.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Indeed, Lord Advocate.

### Police Strength Statistics

**2. Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will next publish the police strength statistics for Scotland. (S5O-02800)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** The next edition in the "Police Officer Quarterly Strength Scotland" series, for 31 December 2018, will be published on Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 9.30 am. In line with requirements of the code of practice for official statistics, that publication date has been announced via the Scottish Government's "Official Statistics—Forthcoming Publications" web page.

**Peter Chapman:** The latest police figures show that the number of local divisional officers in the north-east has been cut by 42 in the past year alone, which is a clear demonstration of the Scottish National Party's policy of centralisation and is to the detriment of communities in my region. Can the cabinet secretary assure me that I will not discover further reductions in the next set of statistics?

**Humza Yousaf:** On the local policing issue, as at 30 September 2018, the north-east division had 1,158 full-time police officers, which was an increase of 2.3 per cent from 2013.

I have to mention Peter Chapman's lack of self-awareness in asking the question when, under the SNP-led Scottish Government, we have 913 more officers than we had in 2007, whereas the Conservative-led United Kingdom Government has utterly decimated police services in England and Wales, where there are 20,000 fewer officers, which is a reduction of 13 per cent. In Scotland,

we have 32 officers per 10,000 of population; in England and Wales, there are 21 officers per 10,000. Perhaps a little bit of self-awareness is necessary when the member asks such questions. As we are getting into Burns season, he might want to be reminded of those famous verses:

"O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as others see us!"

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** I will resist the temptation to quote Burns.

The City of Edinburgh Council currently plans to cut the £2.6 million that it provides the police directly to fund 54 additional community-based officers in the capital. Does the cabinet secretary know the total number of officers who are funded directly by local authorities? What impact have the reductions in local authority spending over the past few years had on the number of community-based officers in Scotland?

**Humza Yousaf:** I discussed that issue with the member at a recent meeting of the Justice Committee. It is for the local authority to decide how to spend its resource. The member is free to argue otherwise, but I would say that local authorities will receive a very fair settlement in the upcoming budget. If the member thinks that that is not the case, it is incumbent on his party to make proposals on where to remove money from the budget, as we would have to do, to increase the local government budget. No doubt, the member and his party will engage in that process. However, in our investment, we are treating the police fairly and well, with revenue protection plus a 52 per cent increase in the capital budget.

We will continue to invest in the police and in local government. If the member thinks that there should be a change in the budget, he and his colleagues should engage positively in the budget process.

### Scottish Independence Referendum (Authorisation)

**3. Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what the Lord Advocate's position is on its competency to authorise another referendum on Scottish independence without another section 30 order. (S5O-02801)

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans (Graeme Dey):** By long-standing convention, the content of any legal advice received by the Government is confidential.

**Mike Rumbles:** What a poor response that was. In the spirit of openness and transparency, which the Parliament prides itself on, does the minister agree that, just as the Scottish ministers demanded that the United Kingdom Government

publish its legal advice on Brexit and it was published, the Lord Advocate's advice on an independence referendum should be published by the Scottish ministers? I see that the Lord Advocate is present in the chamber. It would have been helpful if he had given us the benefit of his advice.

**Graeme Dey:** Presiding Officer, in the spirit of your oft-repeated plea that ministers and members should avoid extending such exchanges unnecessarily, I refer the member to my previous answer. However, in so doing, I point out that the convention that I referred to is so long standing that it goes all the way back to when the Lib Dems were part of the then coalition Executive. Of course, that was quite some time ago, which is perhaps why the existence of the convention has slipped from Mr Rumbles's memory.

**Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con):** Is it the Scottish Government's view that the Parliament could lawfully pass legislation authorising an independence referendum without a section 30 order—yes or no?

**Graeme Dey:** I have to refer the member to my earlier answer.

#### **Kurdish Community (Relations with Police)**

**4. Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to improve the relationship between the police and the Kurdish community. (S5O-02802)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** Police Scotland is committed to building positive relationships with all of Scotland's communities. Responsibility for that lies with the chief constable. However, the Scottish Government understands that Police Scotland has engaged recently with representatives of the Kurdish community to address concerns that have been raised by some of its members. I also understand that Police Scotland has engaged directly with Ross Greer, in his capacity as co-convenor of the Parliament's cross-party group on Kurdistan.

**Ross Greer:** The cabinet secretary might be aware that police operations over recent years have resulted in members of the Kurdish community being afraid to attend their own community centres and no longer sending their children to language and dancing classes for fear of them being monitored. That is an unacceptable and unsustainable situation. Will the cabinet secretary agree to a meeting with representatives of the Kurdish community and the cross-party group on Kurdistan to discuss how we can improve relations and trust between the community and the police?

**Humza Yousaf:** I am more than happy to engage with Ross Greer and members of the Kurdish community. He will understand that I cannot do so in relation to any live police investigations but, on the wider issue, I am more than happy to meet him, in his role as the co-convenor of the cross-party group, to hear the community's anxieties and concerns.

Over a number of years, I have engaged with Police Scotland over concerns that I, as a young Asian male and a member of the Muslim community, have had. Having been stopped and searched on numerous occasions in my younger days, when I was growing up, for no apparent reason, I know that it has taken time for Police Scotland to build back up a level of trust with the Muslim community. That takes hard work and effort. I know that the chief constable is absolutely committed to ensuring positive community relations.

Ross Greer can continue to engage directly with Police Scotland. I am more than happy to assist with that, when I can, and to listen to concerns.

#### **Draft Budget (Police Scotland)**

**5. Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how much Police Scotland expects to receive from the proposals in the draft budget, and how it will allocate this. (S5O-02803)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** The Scottish budget for 2019-20, which was published on 12 December last year, contains funding of £1.2 billion for the Scottish Police Authority, which is a 3.7 per cent increase on the 2018-19 budget. The funding includes real-terms protection for the revenue budget and, as I have mentioned, a 52 per cent uplift in the capital budget for investment in modern information and communications technology. It is for the Scottish Police Authority to set its budget for 2019-20, which includes setting the budget for Police Scotland.

**Gil Paterson:** I am sure that the cabinet secretary will welcome the fact that Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will no longer be punished by the UK Treasury in that they will now be allowed to claim back VAT. Have the police and fire services been paid back the VAT that had been withheld? If so, how much have they been repaid?

**Humza Yousaf:** Members will know that we welcome the VAT policy change that came into effect in March 2018. However, that did not address the issue of VAT that had already been paid to Her Majesty's Treasury between 2013 and 2018. Having conceded the principle that it is unfair to charge VAT only to our services, the UK

Government has refused to pay back £120 million to the Scottish Police Authority and about £50 million to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. If, as a Parliament—I am looking at Conservative members specifically—we agree to lobby the UK Government to give back the money that it has taken unfairly from Scotland, we can continue to invest in the police service, in the ICT system and in keeping our communities safe.

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** Police Scotland has been plagued by financial troubles since the SNP created it, despite the Scottish Conservatives getting back the VAT and bailing out the SNP. Last December, the Auditor General was clear that, if the information technology is not sorted out, the force will remain in deficit. Does the cabinet secretary think that the Auditor General was wrong?

**Humza Yousaf:** I always listen to what the Auditor General has to say. I also listen to what those south of the border say about the UK Government's lack of investment in the police service. The Police Federation of England and Wales has said that it is the UK Government's

"austerity policies which have seen police budgets"—  
[*Interruption.*]

The Conservatives do not like hearing this at all, but I will continue to read the quote. The Police Federation says that it is the UK Government's

"austerity policies which have seen police budgets slashed by 19% in real terms. This is why policing"—

in England and Wales—

"is in crisis and our members are on their knees trying to keep up with the rising tide of crime with nearly 22,000 fewer officers."

Compare that to the situation in Scotland, where we have revenue protection, an uplift of 52 per cent in the capital budget, more police officers than we inherited and lower crime rates. That puts us in a relatively good position compared with that of police services south of the border.

### **HMP Inverness (Capacity)**

**6. Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether Her Majesty's Prison Inverness exceeded prisoner capacity in 2018. (S5O-02804)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** It did. The average population during 2018 was 113 people, which is an average occupancy level of just over 120 per cent. As the member no doubt knows, HMP Inverness is a small local prison that manages the requirements of the courts across a vast geographical area. The Scottish Prison Service supports positive relationships by, wherever possible, accommodating people in the prison that is closest

to their home, and that has contributed to that occupancy level.

**Edward Mountain:** When prisons exceed their capacity, two areas that suffer are rehabilitation and safety. Will the cabinet secretary confirm that enough resources are being directed at providing sufficient warders and rehabilitation support to prisoners in Inverness? Will he also tell us when the new prison in Inverness will be ready for use?

**Humza Yousaf:** Edward Mountain makes a very important point. None of us wants to see overoccupancy in any of our prisons—indeed, I answered a question last week on this issue from, I think, Liam McArthur. The fact that we have one of the highest prison populations—if not, by some measures, the highest—is to our great shame and not something to be proud of at all.

The member is absolutely right to say that such a situation potentially has a detrimental effect on rehabilitation. I know that the SPS is very aware of that and will work hard on continuing to fund rehabilitation programmes and looking at alternatives to custody. I know that his colleagues in the United Kingdom Government recognise this, but I say genuinely to the member that short sentences do not have the same impact on rehabilitating those who commit crimes as community disposals do. As a result, I would appreciate it if, when we come forward with plans to introduce a presumption against short sentences of 12 months, he and his party would look at them with genuine open-mindedness.

As for the replacement for HMP Inverness, I will send the member some details on that. It is included in the Government's infrastructure planning, but it is fair to say that at the moment the priorities are the female custodial estate, a replacement for Barlinnie and then a replacement for HMP Inverness.

### **Hate Crime Policy (Input from Women's Organisations)**

**7. Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how its policy on dealing with hate crime is informed by the expertise of women's organisations. (S5O-02805)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** There is a clear need for action to be taken to tackle gender-based prejudice and misogyny, and we are currently seeking views on how best to tackle that in Scotland as part of our consultation on hate crime legislation. As we worked to develop the proposals in our consultation, we engaged with a number of women's organisations including—and this is not an exclusive list—Engender, Rape Crisis Scotland, Zero Tolerance and Scottish Women's Aid.

As the member no doubt knows, the consultation was launched on 14 November 2018 and will run until 24 February. It provides a range of organisations and groups, as well as members of the public, with an opportunity to share their views and inform what is included in the new hate crime legislation, and I encourage everybody with an interest to respond.

**Claudia Beamish:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that answer and certainly welcome the consultation. Can he give some detail on how the Government is engaging with women's groups, especially in rural parts of the country where women might be quite isolated and might not necessarily be members of a particular grouping?

**Humza Yousaf:** The member makes a hugely important point. As part of the hate crime consultation, we are holding a host of events right across the country, including in some remote and rural areas. In March, the Minister for Older People and Equalities and I will be meeting Engender and a number of other women's organisations, and I will certainly be speaking to them about this issue. If they feel that there is a deficiency in engaging with women in remote and rural areas, I will be more than happy to see how we can address it, if it exists. However, the premise of the member's question—that there are issues that specifically affect women in rural and remote areas—is undoubtedly right, and anything more that I as cabinet secretary can do about that, I will certainly look to do.

### **Accused Persons (Anonymity)**

**8. Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind):** To ask the Scottish Government what steps are in place to prevent disclosure of an accused's identity from compromising the safety of innocent parties. (S5O-02806)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** In addition to the provisions of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, the courts have a common-law power to restrict the reporting of proceedings where it is in the interests of justice to do so. It is for the court to decide whether to make such an order in any individual case and in appropriate cases, an interdict may also be available.

**Mark McDonald:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that I wrote to him, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General about a case in my constituency in which a young victim could have been identified inadvertently as a result of the accused's identity being disclosed. I am grateful for the support that was provided to prevent that from happening, but there other cases in which it occurs. For example, the disclosure of the accused's identity and address opens up the potential for innocent family members to face

retribution and repercussion as a result of the actions of the accused, despite the fact that those family members are innocent. Will the cabinet secretary look at the issues around identification, in particular the disclosure of address details, which can often lead to retribution and repercussion being brought to the door of family members who have played no role in any criminal proceedings?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Briefly, please, cabinet secretary.

**Humza Yousaf:** Mark McDonald has raised an important issue. I will look at that, but I say again that it is for the courts to make decisions on whether to impose orders banning publication of matters mentioned in court.

On the wider issue, Mark McDonald is not the only member of the Scottish Parliament to have written to me about such cases. Protections are already in place, but if we can strengthen them, I will look to the Lord Advocate and other colleagues to see what else we can do. Of course, we will keep an open mind on that. We will explore whatever might be within the power of the Government, but I reiterate that much of this area is within the powers of the courts—and rightly so.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes portfolio questions. I apologise to Liam Kerr and Joan McAlpine that we have failed to reach their questions.

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. My point of order focuses on the role under the Scotland Act 1998 of the law officers—the Lord Advocate, who is present with us today, and the Solicitor General—who are privileged to be the only two unelected people who are allowed to sit in the chamber. That was written into the act so that they are here specifically to give their opinions and views directly to MSPs. In my question at portfolio question time, I asked what the Lord Advocate's position was on the Scottish Government's competence to authorise another referendum on Scottish independence without another section 30 order. I did not ask what his advice to the Scottish Government was; I specifically asked for his advice to MSPs here in the chamber. As I have said, under the Scotland Act 1998 they are here for that purpose. I find it particularly annoying that the Lord Advocate is present but has taken the decision not to answer my question.

I would like to know from you, Presiding Officer, whether it is appropriate for the Lord Advocate to sit in the Parliament, in the privileged position that he has under the Scotland Act 1998, and not to address members directly, as was the purpose of the provision in the Scotland Act 1998 in the first place?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I thank Mr Rumbles for making that point of order. However, as is set out in rule 13.7 of the standing orders, with a few exceptions that do not apply in this instance,

“oral questions may be answered by any member of the Scottish Government or a junior Scottish Minister”.

As the member is aware, oral questions are addressed to the Scottish Government, as his question was, and it is for it to decide who attends to answer each question.

**Mike Rumbles:** With respect, Presiding Officer, I understand all that and I accept entirely the position that you have just outlined. However, my question goes further than the one that I asked earlier today. I understand that, under the standing orders, the Scottish Government can choose to do that. My question is on a more fundamental point, which is very important for the Parliament: why has the Lord Advocate, who is here by virtue of his privileged position under the Scotland Act 1998, chosen not to answer directly the questions that he is here to answer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that I answered your point of order clearly. The position is that that is in the standing orders. You may be dissatisfied with that, but those are the rules of the Parliament.

I must move on to the next item of business, which is a statement. I will give members on the Government front bench a moment to take up their places.

## Review of Personal and Social Education

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The next item of business is a statement by John Swinney on a review of personal and social education. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:44

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):** The health and wellbeing of children and young people in our schools is central to our ambition to achieve excellence and equity for all in a high-performing education system. Personal and social education is a key element of that approach and it must be firmly aligned to the curriculum for excellence. Children and young people must be equipped with the skills and knowledge that they need to make their own decisions.

Equity for all can be achieved only through an inclusive education system. Scotland's inclusive approach celebrates diversity and allows all children and young people to develop an understanding and recognition of difference. That contributes to the development of an increasingly inclusive, compassionate and equal society. A core principle of personal and social education is to provide young people with the requisite knowledge, skills and resilience to fulfil their potential.

I am very pleased to announce that the review of personal and social education has been completed and I have accepted all the recommendations of the review. I believe that the recommendations will strengthen the delivery of personal and social education in our schools and will support our young people to reach their full potential.

The recommendations will further embed our ambitions for prevention and early intervention in our schools to provide every young person with the opportunity to grow, achieve and succeed as individuals.

Before I speak about the details of the review, I take this opportunity to thank the Education and Skills Committee for investigating the main issues in relation to the content and delivery of PSE. The committee's report, "Let's Talk About Personal and Social Education" helped to establish the focus of the review. I am also grateful to Christina McKelvie MSP for her role during her time as convener of the Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee and for the committee's report, "It is

not Cool to be Cruel: Prejudice-based bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools", which also highlighted the importance of high-quality personal and social education.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the review, especially the young people whose insightful contributions played a huge part in it. Their time and contributions were extremely valuable in shaping the final report and recommendations.

Personal and social education is a key component of the curriculum for excellence. It should support children and young people to gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century, including skills for learning, life and work. Good and relevant personal and social education is a major factor in providing the foundations of successful learning and supporting schools to close the attainment gap.

Personal and social education should be designed to enable children and young people to develop, learn about their rights and responsibilities, help them stay healthy and safe and prepare them for the challenges and opportunities that they will experience.

The review includes 16 recommendations outlining how we can, in co-operation with our partners, improve the delivery of personal and social education to provide all young people with the learning experience that they need and want. The recommendations have been informed by a 20-month review process that involved reviewing existing resources, a thematic inspection of PSE delivery in 55 schools and early learning centres and an extensive six-month engagement programme with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, local authority representatives, third sector organisations, faith groups and young people.

The thematic inspection undertaken by Education Scotland was a significant element in the review process and I am grateful to the inspection team for completing the inspection in a short time. The thematic inspection highlighted key strengths of PSE delivery, as well as areas for improvement, both of which were crucial elements of a thorough and extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders, providing the basis for the suite of recommendations that will strengthen PSE delivery and prepare children and young people for learning, work and life.

The priority and place of PSE in the curriculum and the role of schools' senior teams in promoting PSE's importance in our schools is crucial. I am therefore pleased to announce that the Government and our key partners will co-produce a new PSE toolkit to enhance PSE delivery at all stages of education. It will illustrate models of

good practice, provide support and resources for teachers on the delivery of PSE and provide models for involving children and young people in the design and delivery of PSE.

It is vital that PSE provides children and young people with the right learning at the right stage and in an appropriate manner. The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will produce advice and guidance on approaches to monitoring young people's progression in PSE to support schools in providing learning that equips our young people with the knowledge, skills and resilience that they need.

To provide support to teachers and pupils on mental wellbeing, new guidance on the spectrum of mental health and wellbeing services that are available will be produced. That will complement the work that we are taking forward to provide access to school counsellors and enable schools to complement existing provision with additional services and share effective practice that is already delivering improvements in our schools.

Throughout the review, the issue of consent and how it is taught was raised. That is an important aspect of personal and social education. Our young people are facing a number of influences on what is appropriate and inappropriate, especially from online resources. As I announced in November, we will update the existing statutory guidance available to schools on relationships, sexual health and parenthood to ensure that consent education is stage and age appropriate, that it focuses on the issues relevant to young people and that it provides support and resource to our teachers on issues such as sexual harassment and online influences, linking with the work that we are taking forward to deliver lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender inclusive education in our schools.

The senior phase at school is a critical time in which we prepare our young people for life after school. Young people themselves told us, through targeted engagement, that PSE was not meeting their needs and preparing them with the necessary life skills and knowledge that are vital if the pioneers and leaders of tomorrow are to be equipped and ready for the challenges ahead. We will therefore establish a senior phase PSE mentoring programme to enable pupils to design and deliver PSE learning that is relevant to them and that focuses on the issues and knowledge required for the next phase in life. We will also provide support to teachers, through the PSE toolkit, on where they can access support for pupils preparing for life after school.

As well as preparing our children and young people, it is critical that we provide the right level of support and resource for our teachers, to ensure the consistent delivery of PSE in all our

schools. We will therefore develop a suite of learning resources that promote a focus on the key issues identified by young people during the review process: life skills; personal development; planning for choices and change; relationships; sexual health; and parenthood. Key partners in career-long professional learning, as well as the third sector, will be instrumental in helping us to deliver this recommendation.

I am also acutely aware, through the review process, of some of the high case-loads that pastoral and guidance teachers are having to deal with, which is having an effect on the support being offered to our young people. I want to improve that situation and to allow teachers to deliver the support and help to young people that they want. The PSE toolkit will deliver that ambition by providing our hugely important pastoral guidance staff with additional resource, a reduction in the bureaucracy that they face and details on evaluated good practice models. Additionally, I believe that our work with local government partners and the teaching unions will enable us to take steps to highlight the vital and rewarding role of pastoral guidance teachers as a career pathway. It is not just the existing teaching profession that we need to equip with the necessary skills and resource, but the teachers of tomorrow. That is why we will work with the General Teaching Council for Scotland to update the standards for professional registration to ensure that the importance of PSE is recognised, and that it is a skill expected of all newly qualified teachers.

There is a great deal of strength in our education system and I am determined to ensure that the delivery of personal and social education is making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Scotland. I am sure that all members here want, like me, a Scotland where children and young people form healthy relationships and value diversity; where everybody should be recognised and respected for who they are individually; where our children and young people can grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected and protected; where every child and young person is supported to be who they want to be and treated equally in order to enjoy equal chances and choices in all aspects of their lives; and where every child and young person is valued for the contribution that they make to our society and to communities.

One of the young people quoted in an online survey said:

"PSE is really good for learning about everything you might encounter in life ... It's very empowering and PSE is a very good and vital subject."

That is the experience that we want for all our children and young people in order to give them the skills and knowledge to prepare them for learning, work and life. The range of actions to strengthen the delivery of personal and social education that I have announced today reaffirm our commitment to making that a reality for all children and young people, which will make a real difference to their lives in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The cabinet secretary will now take questions on the issues raised.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Yesterday, on several news channels, we heard about the disturbing circumstances that led to the death of teenager Molly Russell. In a very brave interview, her father spoke emotionally about how social media has the potential to damage a young person's life, irrespective of the quality of the guidance provided at home or in school.

In the context of the cabinet secretary's comments about working with a wide range of stakeholders, I ask what engagement the Scottish Government has had with the social media industry to complement the work that is being done at United Kingdom level to ensure that online safety is a central part of PSE in the toolkit that the cabinet secretary described.

**John Swinney:** The Scottish Government has discussions with a range of interested parties about the issues around social media. It is important that we focus our work in personal and social education on equipping young people with resilience and the capacity to make judgments around the handling and use of social media, to ensure that they are suitably equipped and protected when dealing with some of the potential challenges that come with it.

Personal and social education is implicit in the ethos of education. I want to make sure that the good practice that I see in schools to encourage the nurturing of good relationships is deployed not only in the context of school activity, but enables young people to think about their contribution to the world of social media and the impact that their actions can have if they are not appropriately set.

We are taking actions that are designed to ensure that in an ever-changing world—which is changing at a faster pace than any of us have seen before—young people are equipped with the essential attributes of resilience to enable them to manage those challenges. Some of that will come from personal and social education and some from the wider impact of curriculum for excellence, which is focused entirely on the objective of ensuring that young people are equipped for modern life and supported in meeting its



challenges, some of which may present themselves through social media.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for early sight of his statement. We agree with him that schools are very much about the health and wellbeing of our young people, their values and social development and, indeed, progress towards inclusivity and equality in wider society. Therefore, the review is important and the acceptance of its recommendations is welcome.

However, it is now almost two years since the Education and Skills Committee report that Mr Swinney says provided the focus for that review, and it is another two years before he expects delivery. When does he expect to bring his implementation plan to Parliament, and the updated statutory guidance on relationships and sexual health to be completed? Mr Swinney also acknowledged the pressure that there is on guidance teachers, which he says will be addressed by a PSE toolkit. Does he not agree that it would be better addressed by having more teachers—specifically, more guidance teachers—and how will he try to deliver that?

**John Swinney:** I am signalling to Parliament the considered way in which the Government has addressed this important issue. It is important that we take the time to put in place and implement the right measures. We are moving to the implementation phase, which will take place over the next two years to ensure that we make the required progress on a staged basis.

I expect the revised guidance on relationships, sexual health and parenthood to be launched at the Scottish learning festival in September 2019. It is currently being piloted in 40 schools around the country. We want it to be piloted effectively, so that it can be adapted to ensure that it can be implemented widely in our education system. If we can do that on a shorter timescale, we will, but I want to be sure that the material that we put in place meets the needs of the teaching profession and of children and young people.

The PSE toolkit is designed to be a helpful addition to the resources that are available to guidance teachers. It will assist them in identifying best practice and deploying it to the best of their ability.

On Mr Gray's general point about the number of teachers, I say to him that the number of teachers is, of course, rising. Mr Gray knows that. It has been rising for the past number of years and it is at the highest level that it has been at since 2010. We are making progress on increasing the number of teachers and, obviously, the steps that we have taken and the investment that the Government has made are helping that process.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can I have short questions, please?

**Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary outline how this year's programme for government commitment to invest in school counselling services will assist in the delivery of PSE?

**John Swinney:** As Ruth Maguire will know, the Government set out in the programme for government the commitments that we are making in relation to the roll-out of counsellors in schools. As part of implementation of the programme for government, the first part of that work—putting in place counsellors in secondary schools—will be deployed. Dialogue is under way with local authorities about the most appropriate means of undertaking that to supplement the resources that are available in schools to provide the support that young people require.

This morning, I visited Queen Anne high school in Dunfermline, in Fife, and saw at first hand the very integrated and focused support that the school has put in place to provide assistance to young people. It draws together a range of expertise from a number of different disciplines but, fundamentally, it is child focused and child centred. The addition of the mental health counsellors will support that process and enable a broader range of skills to be available to be deployed to support young people in our schools.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I respectfully ask for shorter answers in order to try to get everybody in.

**Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con):** What involvement have parents and carers had to date in development of the toolkit? What consultation and support will be given to help them to reinforce the messages at home?

**John Swinney:** As part of all our work, we engage widely within Scotland—that is what takes time—and we have engaged with parental representatives as part of this process. It is very important, as we take the next steps, that we take care—particularly in relation to some of the issues on relationships—to actively engage parents in the process, so that they are comfortable with the approach that is being taken and can support it with some of the wise guidance that is offered within the home.

As Mr Mundell will know, we attach the greatest significance to parental engagement, and my view is that that needs to be to the fore in taking forward the next stages of this work.

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** Following the incredible commitment and success of the time for inclusive education campaign, how will the principles of the campaign

and the inclusion of LGBT rights and issues be delivered through the PSE reforms?

**John Swinney:** As I announced to Parliament before Christmas, we are embarking on taking forward inclusive education. That message lies at the heart of the statement that I have given in Parliament today and at the heart of the thinking and the ethos behind personal and social education. We will ensure that the implementation of inclusive education is right at the heart of personal and social education and that the commitment to the aspirations of the TIE campaign that I expressed in my ministerial statement to Parliament are reflected and practised in our schools.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the announcement of guidance on mental health and wellbeing services to complement the previous announcement regarding counsellors in schools. Will the cabinet secretary tell Parliament when the first new mental health counsellor will be in a school? Will the implementation of the new counsellors be targeted at certain areas or schools?

**John Swinney:** We are working with individual local authorities to take that activity forward. I would expect the first of the mental health counsellors to be in schools during the forthcoming financial year; provision has been made for that in the budget. Some local authorities and individual schools have different approaches to the provision of mental health support, so we will work in a complementary fashion with existing provision, but I expect roll-out to commence during 2019-20.

**Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** I thank the Government for the actions to which it has committed today. The review that led to the report was the first thing that I asked for after my election to this Parliament.

Given that the campaign to fix personal and social education has, at all points, been led by young people, I ask that the PSE delivery and implementation group includes young people. I recommend members of the Scottish Youth Parliament as appropriate representatives.

I ask the Government to confirm that workplace rights and associated skills are included in the life skills that are considered essential as part of PSE and that, as such, they will be reflected in resources and guidance—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That was two questions. I liked the first one okay.

**John Swinney:** On Mr Greer's substantive point, it is essential that we hear the voices of young people in all aspects of the work that we take forward in the development of education

policy. At all stages of the process, I want to hear the views and voices of young people. That will be the case in the group that we establish to take forward the activity that we are talking about.

On Mr Greer's second point, on workplace rights, it is important that PSE remains relevant to the changing times in which we live; it must equip young people with a knowledge and understanding of the circumstances that they will face. I mentioned that I visited Queen Anne high school this morning; there, guidance services are provided alongside work by Skills Development Scotland, in recognition of the proximity to the developing Scotland's young workforce agenda. I think that the issues will be adequately covered in the approach that we take.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** If we are to improve personal and social education across Scotland, I hope that the cabinet secretary recognises the importance of school guidance teams having a range of skills, qualifications and attributes. In that context, does he understand the case that has been made for including youth workers and people with youth work qualifications in guidance teams, to achieve the essential reforms that are so necessary?

**John Swinney:** I agree entirely with that. It is interesting to look at youth workers' achievements in reaching young people who might be difficult to reach through what we regard as the traditional education structures and in enabling those young people to continue to participate. The broadest range of skills will be relevant to help us in this work, and in my view there is a strong and significant role to be played by youth workers in the exercise.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** Will the cabinet secretary set out how the new PSE toolkit, the announcement of which is welcome, will help to reduce the workload and bureaucracy that have been a concern for teachers?

**John Swinney:** Part of the approach that I have been taking has been about encouraging more collaboration in the education system, so that elements of the good practice that undoubtedly exists in different parts of Scotland are shared more widely and individual practitioners do not have to develop materials and resources from scratch. It is about supporting good models of teaching delivery around the country.

That is exactly what the PSE toolkit will do. It will help the people who are involved in delivering personal and social education by providing a rich set of resources, which will assist practitioners in their work. As part of our general approach to trying to reduce the workload of the teaching profession by encouraging collaboration and other

measures, steps have been taken, and the PSE toolkit will help in that respect.

**Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** I note the Scottish Government's commitment to work with the General Teaching Council for Scotland to update the standards for professional registration. Will the cabinet secretary say when the updated standards will be in place? Is it the Scottish Government's opinion that additional teacher training should be introduced in relation to the revised PSE?

**John Swinney:** Initial teacher education must take due account of the steps that we are taking on PSE. That is one element of the process; the other element is the emphasis on continuous professional learning. Particularly with a theme such as personal and social education, as we try to maintain its relevance to the world that young people face, there will be a constant need for practitioners to undertake continuous professional development. Ensuring that PSE is central to the approach in initial teacher education and is recognised in continuous professional learning gives us a good foundation for our dialogue with the General Teaching Council for Scotland on ensuring that professional updates take account of these important topics.

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** We know that personal and social education is an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour and healthy relationships in young people. Will the cabinet secretary expand on how the reviewed guidelines on consent education will be rolled out in the PSE curriculum and how quickly that might happen?

**John Swinney:** The material on that topic is currently being piloted across 40 schools in Scotland. We will look at the experience of piloting those resources to make sure that we can guarantee that they are appropriate for use. As I indicated to Oliver Mundell, we have to take into account parental understanding of the steps that we are taking and ensure that the roll-out of education about consent is age and stage appropriate for individual children and young people.

The importance of that cannot be overstated, because we have to make sure that young people are given the most substantive and thoughtful support to enable them to come to the right judgments about consent and the formation of relationships. These are issues of enormous significance and concern in our society, and we must make sure that we get the approaches correct before we roll them out across the whole education system.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):** Given the often very sensitive issues that are considered, in

my experience PSE classes are run with small groups rather than full classes. What action is the cabinet secretary taking to ensure that there is agreement not only on the approach to PSE, but on how it is delivered, and how will he ensure that sufficient resource is available to make personal and social education meaningful for all young people?

**John Swinney:** A significant amount of professional judgment will have to be deployed to address the point that Johann Lamont makes about the environment and circumstances in which personal and social education can be delivered successfully. That judgment is best left to individual professionals, and the Government is trying to ensure that we work with partners to equip those practitioners with a range of materials and approaches that will support them in those efforts. I hope that the announcements that I have made today will help to structure the approach to allow individual practitioners in individual schools around the country to make those judgments.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** Will education on organ and tissue donation be included in the curriculum for personal and social education and, if so, what resources will be made available to the appropriate designated education providers?

**John Swinney:** Emma Harper has asked me a question of a very specific nature about the content of the teaching materials. I will have to come back to her on that specific point, but individual teachers will make judgments about which particular topics and themes should be covered, within the framework that we put forward, to illustrate these important questions.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I thank members for their succinct questions. That concludes questions on the statement.

We will have a slight pause before we move to the next item of business.

## Clinical Waste Services

15:14

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a statement by Jeane Freeman on clinical waste services. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman):** I am grateful for this opportunity to update members on the current situation on clinical waste services for the national health service in Scotland, and to set out the action that the Scottish Government has taken to support both NHS Scotland and those staff who lost their jobs after Healthcare Environmental Services Ltd ceased its business operations in December last year.

As members are aware, there has in recent weeks been considerable interest in Scotland and England in clinical waste services to the health service and, in particular, in Healthcare Environmental Services. Until recently, that company, which is based in Shotts, operated contracts with national health service boards and trusts across the country.

Clinical waste is a niche sector that requires specialist equipment, facilities and staff to manage the whole process from collection through to transportation and storage and on to final disposal and incineration. Since 2009, Healthcare Environmental Services has provided those services to our NHS. However, following concerns raised by NHS England about significant backlogs of waste being stored and enforcement notices being placed on HES sites in England, we understood that there was the potential for disruption to services in Scotland.

In August 2018, officials from the Department of Health and Social Care in England contacted the Scottish Government, raising concerns about the amount of clinical waste collected from NHS England sites and being stored at Healthcare Environmental Services sites in England. The volume of waste stored and being reported by the Environment Agency was about 700 to 800 tonnes, some of which breached storage conditions and/or exceeded the maximum storage times.

In October 2018, 15 NHS trusts in England terminated contracts with HES, with more reporting missed or late collections. At that time, HES sites in Scotland were not in breach of any environmental permits, licences or storage limits. However, on 12 September 2018 the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, as part of routine

monitoring and inspection activities, issued two enforcement notices to HES relating to the tracking and management of waste; two further enforcement notices relating to the storage of waste were issued on 11 December.

The Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and SEPA were monitoring the situation closely, and were in close contact with authorities in England. Given the serious nature of the emerging situation, the Scottish Government directed NHS National Services Scotland to ensure that a national contingency plan, building on local board arrangements, would be ready for use in the event of any disruption to NHS waste collection services in Scotland. NSS was in contact with HES during that period, to ensure that HES was able to deliver its contractual obligations.

The company repeatedly provided assurance that it could meet those contract obligations, but on 7 December 2018 HES advised NHS boards in Scotland that it was unable to continue to provide clinical waste services with immediate effect. As required in the contract terms and conditions, HES was given up to 20 days to resume normal service, but the company failed to do so. The company gave notice that it had ceased trading from 27 December 2018.

Let me be clear that it was the company that breached its contracts—with 18 NHS boards—leaving Scotland's accident and emergency departments, our hospitals, community health centres, general practitioner practices and dentists without essential clinical waste services.

With the planning work already in place, full contingency arrangements were operationalised across NHS Scotland to ensure that boards, GPs, dentists and others received the service. The contingency arrangements continue, and involve a range of companies in Scotland and across the United Kingdom working with NHS Scotland staff.

NHS National Services Scotland and NHS boards are closely monitoring local and national arrangements, and have acted quickly to resolve any emerging issues. Contingency arrangements are also subject to robust checks by SEPA and the Department for Transport, to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met.

Our priority throughout has been to ensure that measures are in place, so that NHS Scotland can continue to receive clinical waste services and public safety is assured. There have been no reports that patient care has been affected, or public safety compromised, and we are working to ensure that that remains the case. My thanks go to those staff who are working to support those arrangements.

Contingency measures, and ultimately maintaining NHS services, come at a cost. The

Scottish Government has provided £1.4 million towards initial contingency planning, and NSS is leading on managing contingency arrangements on behalf of health boards. Under the terms and conditions of contract, health boards are entitled to reclaim costs incurred from HES, and will seek to do so.

The process for a new national contract for all NHS clinical waste management services in Scotland started in 2017, with tenders invited in 2018. The process is nearing completion. Final contract details and an implementation plan are being agreed with Tradebe Healthcare Ltd and should be concluded by the end of this month. The new contract is effective from 1 April this year for up to 10 years and has an estimated value of £100 million. My apologies, Presiding Officer, I believe that that figure should be £10 million.

The introduction of a single national contract that covers all health boards will further improve how NHS waste is managed and offer a range of community, educational and employment benefits. A new single national contract will bring various benefits to NHS boards and communities over the next 10 years and we are in a good position going forward. However, significant issues that are outside of ensuring NHS provision are yet to be resolved. Those issues relate directly to health environmental services and include supporting former employees—work that is being led by the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills—and maintaining environmental standards at HES sites in Shotts and Dundee; that work is being led by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, with support from SEPA.

I know that the thoughts of members across the chamber are with the employees who lost their jobs at Christmas. This is, without question, a very difficult time for them and their families. The Scottish Government has provided and promotes a range of support to help people to find alternative employment and access redundancy payments. In November last year, we offered HES workforce support for its employees, which was not accepted until 27 December 2018. We also offered support to more than 125 employees at an event at the Salvation Army centre in Shotts on 3 and 4 January 2019, and in Dundee on 10 January. Feedback from that event suggests that a number of employees have already secured new work. Members will be pleased to know that, of the 262 staff across Scotland and England who are entitled to redundancy payments, 244 have now received the payments to which they are entitled from the redundancy payments service. *[Jeane Freeman has corrected this contribution. See end of report.]* The RPS will now try to reclaim those costs from the company.

Former employees, who have set up an action group called @ help healthcare, had a constructive meeting last week with the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills at which a range of issues was discussed. The group has written directly to its former employers to ask them to do the right thing and pay staff the wages that are owed for December. The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills also wrote to the managing director to seek agreement to approach the company's bankers on the same issue. However, that request has been refused.

As already stated, HES was subject to four environmental enforcement actions in Scotland and several more in England. It is, therefore, essential that SEPA continues to monitor the sites in Shotts and Dundee to ensure that there is no risk to the public. SEPA also continues to seek regulatory compliance from HES to ensure that the sites are cleared safely and that all waste is disposed of appropriately, should that become necessary. There is, at present, no significant environmental risk and no risk to the wellbeing of local communities.

Scotland's health services were placed at risk as a result of HES breaching its contract. Contingency arrangements that were developed in anticipation of such an eventuality—in consultation with NSS, SEPA and a range of other partners—ensured that there was no disruption to front-line services. The Scottish Government will continue to support former employees to access the money that they are owed and the benefits to which they may be entitled. However, that relies heavily on the co-operation of the company's directors. SEPA will continue to monitor the Shotts and Dundee sites to safeguard the public and local communities, and will take enforcement action, should that be required.

I reiterate my thanks to those who are involved in ensuring that collections of clinical waste from NHS sites around Scotland continue and that front-line patient services remain uninterrupted.

My thanks and best wishes go to former employees of HES, who are being supported at this difficult time for them and their families.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Cabinet secretary, I know that you understand how important it is that members get the right figure in relation to the new contract that you mentioned. Will you confirm that figure for the chamber before we go any further?

**Jeane Freeman:** Yes. I apologise—it was a typing mistake that, in my proofreading, I did not spot. The figure should be £10 million.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I presume that that is now clear to everyone.

The cabinet secretary will now take questions on the issues that were raised in her statement, for which I will allow about 20 minutes. I invite members who wish to ask questions to press their request-to-speak buttons.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con):** There are many unanswered questions that the Scottish National Party must answer today. What steps have been taken to protect and train NHS staff who are currently tasked with handling hazardous clinical waste in our hospitals? That issue was not mentioned in this afternoon's statement.

Will the cabinet secretary confirm that, under the proposals that she outlined today, all Scottish clinical waste will now need to be transported to England for incineration? What will be the additional cost to Scottish taxpayers? The cabinet secretary said that that would be £10 million, but it might be closer to £100 million by the time that the fiasco is cleared up.

Will the cabinet secretary confirm that all hazardous clinical waste is now being transported in vehicles that are designed to transport such waste and that all those vehicles display "Hazardous load" signage?

**Jeane Freeman:** If there is a fiasco, it is not one of this Government's making. The fact that those services have continued is thanks to the anticipatory measures in the contingency plan. Any break in services was caused by a private sector company failing to honour its contracts—it is important that we understand that. The Scottish Government did not cause or create this situation.

On protecting and training NHS staff, they have always had an involvement in the collection and preparation for onward collection of clinical waste, and that continues. Where additional measures have been asked of staff, boards have risk assessed those measures and have discussed them in the partnership forums that exist in boards, which is where discussions with staff and trade unions take place. In the Inverness case in which porters were injured as a consequence of their involvement in handling clinical waste, the NHS Highland board looked at the matter quickly, undertook measures to ensure that it could not happen again and employed an additional member of staff to assist in such work.

Waste is, indeed, transported south of the border for incineration, as was the case prior to the contract being broken by HES, with the exception of—in the latter stages of its contract—the incineration sites that it had in Shotts. As HES has ceased trading, those facilities are obviously not available under the interim arrangements. All the transportation must meet the regulatory requirements of SEPA and the Department for Transport. NSS is responsible for ensuring that the

required standards are met, which is the case at this point.

**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):** When the UK Government convened a Cabinet Office briefing room A—COBRA—meeting, we all feared that this clinical waste scandal might affect the NHS in Scotland, the workforce of Healthcare Environmental Services Ltd and our communities. Devastatingly, those workers, who kept our NHS operating, were dumped by their bosses at Christmas without pay or notice. The contingency planning has not benefited those workers. NHS boards continued to put money into HES's bank account, but, rather than staff being paid what they are owed in wages, people have been left to rely on food banks.

When did the Government know that the company was in serious trouble, and what pre-emptive steps did it take to protect the workforce? What is the cost of the contingency plans to health boards, and when were boards advised to stop paying HES? Given that the NHS retains a duty of care for the stockpiled waste, what negotiations are taking place with HES and other relevant parties over the future of the sites at Shotts and Dundee?

**Jeane Freeman:** There were a number of questions; I hope that I have them all, but I ask the member to let me know if I do not, please.

I repeat that we are in this situation because a private sector company has breached its contract. With regard to the NHS continuing to put money into the bank account of HES, NHS Scotland paid money that was owed for services that were delivered up to the point when HES ceased trading and breached its contract. That is perfectly right. It had a bill, it was due to pay it, and it paid it.

It is very difficult to have discussions and negotiations with the company about the future of the sites at Dundee and Shotts because it has ceased trading but has not put itself into insolvency. That is part of the real difficulty that the employees face. They are owed their December wages. As I said in my statement, my colleague Mr Hepburn has attempted to intervene to ensure that they are paid those wages, but we need the company's permission to speak to its bank, which has been refused.

The Government acted and, indeed, offered pay support to the company—I think that I said in my statement in November—but that was not accepted until 27 December. We cannot just walk into a site in that way; we do not have those direct powers, nor should we. Such matters get resolved by co-operation and discussion, but, if the other party will not co-operate and discuss, we are a bit stuck.

With regard to NHS Scotland and the continued safe removal and disposal of clinical waste, I have outlined that we took the necessary pre-emptive measures by ensuring that we had a contingency plan. At the point at which there were clear difficulties between NHS England and the company, we were able to operationalise those contingency plans. Despite the company having assured us on 7 December that it could meet its contract obligations and then, on 20 December, telling us that it could not, in a very short space of time we moved to do that.

I have probably missed one of the member's questions. If one of her colleagues is going to ask me a question, perhaps they could pick that up for her and I will be sure to answer it.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The first two questions and answers have understandably taken a long time, as there was a lot of content. We will have to be a bit quicker if we are going to get through all the questions.

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** On 12 September, SEPA issued two enforcement notices, which were followed by a further two notices on 11 December. Within a couple of weeks, the company gave notice and ceased trading. Are we to understand that the Government and its agencies were completely unaware of the impending crisis? How frequent were SEPA's inspections up to the point at which the situation became critical?

**Jeane Freeman:** I have never said that the Government was completely unaware. If we had been, we would not have taken the necessary steps to know that there were difficulties between the company and health trusts in NHS England, and we would not have taken the necessary steps to ensure that, should there have been a difficulty in fulfilling the contract in Scotland, we had contingency plans to ensure that clinical waste would continue to be uplifted, stored and disposed of in a way that protected patients and public safety.

As I said in my statement, as soon as it became clear that there were difficulties south of the border, we understood that there was the potential for problems in Scotland. However, at that point, there was no significant difficulty. SEPA, as part of its normal inspection process—I am happy to check exactly what the frequency of the inspections was over the contract period and advise Alison Johnstone of that number—issued those two enforcement notices initially and then, subsequently, issued two further enforcement notices. Of course, a company has time to comply with such notices. However, on 7 December, the company advised us that it could not meet its contract obligations. We gave it the 20 days to which it was entitled to get back to a place where it

could do so. However, on 27 December, it advised us that it had ceased trading.

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** HES also held the contract for the disposal of animal remains and clinical waste from Edinburgh zoo, which is in my constituency. Are there still animal remains at the Shotts site? What other non-NHS contracts did the company serve? What contingency is being offered to those companies to facilitate the safe disposal of their clinical waste?

**Jeane Freeman:** My understanding—I will check this and return to Mr Cole-Hamilton on the matter—is that, where there is clinical waste for disposal, whether it is of animal or human origin, the contingency arrangements are picking up on that obligation.

I do not have any information about any other non-NHS contracts that the company had. I do not know whether the Government holds that information, as it would be company information. I am, therefore, unable to give Mr Cole-Hamilton that information this afternoon.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We are more than halfway through the session. I have a little bit of extra time, but not much. I ask for short questions and answers, please.

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary will be aware of reports of a build-up of clinical waste at the Coatbridge health centre in my constituency. I raised the matter in a supplementary question in the chamber last week. The local paper, the *Airdrie & Coatbridge Advertiser*, has since highlighted the issue again, and the matter has had wide circulation. Will the arrangements that are being put in place prevent any future build-up of waste?

**Jeane Freeman:** My understanding is that collections have returned to normal and are being monitored on a daily basis by NSS. There was a back-up of clinical waste at NHS sites, which was due to a diminution of service from HES prior to its ceasing trading and before the new arrangements were put in place. Of course, in some instances, those new arrangements took a little bit of time to bed in. However, my understanding is that, now, collections have returned to normal, the backlog has been cleared, and the situation is being monitored on a daily basis.

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** Last week, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, estimated that the total clearance and disposal cost would be around £250,000. I note from the health secretary's statement that the Scottish Government has provided £1.4 million towards the initial contingency planning. With that

in mind, is she confident that the costs will not continue to rise exponentially?

**Jeane Freeman:** As Mr Whittle rightly says, the £1.4 million is towards the initial contingency planning, and NSS has now taken over the management of the contingency arrangements. Of course, what that means is that our boards are no longer paying HES for services that they are not receiving. When we get to the end of the contingency period and the new contract starts, we will be able to rebalance the funding between what our boards would have normally paid to HES for the months in which there have been contingency arrangements and the amount of money that NSS has paid out to cover those contingency arrangements. At that point, I will know whether there is a gap between what would normally have been paid and what we have had to pay for contingency arrangements.

Of course, contingency arrangements carry additional cost, because they involve bringing in trailers and securing additional storage facilities and so on to ensure that the service can continue to be delivered. When we get to the end of the contingency period and the new contract begins with a new contractor, I will be able to give Mr Whittle and other members the exact cost of the contingency arrangements in full and I will be able to say how that is balanced against what our boards would normally have paid to HES, and whether there is a deficit between those two figures.

**Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP):** As the constituency member for Shotts, I thank the Scottish Government for the tremendous help that it has given so far to the workers who have lost their jobs at Hassockrigg in Shotts. However, I wonder whether the Government can give further assistance. My colleague Neil Gray and I have brought in specialist lawyers and have found that, if people go through the normal employment tribunal process, it will take six to nine months before they get their wages and other payments that they are due. Can pressure be brought to bear to speed up the process?

I also have a specific question for the health secretary. When the new contract is being awarded, will she put pressure on the new contractor to give priority to recruiting former HES workers in carrying out the new contract, particularly as the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations do not apply in this case?

**Jeane Freeman:** On the first part of Mr Neil's question, I will ask my colleague Mr Hepburn to respond in writing on whether the Government might do anything further to insist that employees receive the December wages that they are due, which I believe is what Mr Neil was asking about. I

do not want to intervene in another portfolio and talk about something that I do not know anything about, so Mr Hepburn will respond.

On the second part of the question, which was important, NSS, in conjunction with Tradebe Healthcare, is arranging for an information and recruitment day to be held in Shotts in the next few days and, when we have the exact date for that, I will ensure that all relevant members, including Mr Neil and other colleagues, are aware of that date, and the employees of the former company will certainly be informed. The new company that will take over the contract once all negotiations are concluded, which will be by the end of this month, will hold that information and recruitment day. I hope that that gives Mr Neil and, more importantly, those who have lost their jobs with HES some assurance.

**Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I back Alex Neil's call for no stone to be left unturned to ensure that the workers get the money that they are due. Workers in Dundee are waiting for wages that they are due, too.

The health secretary talked about the cost of contingency plans to health boards. Is the Scottish Government pursuing HES's insurers to find out whether the public purse can recover some of that cost?

I have another brief question, just to clarify the cabinet secretary's answer to Ms Lennon. She talked about the 10-year contract being worth £10 million. We are a little unsure of that, because we understand from the press that three health boards made a payment of approximately £1 million for the past three months.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Could you speed up, please, Ms Marra?

**Jenny Marra:** The figure of £10 million that the health secretary gave does not really stack up, so it would be helpful if she could clarify that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I clarify that some members will not get to ask questions because of the time taken by their colleagues.

**Jeane Freeman:** I apologise to members for causing considerable confusion about how much the contract is worth—it is £10 million a year for 10 years, so it is £100 million. I hope that that clarifies that for the record.

On leaving no stone unturned, I believe that the Government is doing everything that it can. Mr Hepburn has advised me that, as well as seeking the company's permission to contact its bank, which was refused, he has now written to the bank on behalf of the employees to see whether the bank can assist in ensuring that they receive the moneys to which they are entitled.



On Ms Marra's question about HES insurers, we are seeking legal advice on that and on a range of matters relating to the contract. I am sure that she appreciates that there are three portfolios involved, from the perspectives of the environment, the employees and the business, and the NHS, which is my interest and concern. We are looking at all ways in which we may assist in order to find a resolution of the matter.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I welcome the robust contingency plans that NHS Scotland has developed. Can the cabinet secretary confirm that those measures will remain in place until a new contract begins and that the new contract will, at the very minimum, adhere to those standards?

**Jeane Freeman:** The contingency arrangements will remain in place until we are confident that the national contract is fully operational. The new national framework agreement includes an updated specification, meets the Scottish Government's current environmental targets and provides greater visibility of waste streams, locally and nationally. Using a single contract for the whole of Scotland's health service is exactly what we should be doing, rather than using a series of individual board contracts.

**Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP):** Given what she has said about the bank and other matters, is the cabinet secretary satisfied with the level of engagement and co-operation that the Scottish Government has received from HES since this situation first came to light?

**Jeane Freeman:** No, I am not. I do not think that anyone is satisfied. The skilled and experienced employees of the company who have worked hard have not been treated fairly or well. Christmas is a particularly difficult time of year for people to be told that they have lost their jobs, and it is completely unacceptable for workers to be told that with no notice and for them not to be paid the wages that they are due. I am not satisfied with the way in which the company has handled its contractual obligations to our national health service or its contractual and other obligations to its workforce. Since the autumn of last year, the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise have been trying to co-operate with HES by offering a range of business support and support for the workforce, but we have had little, if any, co-operation.

On the health service contract, any company that takes contract obligations seriously would not advise, over a very short space of time, that it cannot meet its contractual obligations and say, over an equally short space of time, "That's it. We have packed up shop," and cease trading.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes questions on the statement on clinical waste services. I apologise to Alison Harris, James Kelly and Shona Robison, whom I was not able to call.

## Supporting Entrepreneurship

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-15507, in the name of Kate Forbes, on supporting entrepreneurship. *[Interruption.]* I ask members who are leaving the chamber to do so quietly, please. My goodness! I will say no more. I call Kate Forbes to speak to and move the motion.

15:48

**The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes):** The Government and I, as the Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, have made it clear that our ambition and vision is for the nation of Scotland to be at the forefront of economic and technological development. That means that we must be the inventors and producers of future innovations, not just consumers. We know that Scotland's people have more than enough potential to be world leading in many fields.

We are all very familiar with the names of the innovators and entrepreneurs of our past, such as Bell, Fleming and Carnegie. More recently, names such as Farmer, Gloag and Hunter have come to the fore. The Government agrees with Sir Tom Hunter that we must work together to ensure that our best days are ahead of us and that enterprise plays a positive role for all society.

Of course, that will be no mean feat, but there is another generation that is coming through with the ideas, the initiative and the guts just to give it a go, and I absolutely believe that we can accomplish it and achieve our vision if we work together. It is no wonder, then, that our approach is based on working with partners to nurture our existing entrepreneurial talent as well as creating the conditions that attract international talent. On that note, I am startled by the way in which the Conservative amendment talks about attractiveness, given that the party has in recent weeks—and, indeed, years—been lambasted for single-handedly not just turning people off coming to this country but actively restricting them from entering.

The Scotland can do approach embodies our strategy, because in sharp contrast to the small-minded and self-obsessed approach that I have outlined and what, in the words of some business organisations, is misleading rhetoric on immigration, this Government is actively supporting home talent as well as attracting people to move to this country. The Scotland can do platform, which we have developed with our public, private and third sector partners,

represents our shared ambition to become world leading in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Make no mistake—Scotland can do is paying off. Since its introduction in 2013, the effectiveness of Scotland's business support environment has risen from 13th to fifth in the world, ahead of all other parts of the United Kingdom. However, I do not think that that is enough—we need to go further. That collaboration, which champions an approach in which sustainable growth and innovation go hand in hand with the wider benefits to all society, is the foundation that we must continue to build on.

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** In many ways, the minister is absolutely right, but how do the remarks that she has just made square with the fact that funding for Scottish Enterprise has declined by more than a quarter since her party came to power?

**Kate Forbes:** We have made it clear that support for business lies at the very heart of this year's draft budget, and in our support for our enterprise agencies—which, of course, include Highlands and Islands Enterprise as well as Scottish Enterprise—we have treated them fairly and consistently. At the heart of the issue, however, are the output and the benefit to the business community, and the statistics that I have just quoted on the business support environment—and which I should point out are not mine—showing that Scotland has risen from 13th to fifth in the world, ahead of all other parts of the UK, indicate that we must look at the support that businesses are telling us that they need and ensure that that support is not piecemeal but of the type that business wants.

Where we have applied a focus and prioritised matters such as tackling the gender gap or ensuring that our young people see enterprising activity as the norm, the results have been positive. I think that a very important point in the Labour amendment is its recognition of the importance of women in enterprise to ensure that the growth that I have talked about is, indeed, inclusive. Although the proportion of women actively starting a business has risen significantly since the establishment of the women in enterprise action framework, we clearly have more to do to ensure that we leave nobody behind.

**Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab):** Although I recognise what the minister has said, I think that, at this stage, we should also point out that, according to the statistics, less than a quarter of new businesses in Scotland are being established by women.

**Kate Forbes:** I appreciate and do not disagree with that point. If we were able to encourage more women to be in a position to start a business, the

value to the Scottish economy would be enormous. Making sure that inclusivity lies at the heart of our entrepreneurship agenda is good not just for entrepreneurs but for the Scottish economy as a whole. We recognise that values and diversity must lie at the heart of our can do philosophy.

Organisations such as the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses have made enormous contributions to those shared outcomes, and Young Enterprise Scotland and the Prince's Trust have driven action. As for the gender gap, which I have already mentioned, Women's Enterprise Scotland and Investing Women are tackling some of the challenges around the statistics that Elaine Smith highlighted. In fact, so many partners are responsible for driving that impact that to name them all and their contributions would leave us little time for the debate.

However, one partner that deserves specific recognition is Entrepreneurial Scotland, which is a network of and for Scotland's entrepreneurs and is at the very heart of what the Scottish Government is trying to achieve. At the weekend, I met Rachel Wallace, who works for Entrepreneurial Scotland, to ask her, aside from any briefings that I might receive, what impact she sees the network having on the business that she is trying to support. The entrepreneurial drive that I could see in Rachel herself was very clear: being able to come alongside businesses and support them in a way that they ask for, rather than one that the Government wants to provide, is really making a difference.

I touched briefly on values, which have to be at the heart of our approach. Time and time again, the Scottish Government has stated its commitment to economic growth that must be inclusive, and that businesses that do good are much more likely to be successful and resilient. From the social enterprise strategy to the Scottish business pledge and our commitment to being a fair work nation, we have made clear our position.

**Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** The minister mentioned inclusive growth. The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee recently heard that the Government has no agreed definition of that term. When will it be able to tell the various agencies that are involved in the economy what it means by the term?

**Kate Forbes:** I recall my colleague asking Dean Lockhart which strategy he thought the Scottish Government could leave behind, and his citing inclusive growth—which, of course, we would never do.

On that subject, it is quite clear that we should ensure that anybody who wants to access the workforce and be an entrepreneur is able to do so

and that there is a level playing field. On the other hand, we must ensure that the outcomes of the growth that we then see in the economy benefit everybody and that we do not see a continuation of the gap between rich and poor that some of Dean Lockhart's colleagues in the Westminster Government seem intent on making bigger. That means growth for more than its own sake. It means growth in which positive social, environmental and community outcomes are a natural consideration—not an afterthought, a convenient side effect or a nice subject for debate in the Parliament—and in which everybody is empowered to participate and from which everybody can benefit. In itself, that sentence is quite a neat definition.

**Dean Lockhart rose—**

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The minister is in her last minute. In fact, she is just winding up.

**Kate Forbes:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I have been having far too much fun taking interventions, so I will now rush to the end of my speech.

We are all aware—and I am sure that we will have a very interesting debate on the matter—that approaching headwinds will inevitably impact on the ability of business to thrive. Just yesterday, the Confederation of British Industry published what I will call—for want of a better description—scary figures on the impact on the Scottish economy of a no-deal Brexit. Such headwinds have been caused not by Scotland's businesses but by decisions made elsewhere. More than ever, that underlines why we must work with our partners in business, listen to them and ensure that our support is right. That is the essence of our approach, and that is the reason for its success.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the successes of Scotland's entrepreneurial businesses and the potential of all of Scotland's people; welcomes the collaborative approach to increasing and supporting entrepreneurship between the private sector and the Scottish Government; notes the crucial role played by Scotland's entrepreneurs and the all-sector enterprise support network in developing the "Scotland CAN DO" approach, including through the Unlocking Ambition Challenge; further notes the role of the public sector in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation through organisations such as CivTech, and welcomes the commitment to build on this momentum, as set out in the Economic Action Plan.

15:58

**Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** The concept of entrepreneurship reaches back to the work of Adam Smith, and Scotland rightly has a long and proud history of creating new industries. Entrepreneurs in Scotland today continue to play a vital role in our economy, and

their success must be recognised. They build new businesses and create jobs, providing a boost to local and national economies; they add to national income by generating new wealth and increased tax receipts; and they generate multiplier effects for the economy by creating new products and services.

Although we all recognise that entrepreneurship is a vital part of the economy, the reality is that no Government can legislate for it: we cannot regulate entrepreneurship into existence. Instead, the role of Government should be to create a dynamic skills, business and financial environment in which entrepreneurship can flourish.

The importance of creating such an environment was highlighted in a recent study by Grant Thornton, which identified that £4.3 billion-worth of business growth is being lost to Scotland because of what it described as an environment of barriers, including barriers to access to skills, technology and innovation, and financial issues.

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Dean Lockhart:** I will in a second.

Perhaps that is why business creation rates in Scotland continue to lag behind those in the rest of the UK—and perhaps that is what John Mason wants to explain.

**John Mason:** Dean Lockhart mentioned a lack of skills. Is he not concerned that Brexit could lead to a greater lack of them?

**Dean Lockhart:** The UK Government has announced a new immigration policy, which is designed precisely to align with the economy's skills needs, so no—I am not concerned.

The Scottish Government's motion sets out various initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, which we welcome. However, a patchwork list of initiatives is not enough to create the right environment for enterprise. The motion also refers to the new economic action plan, but that plan is merely what the Fraser of Allander institute describes as

“a long list of government initiatives recording how money is spent.”

We need to do more to realise Scotland's entrepreneurial potential. That is why our amendment calls on the Scottish Government to take a more fundamental approach to create a dynamic skills, business and financial environment that truly supports entrepreneurship.

**Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP):** I completely agree that skills are a key issue. One of the key drivers of skills is our fantastic university sector. I am sure that Mr Lockhart will welcome as much as I do the figures that were released last

week showing that 15.6 per cent of university students are from the 20 per cent most deprived areas. The commissioner for fair access, Sir Peter Scott, said in today's *Herald* that the SNP policy of free tuition fees was vindicated.

Let me just ask Mr Lockhart—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Arthur, I think that that is a long-enough intervention.

**Tom Arthur:** Does Mr Lockhart support the policy of free tuition—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Arthur! We are short of time for the debate. I call Mr Lockhart.

**Dean Lockhart:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. Let me address the intervention. There is a skills shortage in Scotland, which has doubled since 2011. Over the past 10 years, college student numbers have been cut by 150,000 and the CBI has called on the Government to do more to fill teacher vacancies in vital subjects such as maths and science.

I say to the minister, who is responsible for the digital economy, that we are also seeing an increasing digital skills gap emerge in Scotland. The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee has heard evidence that only 9 per cent of businesses in Scotland use digital in their business, compared to 43 per cent in other countries. A number of new businesses in digital and technology will not be able to get off the ground unless the digital gap is addressed.

That is why we have been calling for the establishment of a dedicated institute of e-commerce—a specialist agency that would help emerging enterprises take full advantage of the global opportunities in e-commerce.

**Kate Forbes:** The member talked about the need for skills. Will he respond to the FSB's point that the UK Government's “obstinate approach” to immigration will ensure that non-UK labour and skills will not be there to enable small businesses to grow and sustain their operations?

**Dean Lockhart:** I have already said that the UK Government has announced a new immigration policy that is designed to fill the skills gap.

On the business environment, we need to promote Scotland as a home for innovators. Entrepreneurs create jobs; they are business developers who support economic growth. Not only that—they tend to be top-rate taxpayers who contribute to Government tax revenues.

Not surprisingly, we face competition from around the world and the rest of the UK for those innovators, but instead of trying to attract them to Scotland, the SNP is doing exactly the opposite by making Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK for entrepreneurs.

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Daniel Johnson:** Will the member give way?

**Dean Lockhart:** I have given way enough—I am sorry.

We also need a business environment that encourages entrepreneurs to scale up and expand their business base, but, again, we have a Government that does the opposite by inflicting the large business supplement on successful firms with the ambition to expand.

**Gillian Martin:** Will the member give way?

**Dean Lockhart:** No.

I turn to enterprise policy. Scotland has a vibrant start-up scene, with many entrepreneurs looking to commercialise new ideas and innovations. However, the SNP's enterprise policy fails to provide the right level of support for start-ups across Scotland.

The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee is concluding an inquiry into business support, including business gateway, which is the primary provider of enterprise support for start-ups. The committee has heard evidence that because of a lack of funding and resource, business support for start-ups across Scotland is inconsistent and lacks expertise. We also heard that the number of start-ups receiving assistance has dropped to an eight-year low.

If we are serious about supporting start-ups, we must have a fundamentally improved system of start-up support.

**Daniel Johnson:** Will the member give way?

**Dean Lockhart:** I am sorry, but I am just about to conclude.

I urge the minister to take action on the committee's recommendations when its final report is presented to Parliament.

After 11 years of SNP Government, we have a low-growth, low-wage, low-productivity and low-innovation economy, with levels of innovation in Scotland now in the third quartile of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

I remind the minister that all these policy areas have been within the control of the SNP for 11 years. If Scotland's true entrepreneurial potential is to be realised, we need to see the SNP Government change direction in economic policy and create an environment in which innovation and enterprise can flourish.

I move amendment S5M-15507.1, to leave out from “, as set out” to end and insert:

“notes the economic forecasts of the Scottish Fiscal Commission, which state that Scotland's economic growth will continue to be subdued over the next five years and will continue to underperform that of the UK as a whole; further notes that Scotland's business creation rate continues to lag behind the rest of the UK; recognises the impact that the Scottish Government's policy of making Scotland the highest taxed part of the UK has on Scotland's reputation as being open to entrepreneurs, and calls on the Scottish Government to change direction in economic policy in order to create the skills, business and financial environment in which entrepreneurship can flourish.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Rhoda Grant to speak to and move amendment S5M-15507.2—five minutes, please.

16:04

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Scotland has a long history of entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, most of it is historic. We need to lay again the foundation that encourages that entrepreneurial spirit. Although there is little to disagree with in the Government motion, statements of intent do not really build the foundations that we need in order to thrive. A couple of years ago, I attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association women's conference that looked at women in business. A number of women addressed the conference and talked about their own experiences. For the most part, they had gone into business because circumstances forced them to. It was the difficulty of finding work that fitted around caring responsibilities that drove them to set up their own businesses. They were driven not by a career choice or a burning ambition but by what they needed to do to survive.

Women's Enterprise Scotland published a report highlighting the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs. Its recommendations pointed to the in-built inequality in the way in which support is provided, which means that women are underrepresented in the sector. That is detrimental to women and to our economy as a whole. Some of the issues that WES raises are amplified by others, such as the FSB, as being true throughout the sector. They include, for example, the fragmentation of support and the missing middle: the transition between business gateway and the enterprise sector.

I have constituents who find themselves being passed back and forth between different organisations because the help available from one is quite different from that available from another; many businesses fall between all of them. Businesses need seamless support. When companies are trading successfully, they become vulnerable to takeover from larger organisations that can grow the business. That indicates that there is a risk factor for companies looking to take the next step to grow and export, and that they

need support at that point. The loss of ownership of those companies damages our economy. They often become part of larger multinationals, so we lose much of the wealth that they create in taxes as well as their income.

If we are to maximise the benefits of entrepreneurship, we need to encourage, grow and nurture those companies, but the system does not do that seamlessly. In addition, the support available is not always suitable. Enterprise companies tend to focus help on account managed companies, which fit a narrow definition, while other potentially successful businesses get little or no support. We need to be more open to different business models. Again, the support for those can be fragmented. Co-operatives and social enterprises spread risk while providing employment and economic benefit, but their economic impact is sometimes overlooked and they do not get the support that they require.

**Gillian Martin:** Does Rhoda Grant agree that some of the issues around business support involve looking for too fast a growth and that woman-led businesses tend to be more about sustainable, long-term growth?

**Rhoda Grant:** Yes, I agree with that. However, there are also gaps in the support provided, and that is most likely to be felt by women.

As I said, the economic impact of co-ops and social enterprises is sometimes overlooked. Although there are expert organisations that can help them, co-ops and social enterprises also need mainstream support that understands and encourages that form of entrepreneurship, supports them and signposts them to those expert organisations where necessary.

The same is true of sole traders. In many rural areas, there is not the opportunity to grow a business, because it is about filling a local niche. Those businesses are a crucial economic driver in rural communities and, if they fail, there is a detrimental impact on the wider economy. However, those businesses are often overlooked because of their inability to grow. In addition, as my colleague Daniel Johnson said in an intervention, there are the falling enterprise company budgets. It is therefore difficult to see how the Scottish Government is supporting entrepreneurs.

The Conservative amendment talks about Scottish economic growth underperforming against that of the rest of the UK, and we agree with that point. However, we do not agree that fairer taxation discourages entrepreneurs; indeed, we believe the opposite. Austerity damages our economy and business opportunities for entrepreneurs. It holds our economy back, and those who bear the brunt of that are the least well-

off in our society. Therefore, we cannot support the Conservative amendment.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close, please.

**Rhoda Grant:** However, austerity handed down from the UK Government cannot explain the difference between the Scottish economy and the economy of the rest of the UK. Yes, there is the uncertainty of Brexit, but that is shared throughout the UK.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close, please, Ms Grant.

**Rhoda Grant:** Indyref 2 would give more uncertainty to Scotland.

I move amendment S5M-15507.2, to insert at end

“; notes the report from Women’s Enterprise Scotland highlighting barriers for women entrepreneurs getting support; further notes concerns about the fragmentation of support for start-up businesses, especially for social enterprises, worker co-operatives and sole traders, while budgets for Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise decrease, and calls on the Scottish Government to provide streamlined support to business start-ups and to ensure that such support should continue in order to discourage successful businesses being bought over, rather than grown rooted in the Scottish economy.”

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We are really pushed for time today. That is largely because of people going over their time, which is unfair to their colleagues. Willie Rennie, you have four minutes.

16:10

**Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD):** Thank you for setting me up so nicely, Presiding Officer. I will aim to keep within four minutes.

I recognise the success of Scotland’s entrepreneurial businesses and the contribution that they make to employing people across Scotland. Members need to look no further than the east neuk of Fife and the village of Pittenweem in my constituency. According to the Federation of Small Businesses, it is the fourth most enterprising town. No less than 14.7 per cent of its workers are self-employed, which is an astounding 128 per cent above the national average.

I was fortunate to spend 16 hours on the night shift with one of those businesses—the prawn boat Sanela. I cannot say that it was easy—I did not sit down for the whole 16 hours—but it provided an example of the dedication that small businesses and businesspeople offer as a contribution towards our economy. Small businesses are responsible for seven out of ten private sector jobs in rural areas, accounting for

more than 40,000 jobs in Fife alone and almost double that in Scotland's two biggest cities.

**Kate Forbes:** Does Willie Rennie welcome the fact that two of the most entrepreneurial villages in Scotland are in the Highlands?

**Willie Rennie:** I think we will find that two of the most entrepreneurial hamlets are in North East Fife. If we look closely at the statistics, I am sure we will find that that is true.

My father was a small businessman in the grocery trade. I saw at first hand the dedication, hours and heartache that come with running a business, employing people and meeting the expectations of customers—who, of course, were always right.

I draw the minister's attention to the concerns raised by the Federation of Small Businesses surrounding the drop in the numbers of both registered and unregistered businesses between 2017 and 2018. The FSB pointed out that

"A decline in the number of Scottish businesses spells trouble for our ambitions for our economy and our local communities."

and said that we need to create a stronger start-up culture.

It is important that we take action to promote that culture as the threat of an undesirable no-deal Brexit looms over our economy. According to the Scottish Government's website, almost a third of small and medium-sized enterprises believe that a no-deal Brexit would be detrimental to them. I looked closely at the Conservative amendment and, bizarrely, there was no mention of Brexit. I am sure that that was just an oversight.

Women's Enterprise Scotland is right to highlight the barriers that women face, so we need to redouble our efforts to make that culture change happen.

The Scottish Government's economic action plan has committed to delivering apprenticeships, as it should, but I want the minister to go a step further. When asked whether they know someone who has started a business in the past two years, the number of Scottish people who answered yes was way below the UK average, as it was when they were asked whether, in the place where they live, there will be good start-up opportunities in the next six months. The number of Scottish people possessing the skills and knowledge to start a business was also below the UK average. We have to do better than that, because, as we have seen from the statistics, SMEs are at the heart of the growth in our economy.

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Rennie is just closing

**Willie Rennie:** I am sorry, but I am in my last minute.

We need to improve enterprise education in schools. The way to create the new culture is to encourage more young people into business. I urge the minister to look again at enterprise education in schools.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate. Speeches should be absolutely no more than four minutes long, please.

16:14

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I start by encouraging Dean Lockhart to walk a couple of hundred metres up the Canongate, cross the road and go into the Canongate kirkyard. In the north-west corner he will find Adam Smith's grave, and I suggest that he reads what it says on it. However, I will leave that for another day.

The Tory amendment mentions business start-ups. I had a quick look at one aspect of that by looking at the Companies House figures and, lo and behold, the figures, which are published quarterly, show that the increase in registered companies in Scotland is going at about 4.06 per cent per quarter. Guess what the figure is in England and Wales. It is 4.06 per cent per quarter—it is very similar. I absolutely accept that the base in Scotland is smaller—

**Daniel Johnson:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Stewart Stevenson:** I am not going to have time. I ask the member to forgive me.

There are all sorts of reasons for those figures, but I cannot develop them here in the time that is available.

I want to say a little about taxation, because the Conservatives are also focusing on that. The key thing that helps to start businesses is a friendly tax regime. The small business bonus is hardly a disincentive to small businesses and it is not replicated anywhere else in these islands. This Government has done extraordinarily well.

Of course, by taking away student tuition fees, we are also making sure that the next generation is equipped to do the things that we need—

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Stewart Stevenson:** I will not. It is just because of the time. I am halfway through already. I ask the member to forgive me. I am sure that his

intervention would be worth listening to, but I just do not have time.

We are supporting both entrepreneurs and innovation, because the two are bedfellows. This debate focuses on entrepreneurship, and we must be conscious that, when we support start-ups, new businesses and new ideas, not every one that we support will ultimately be successful. Something that I want to know but which I have found rather difficult to find is the failure rates. If they are too low, we are being too unambitious in the way that we support companies.

I worked as a technologist in banking, and if a bank branch had no bad debt, the manager was instantly taken out of position because he was not being ambitious enough in his lending. If he had too much bad debt, he was also taken out and hung, drawn and quartered, so there is a balance to reach, but we must recognise that there is risk associated with entrepreneurship.

There are some outstanding examples, and I will mention one from Gillian Martin's and my constituency experience. Ten years ago, in Fraserburgh, two lads started BrewDog. It began with two people under the age of 30. Today, they have had to move to get a bigger site in Ellon in Gillian Martin's constituency, and the company is worth more than £1 billion. I very much welcome the fact that it is going to be supporting the business improvement district initiative in Peterhead by bringing a BrewDog bar to the main street. That is absolutely terrific.

In the few seconds that I have left, I note that we also need to think about how we support intrapreneurs—in other words, entrepreneurs inside big companies. The best initiative that we had at the Bank of Scotland was when Bruce Pattullo said in the early 1980s, "Our objective is to double the size of the bank in 10 years." That was the single objective and everybody in the organisation knew it. We did it in seven. Keep it simple—it works.

16:19

**Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con):** I am grateful for the chance to debate the topic of supporting Scotland's entrepreneurs. I start by declaring a registered interest in the topic, having started an accountancy practice over 20 years ago.

Before looking at how we support entrepreneurs, it is important to have a clear understanding of what we mean when we talk about entrepreneurs. When we hear the word "entrepreneur", it is easy to think about the huge success stories: Andrew Carnegie, Sir Arnold Clark and Michelle Mone, to list a few. However, the term really describes any individual who sets

up an enterprise or business, who assumes the risks and—they hope—reaps the rewards that come with that.

Entrepreneurs can take many forms. They can be sole traders, partnerships or small limited companies. Our local butchers, hairdressers, plumbers, mechanics and restaurant and nursery owners are therefore all entrepreneurs.

Being an entrepreneur is to be in a very different environment from that of an employee, as I know only too well. The excitement of the potential growth of the business is combined with the extra hours of working at night. All the responsibility falls on the entrepreneur's head.

Being in business is not always easy, as anyone who is in business knows. So many uncontrollable factors can get in the way of success. In the light of that, the best way of supporting entrepreneurs is by creating a business-friendly environment, in relation to the factors that we can control.

It is also important to have a positive attitude towards people in business and to celebrate and encourage success. The public face of an entrepreneur often hides the blood, sweat and tears that are involved behind the scenes. For entrepreneurs, the balance between the risks and the rewards of their hard work needs to be perceived as worth while.

In my Central Scotland region, Falkirk has always stood out as a hub of independent traders and small business owners. The area has been synonymous with those entrepreneurs for decades. Recently, however, significant cracks have started to show. In the publication, "Business in Scotland 2018", it was revealed that the number of businesses in Falkirk fell between 2017 and 2018. The fall was largely driven by a reduction in the number of sole traders and small businesses.

We on the Conservative benches have long argued that the SNP sends the wrong message to businesses and indeed to workers in Scotland.

**Kate Forbes:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alison Harris:** I ask the minister to wait until I finish.

For example, many small businesses see no point in scaling up here in Scotland, because they will be charged twice the level of large business supplement that they would be charged in England.

Moreover, last year, the SNP introduced significant income tax changes, which made Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK for anyone earning more than £26,000. That sends the wrong message to people, by telling them, "Work harder and you'll keep less of your money."



**Kate Forbes:** Will the member take an intervention on that point?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Ms Harris is closing.

**Alison Harris:** The tax changes influence business decisions, too. Entrepreneurs must decide whether it is worth putting in the extra hours, and their employees must decide whether to push for a promotion.

There are clear knock-on effects of the policy. It hurts Scotland's already low productivity growth rate. Between 2010 and 2017, productivity in Scotland went down.

We need to incentivise entrepreneurs to set up businesses, and we need to make it as easy as possible for people to scale up their businesses. We need employees to be encouraged to work hard and aspire to promotion. Creating an environment in which we accomplish those simple key principles is the best way for us to support entrepreneurs.

16:23

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee has carried out a range of inquiries that touch on entrepreneurship. I will mention some of them, as I go along.

For example, the committee is just concluding its inquiry into business support, which has been mentioned in the debate, in which we focused on business gateway. Of course, I cannot go into the detail of our conclusions until they are published, but most of the evidence that we have taken is on the public record, so I think that it is fair to say that the picture of business gateway across Scotland is a bit patchy. Some entrepreneurs have been positive about the support and advice that they have received from business gateway, some have been more connected to Scottish Enterprise or HIE, and some have got their businesses going with little public support.

One thing that strikes me is the tendency among the children of entrepreneurs to become entrepreneurs themselves. That is absolutely fine, but it leaves us with a challenge: how can we encourage more young people whose parents were employed by public or private sector organisations to think about setting up their own enterprises? It says on the Scotland can do website:

"An entrepreneurial mindset can be learned and a culture that supports it created."

I agree, but I do not think that it is necessarily easily learned, and I think that much depends on the mindset that the person has to start with.

My father was an engineer and my mother was a teacher. I do not think that I ever seriously considered starting a business of my own. I assumed that I would work for an organisation, as they had, and that is broadly what I did in my career as an accountant.

The first challenge is to get more businesses started up. The second challenge is to get our entrepreneurs to grow those businesses, and not to sell them off too soon, before they have really fulfilled their potential, in what is sometimes called the fear of heights.

**Liam Kerr:** Will the member take an intervention?

**John Mason:** I will, if it is very quick.

**Liam Kerr:** Effective broadband is clearly crucial to entrepreneurship, whether the business is starting up or scaling up. Does John Mason have any idea when we will see full broadband coverage in North East Scotland, where I live?

**John Mason:** That is important, but it is a bit off the subject of today's debate.

Skyscanner grew to a considerable size while it was independent and was therefore sold for serious money when the time came to do that, but other companies have been sold—as Rhoda Grant said—much earlier, and the feeling is that the Scottish economy as a whole has therefore not benefited as much as it might have.

Once again, I find myself strongly disagreeing with the Conservative amendment. Here we have a party that keeps the major levers of the economy reserved to Westminster, but its members are quick to claim the credit when they reckon that their actions have contributed to economic growth. However, London has been running the Scottish economy for more than 300 years, whereas the Scottish Parliament has had some involvement for only 20 years. Perhaps—just perhaps—the reason why the Scottish economy has not done so well, and why it risks continuing not to do so well in the future, is that London is running the show.

Unemployment in Scotland is at a welcome low level, but the other side of that is that we do not have many extra people available for new jobs that might come along in the future. There could well be a skills shortage soon. Brexit and the potential of Westminster stopping workers coming to Scotland make it likely that our economy will suffer. If the Scottish economy suffers more because despite our needing immigration, Westminster applies immigration controls, the Conservatives must surely accept that the Westminster Government is responsible for the Scottish economy doing less well.

I have slightly less of a problem with the Labour amendment, but Labour seems to want more

expenditure but does not tell us where the money would come from.

16:27

**Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab):** I have a voluntary entry in the register of interests as a non-remunerated director of Macquick Ltd (Bagpipe Covers).

Entrepreneurs come in all shapes and sizes and from all walks of life. They might be big business tycoons—some of whom were mentioned in the minister's opening speech—inventors, or people who have turned a hobby or skill into an idea for a small business venture. Unfortunately, however, they are predominantly male. Therefore, I intend to focus on the issue of women as entrepreneurs. In the Scottish Government's economic action plan, it is made clear in the "Driving Entrepreneurship" paper that collective efforts must be broadened to address the needs of women in enterprise and in the creative sector.

We are all aware that new businesses are a key driver of economic growth and that it is vital that people get the help and support that they need to ensure success. Small business start-ups are not good only for our economy: they are also good for helping people into employment, as business owners and employees.

The minister mentioned the widening poverty gap in her opening speech. Of course, employment used to be a guaranteed way out of poverty, but clearly that is no longer the case. With one in four Scottish children living in poverty, and two thirds of those living in households in which at least one person works, we can see that a job is not always the way out of poverty. Women are the poorest people in our society, so it is particularly important to support more women into business and to break down the barriers to their doing so.

The Scottish Government's "Women in enterprise: framework and action plan" seeks to address a number of the challenges to women in business, but it is needed because women are still underrepresented in self-employment and in business ownership.

I note that £400,000 has been ear-marked for this financial year to help initiatives such as the ambassador programme that focus on women. However, I would be grateful to hear from the minister in summing up—unfortunately we do not have time for interventions—whether some funding can be focused specifically on tackling the lack of start-ups in areas of higher deprivation where women suffer health inequalities, and among people who live in poverty and exclusion in general. That could include specific funding for projects that work with women who have complex health needs and who the mainstream labour

market does not always fit. Personal control and flexibility are important in such cases. I would be grateful if the minister would comment on that.

Women working in agriculture is a specific area that also needs more attention. I and other MSPs recently hosted a women's dinner in the Scottish Parliament at which Sarah Allison, who is the vice-chairperson of NFU Scotland's next generation group, spoke passionately about the opportunities for women in the farming and agriculture sector, and the role that we can all play in supporting them.

The Scottish Government's women in agriculture task force, which has been working on that issue, has just published an interim report. The recommendations for training include

"Short courses designed for women new to farming ... Practical as well as financial and management training courses to be targeted at women"

and

"Courses targeted at women to take into account their needs, including childcare."

That approach is already showing positive results and is challenging the stereotype of agriculture and farming as an all-male preserve.

I highlight the importance of harnessing women's existing skills and taking them seriously as a business proposition. There is a challenge in ensuring that women's business ideas—for example, jewellery making or being a beautician—are not dismissed as hobbies and that they receive the support and respect that they deserve. Sometimes, relatively small amounts of funding can be enough to start up businesses, but getting the funding can be extremely difficult for many women.

I support the Government motion and the Labour amendment. I certainly do not support the Tory amendment.

16:31

**Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** In written evidence to the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee, Scottish Chambers of Commerce stated:

"Scotland has an enviable level of support for developing businesses, delivered through local authorities primarily via Business Gateway, the Enterprise Agencies, and private sector organisations such as Chambers of Commerce."

Scotland is the fifth most effective environment for business support globally, up from 13th in 2013. That finding is supported by research that was carried out by the University of Strathclyde's Hunter centre for entrepreneurship. It has identified that Scotland's Global Entrepreneurship Development Institute

“profile improved both absolutely and relative to benchmark nations. If it were a nation state, it would rank 5th when included with 28 innovation-driven nations on the GEDI index for the 2012 to 2015 period, comfortably within the upper quartile”

and behind only the United States, Australia, Denmark and Sweden.

The most recent official figures for the number of registered businesses in Scotland records 16 per cent growth since 2007, with more than 28,000 new businesses including sole traders and partnerships, which grew from 54,000 to just under 69,000.

In order to support new entrepreneurs and existing businesses to grow, there is a range of support, from business incubators to innovation centres, in addition to the enterprise agencies and business gateway. Some might see that as a cluttered landscape, but the outcome is that Scotland's business survival rates are above the UK average. Scotland is ranked first out of the UK's 12 regions for two-year and three-year survival rates. When it came to the five-year survival rate for businesses that were born in 2012 and were still active in 2017, Scotland's rate was 44 per cent which, again, was above the UK average.

We do not often hear about business death rates. Again, Scotland is performing better, with a business death rate that is 11 per cent lower than the UK average. London has the highest business death rate, with more than 86,000 businesses failing in 2017.

In Edinburgh, the business support landscape has supported the city to become one of the UK's economic hot spots. CodeBase, which is the UK's largest start-up incubator, is home to more than 100 of the country's best technology companies, and brings together entrepreneurs, world-class technological talent and top investors.

In my Edinburgh Pentlands constituency, the Edinburgh business school, which is located at Heriot-Watt University's Riccarton campus, has a start-up incubator in which successful applicants are offered free space in fully equipped offices for a year. The budding entrepreneurs also have access to workshops, training and expert advice. In business accelerators, Edinburgh has Scotland's first specialist fintech hub at the Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters at Gogarburn, where innovative fintech entrepreneurs and start-ups have access to similar expertise.

Start-up finance is critical to ensuring that new businesses get to the point at which they can start trading. The Scottish Government is investing in the Scottish encouraging dynamic growth entrepreneurs—Scottish EDGE—fund competition. In the 12 rounds that have taken

place so far, it has invested in 350 businesses, which has resulted in £130 million of additional turnover and 1600 jobs.

I welcome the proposal to reopen the Scottish stock exchange here in Edinburgh, which would create 60 highly-skilled jobs. Over the past year, the number of employers that are based in Scotland has increased by 900. If we can become the best place in the world to do business, many more new and existing small businesses will grow to become employers, which will make our economy stronger.

16:35

**Tom Mason (North East Scotland) (Con):**

Scotland's current economic performance can be described only as mediocre. Growth is forecast to be lower than that of the UK as a whole for the next four years, and gross domestic product is growing half as quickly. Productivity is at its lowest level in nearly nine years, which is a far cry from the Scottish Government's goal of being in the top quarter of OECD countries. Target set, target missed.

We need to do considerably better, so it follows that we must find ways of improving performance and productivity wherever we can. We need slicker ways of working, less cluttered regulation and bureaucracy and a much more enterprising nation, with new ways of working, new markets and products, and innovation in all that we do.

Innovation comes about through experimenting and risk-taking, and we look to entrepreneurial activity to achieve the success that we need in order to progress the economy at a much faster rate. The best examples of entrepreneurship are when individuals are able to take calculated risks that take advantage of market conditions, knowledge and experience. Innovative processes should therefore take place on a large scale, such as business start-ups, and on a small scale, in every department in organisations across Scotland.

I once asked the chief executive of a leading venture capital company who it was best to invest in, and he replied that it is the person who really knows their market and has failed at least once—or, better, twice. We need that element of calculated risk to push the boundaries of what we can achieve. I am reminded of the words of George Bernard Shaw. In 1903, he said:

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man”.

I apologise to females for that quotation.

We need to find ways to encourage risk-taking and to ensure that, if people fail, the consequences are not too burdensome. With that in mind, investment in business support is vital.

**Kate Forbes:** Can the member say whether he will vote for Labour's amendment, which asks for more money, as well as for his party's amendment, which asks for a tax cut?

**Tom Mason:** I will vote for an environment in which business enterprise and entrepreneurs can flourish. Money is not necessarily the vital part in that.

We need to fix our flatlining research and development spending, which is the worst among OECD countries, bar New Zealand's. We need to sort out our unacceptable skills gap, which has doubled since 2011. We need to ensure that communities have the powers that they need to be reactive and flexible in order that they can deal with the unique challenges that they face. We need to help the high street properly and take account of e-commerce. To compensate for risk, we must reward success where it occurs and encourage investment and, importantly, profitability. Sadly, the SNP does not take that approach.

A business supplement that is double that of the rest of the UK puts Scottish business at a "competitive disadvantage." Those are not my words, but those of Scottish Chambers of Commerce. Where is the incentive when Scottish businesses pay an extra £190 million in taxes every year? The Scottish Government must incentivise innovation, not treat it as a cash cow.

We have so much potential as a nation, but we cannot realise it until such time as the right support is available from the Scottish Government. The current approach is not working as it should. If everything was fine, there would not be fewer businesses across the country than there were last year, and productivity would not be at its lowest level since 2010.

I urge the Government to think carefully about what has been said here today, and to work constructively towards developing policies that work much better and allow innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish.

16:39

**Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** I once again have the opportunity to highlight a significant number that I often mention when talking about Scotland's enterprise potential. The number is 7.6 billion, which is how many pounds would go into the Scottish economy every year if the same number of women as men started up in business.

The Labour amendment makes specific reference to the work that is done by Women's Enterprise Scotland. I recommend that Rhoda Grant and Elaine Smith come along to my cross-party group on women in enterprise, for which WES is the secretariat. We have done great work over the past three years, including securing funding for WES and its enterprise training for women.

**Elaine Smith:** I have not been along to a meeting—I will try to get along—but I read some of the minutes, which were very interesting.

**Gillian Martin:** Elaine Smith would be most welcome, as would everybody else.

Many of the women we have heard from at the cross-party group are innovators, particularly in tech. We have also had sessions on women in agriculture, heard from women from areas of multiple deprivation who have started up in business and done a lot of work on access to finance and business support. We have usually concentrated on the lack of both for women and the unsuitability of current enterprise structures, which miss out on women's potential due to unconscious bias.

From WES research, we found out that women-led businesses view growth as a sustainable, long-term process, rather than as something with a fast, high trajectory, and that, if a business fits in the middle between small and very large businesses, it might not be eligible for a lot of support. Women-led businesses focus on broader community measures such as employment, fair working practices and service, and produce quality, rather than just turnover.

More than three quarters of respondents to a recent WES survey stated that services should be more aware of the difference in support needs of women and men in business, and appropriate peer support was listed as being particularly desirable for women.

That brings me on to this week's deadline for applications for business ambassadors for Women's Enterprise Scotland. I hope that one of my constituents, Lindsay Ritchie, will apply. She embodies the can do approach that is mentioned in the Government motion. A small unit in the village of Newmachar, her business, Kilts Wi Hae Ltd, ships traditional Highland dress and gift items all over the world. She employs seven local people—and a work-experience student—which is seven people not having to commute into the city for work. Small businesses providing local opportunities in small towns and villages are good for high streets, the environment and working parents.

I note that Lindsay's small business and many others in my area are able to have premises with a

shopfront, thanks to the increase in the ceiling of the small business bonus. The majority of high-street businesses in my constituency now qualify for that vital support.

I want to mention low-carbon innovation before I finish. Leaving the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee and moving on to convene the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee has been very interesting. Through our deliberations on the Government's Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill, it has been glaringly obvious that our business and innovation support agencies would do well to have a focus on the potential in shepherding businesses that can be part of the low-carbon revolution, whether in tech for renewable energy; bioscience that improves soil conditions, plant health or feed for livestock; or innovative agribusiness. There is a wealth of knowledge and innovative thinking in our environment and agriculture sector in Scotland that could be nurtured and exported to lead the way in the world as we face up to our climate change responsibilities. If we have that focus, it is ours for the taking.

Untapped enterprise potential is the key to economic growth in Scotland. It is also the key to many of this Government's priorities: equality of opportunity, environmental sustainability, fair work, innovation and internationalisation.

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** We move to closing speeches. Daniel Johnson will be followed by Jamie Halcro Johnston.

16:43

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. With only four minutes, I feel more as though I am taking part in a pitching competition than summing up a debate, but I will have a go.

I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests. I am a non-working, non-remunerated director of a retail business and a member of the FSB.

I have always struggled a little bit with the term "entrepreneur". When we think of entrepreneurs, we think either of Mark Zuckerberg or Del Boy, but when I was working in business I never felt that I was either one of them. I felt that I was constantly chasing my tail, trying to keep all the plates spinning and trying to ensure that I was making progress in my business.

It has been a point of consensus in the debate that the essence of being an entrepreneur is about hard work. It is also about making the most of both the entrepreneur's talents and those of the people who work in their businesses—a point that Rhoda

Grant made well. That is why it is right to focus not just on people in whizzy high-tech businesses, but on those who work very hard in more day-to-day businesses, and to consider how to support them so that they can make the most of their talents.

There has been much that we can agree on in the debate. I refer also to the debate in Labour Party time last week, on investment and business support, which had two points of consensus: we need to see how to grow our middle-sized companies, and that needs to be done through a combination of investment and support. Those are points that we can all agree on.

Although there is much that Labour can agree on in the Government motion, unless we really look at how to stimulate growth and tackle the underlying issues of productivity, there is a danger that the motion is piecemeal. Likewise, there are issues with the Tory approach to the debate. There was much in Dean Lockhart's contribution that I agreed with. I agree with him that we need the right environment for enterprise and that there is danger in a patchwork of approaches and organisations. I agree that there is a need to do better on the digital skills gap and I agree that we need to fund business support more effectively. How that translates into an amendment that simply talks about lowering taxation as the sole instrument and device with which to support our enterprises makes no sense to me.

Although I agree that no businessperson likes paying tax, the reality is that growing a business is also about infrastructure that is invested in through the public sector and about skills that we provide through our education sector. It is about making sure that we plug those skills gaps and support businesses that need to grow to take new opportunities. Again, that is about business support—about the state and the private sector working in partnership. That requires public sector investment and, the last time that I checked, the best way to do that was through taxation. If the Tories have an issue with that, I gently point them in the direction of the Scandinavian countries or Germany, which have significantly higher levels of taxation but seem to do significantly better than we do with regard to productivity.

**Dean Lockhart:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Daniel Johnson:** I do not have the time.

We must also celebrate our successes. Gordon MacDonald did a good job of pointing out successes right here in this city. We have a turnover from tech businesses of £1.14 billion, 212 start-ups in the past year, 10,000 direct tech jobs and 38,000 in associated efforts. That is because we have a highly successful university that has acted as a conduit for knowledge exchange and

collaboration. Therein lies a hint as to where future success may lie for future enterprise policy in this country.

16:48

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** We have seen a welcome focus from Governments at all levels on the need to back innovation and I welcome some of the minister's comments. In what has been far too short a debate, we have heard a number of positive contributions from around the chamber, and I will draw attention to a few of them.

My colleague Dean Lockhart highlighted the increasing digital skills gap that is emerging in Scotland, which we should all be concerned about. As he mentioned, the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee, on which we both sit, has heard evidence that only nine per cent of businesses in Scotland embed digital in the business, compared with 43 per cent in competitor countries. As a country, we have to address that digital skills gap and I agree whole-heartedly with Dean Lockhart's call for the establishment of a dedicated institute of e-commerce to help emerging entrepreneurs to take full advantage of global e-commerce opportunities.

Alison Harris was right to point out that, when we think of entrepreneurs, too often we think of the huge success stories: the Andrew Carnegies and Arnold Clarks or, as Daniel Johnson mentioned, the Del Boys. However, serial and successful entrepreneurs come in all shapes and sizes, from the person who sets up and runs a business that employs thousands of staff to the person who may employ five or 10 people. Their reasons for starting their own business, however, may be the same. Tom Mason made an important point when he highlighted the fact that many entrepreneurs fail at least once, but what differentiates them from others is that they get up, dust themselves off and give it another go—sometimes more than once. They learn from their mistakes, and it is their determination that drives them on.

In his intervention on the minister, Daniel Johnson highlighted the cuts to the budgets of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise—

**Kate Forbes:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** I do not have time, as we have only a short time for debate. Perhaps more time should have been allowed for what is an important subject.

Mr Johnson could also have mentioned that Highlands and Islands Enterprise underspent on

its budget for broadband by more than 45 per cent last year.

Willie Rennie has seemingly launched the entrepreneurial hamlet of the year awards, coming soon to the international conference centre Pittenweem—get your tickets as soon as you can.

Elaine Smith touched on women in agriculture. This is a good opportunity to mention the sisters Kirsty and Aimee Budge, from Shetland, who are the "Countryfile" farming heroes for 2018.

The minister and others highlighted the importance of addressing the barriers to women entrepreneurs. That is a part of the Labour amendment that we can agree with. Unfortunately, we also feel that the amendment seems to discourage foreign investment in Scotland, which is the wrong message to send, so we will not be supporting it.

The issue of entrepreneurship and encouraging more entrepreneurs is one around which we can hopefully build some consensus. There appears to be a recognition across the chamber that there have been shortcomings in our approach in the past and that there is a need to improve in the future. Scotland has suffered too many years of slow growth and a failure to effectively grow businesses from start-ups to organisations of a significant size.

As I have already mentioned, in common with a number of speakers today, I have had the advantage of sitting on the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee during its recent business support inquiry. We heard a great deal of evidence about the functioning of both the enterprise agencies and, at a local level, business gateway. Those will be key bodies in driving forward a cultural change in support of entrepreneurialism.

One thing that seems odd to me, however, is that business gateway, as a local authority service, does not seem to be better integrated to the other functions of local authorities. If we are to embed enterprise earlier in the consciousness of young people, surely organisations such as business gateway can make more of a contribution through their respective councils.

More widely, there has been a positive focus on collaboration today, and that is welcome. However, if we want entrepreneurship to have equal status in terms of the careers that we signpost to young people, we must give it parity of esteem. That will involve incorporating entrepreneurship at all levels. There are, clearly, unharnessed opportunities to build entrepreneurial skills as part of apprenticeships. I know of one former plumbing apprentice who has all the skills to be a plumber but, having set up his own business, is now having to learn how to run that business, with all the additional skills that that

requires. He felt that even the most basic business training as part of his apprenticeship would have been extremely helpful when he started down the road to setting up on his own.

Although I was slightly disappointed when, speaking to a group of about 12 MSYPs in Parliament last year, only one showed any interest in starting up their own company, I appreciate that that is not necessarily reflective of the aspirations of young people. I highlight the case of Estrela from Orkney, which was Kirkwall grammar school's young enterprise team of 2017-18 and which has gone on to be crowned Scottish company of the year. We must ensure that every young person who grows up in Scotland receives a rounded enterprise education that will not only open up new horizons but will also provide them with the practical skills that they require to run a small business.

We on this side of the chamber will welcome any new work from the Scottish Government to support entrepreneurs and break down some of the barriers to starting up a new business. Sadly, however, it is many of the policies of this SNP Government that are holding Scottish business back. As long as the SNP continues to be an Administration that values tax rises above creating an environment for the private sector to succeed, our economic growth will suffer. So, too, will our productivity, which this Government pledged in its 2016 manifesto to tackle. Instead, the gap with the rest of the UK is at its widest level since 2012.

We can and should be ambitious about our entrepreneurs and be clear about the ways in which we can allow a truly entrepreneurial spirit to flourish in Scotland.

16:54

**Kate Forbes:** I thank all members for their contribution to today's debate. Above all, I hope that entrepreneurs across the country feel that we have paid tribute to their efforts. Whether they are in the hamlets of Fife, the villages of the Highlands or the streets of Edinburgh, they are the ones who deliver the successes, who can get up and go and who bear a lot of the risks of what we do.

Many of the issues that we have discussed during the debate deserve more time for greater reflection than we have been able to manage today. It is clear that supporting all of Scotland's people to realise their potential, no matter where they choose to realise it, is a priority that we all share. That endeavour has to be a collective one.

I will start by again referring to the hypocrisy in the Conservative amendment in talking about attracting people to this country. That from a party that gave up on attracting people to the country years ago, with its restrictive immigration rhetoric

and anti-immigration policies. Over the past few weeks, those policies have been lambasted by business for jeopardising and devastating the economy. In the words of one business organisation, the UK Government

"seems hell-bent on ignoring the business community when it comes to its immigration policy".

The Conservative Party might, therefore, want to figure out how to attract people before it lectures others on doing so.

Back on the Scotland can do approach, supporting Scotland's people, investing in Scotland's talent and attracting people to the country, it is clear that we will be able to do those only if we work across society with private, public and third sector partners.

I will touch on a number of issues that members have raised, the first of which is growth support. Along with the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Hunter Foundation, we created and continue to support the Scottish EDGE—encouraging dynamic growth entrepreneurs—fund. Since 2013, that private partner, which was spun out of Scottish Enterprise, has awarded more than £13 million to 350 businesses; supported the creation of more than 1,600 jobs and an increase of more than £113 million in turnover; and helped to secure more than £100 million of additional investment. Following our economic action plan commitment to amplify Scotland can do, Scottish Enterprise has invested a further £1 million in Scottish EDGE.

I pay tribute to Gillian Martin and the cross-party group on women in enterprise, which Elaine Smith commented on. In 2014, with Women's Enterprise Scotland, we launched the first policy framework anywhere in the European Union to tackle the enterprise gender gap. That is now being progressed with many other partners through the women in enterprise action group. It is important that we are working with other partners. They include Investing Women, the Federation of Small Businesses, Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Association of Scottish Businesswomen. Together, we are trying to drive change, because we recognise the figure that Gillian Martin gave on the huge impact that there would be on the Scottish economy if the start-up rate among women entrepreneurs was the same as the rate among men. By working with and listening to those partners, we have started to achieve progress.

Elaine Smith asked about investment. I draw members' attention to the new digital fund, which is in the budget and which I will be taking forward. It focuses on providing grant support to those who are furthest from the labour market to get the digital or tech skills that they need and which are required in our economy. The aim is to expand the

workforce and to provide people with support. In particular, I would like to encourage women to access the fund, as well as others who are furthest from the labour market.

**Dean Lockhart:** As the minister for the digital economy, does the member support our calls for a dedicated institute of e-commerce?

**Kate Forbes:** I support individuals and businesses that want to improve what they are doing digitally. At the moment, industry tells us that we need about 12,800 new entrants to the digital workforce just to stand still, without even starting to realise the huge opportunities that come with digital. We are putting in place digital growth funds for business as well as individuals, so that businesses recognise the opportunities and individuals take advantage of the opportunities to retrain.

Our shared vision is one of an entrepreneurial society, and that starts with Government. It means that the Government needs to value an entrepreneurial mindset, which we then support externally. We want to have that mindset in Government, and we want to support start-ups, particularly through our procurement approach. A core part of that approach is CivTech, which is an innovative project that works with the public sector to disrupt normal procurement models and which puts out problems for small companies to work towards remedying. That can often be the first step for small and medium-sized entrepreneurial businesses in getting their foot through the door.

It is true that there is much to be optimistic about, including the business start-up and growth rates in Scotland. We are seeing success. We know that Scotland is the fifth most effective environment for business support globally, and we should celebrate that. However, in light of the UK Government's damaging proposals in relation to not just market access but immigration, we know that we need to work even harder to ensure that Scotland is an attractive place for skills and talent and for entrepreneurs to choose to set up businesses in.

## Point of Order

17:00

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Section 27(1)(a) of the Scotland Act 1998 says that the Scottish law officers

"may participate in the proceedings of the Parliament to the extent permitted by standing orders".

Rule 4.5 of standing orders, on the participation of the Scottish law officers in proceedings, says:

"1. This Rule applies where the Lord Advocate or Solicitor General ... is not a member of the Parliament.

2. The Scottish Law Officer may ... participate in any of the proceedings of the Parliament as fully as any member",

except in relation to voting and membership of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and Parliamentary Bureau. It also says:

"3. These Rules ... apply to the Scottish Law Officer"

when they participate

"in any proceedings of the Parliament, as if the Scottish Law Officer were a member of the Parliament."

Earlier, during portfolio questions in relation to justice and the law officers, I asked what the Lord Advocate's position is on the Scottish Government's competence to authorise another referendum on Scottish independence without a section 30 order. Presiding Officer, please note that, in my initial question, I did not ask what his advice was to the Scottish Government; I asked directly what his view was. The Lord Advocate was present in the chamber, but the Scottish Government chose to have the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans respond. Over the years, I have not thought of asking about the Lord Advocate's view, because he is head of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and has previously always answered questions about prosecutions. However, last year, he entered the fray in relation to the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill and responded to questions from MSPs on his duties in the chamber.

After my earlier point of order, the Deputy Presiding Officer quite correctly pointed out that paragraph 1 of standing order rule 13.7 allows any minister to respond to an oral question in the chamber. Therefore, the letter, if not the spirit, of standing orders was complied with. I accept that entirely. [*Interruption.*] I hear members say, "That's all that matters", but it is not.

Presiding Officer, as chair of the Parliamentary Bureau, will you have the bureau re-examine Parliament's standing orders to see whether they are fit for purpose in allowing members, as in this



instance, to directly question our law officers on their duties, as they see them, in the chamber? If you raise the matter with the bureau and it decides that the standing orders need revision in relation to this case, will you outline the process that would need to be followed?

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** I thank Mr Rumbles for advance notice of his point of order. I assure him that I followed the earlier proceedings. I heard the question that the member asked, the response from the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, the further exchange with the Deputy Presiding Officer, who was in the chair, and her response, which the member highlighted. The member recognised that the response was right in that it is up to the Government to choose which minister to put forward to respond to questions to the Government.

Having said that, I have looked further into the matter. Although I recognise the point and the concern that the member has raised, it is not for the bureau to look at standing order changes; such matters are for the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. If the member wishes to take the matter further, he might wish to write to that committee. In turn, that committee could ask the bureau for its views. That would be the procedure to follow.

## Business Motion

17:04

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-15515, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 29 January 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: St John's Paediatric Services Update

*followed by* Scottish Government Business: A Connected Scotland: The Scottish Government's Strategy for Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness

*followed by* Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Debate: Appointment of a New Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 30 January 2019

1.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.30 pm Ministerial Statement: Response to the latest EU Exit vote in Westminster

*followed by* Portfolio Questions: Government Business and Constitutional Relations; Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

*followed by* Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.15 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 31 January 2019

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 Stage 1 Debate: Budget (Scotland)  
(No.3) Bill

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 5 February 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Vulnerable Witnesses  
(Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Financial Resolution – Vulnerable  
Witnesses (Criminal Evidence)  
(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 6 February 2019

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:  
Education and Skills

*followed by* Rural Economy and Connectivity  
Committee Debate: Inquiry into Salmon  
Farming in Scotland

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 7 February 2019

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 Stage 1 Debate: Management of  
Offenders (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Financial Resolution - Management of  
Offenders (Scotland) Bill

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, in relation to any debate on a business motion setting out a business programme taken on Wednesday 30 January 2019, the second sentence of rule 8.11.3 is suspended and replaced with "Any Member may speak on the motion at the discretion of the Presiding Officer"

and

(c) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on Thursday 31 January 2019, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders or their representatives to question the First Minister".—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:04

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motions S5M-15514, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, and S5M-15552, on a committee meeting at the same time as the chamber.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (Tax Rates and Tax Bands etc) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2018 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament, after Topical Questions, on Tuesday 29 January 2019 in order to consider its draft report on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.—[*Graeme Dey*]

## Decision Time

17:04

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The first question is, that amendment S5M-15507.1, in the name of Dean Lockhart, which seeks to amend motion S5M-15507, in the name of Kate Forbes, on supporting entrepreneurship, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 28, Against 81, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-15507.2, in the name of Rhoda Grant, which seeks to amend the motion in

the name of Kate Forbes, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)

McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

### Against

Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 82, Against 27, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-15507, in the name of Kate Forbes, on supporting entrepreneurship, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### Against

Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

#### Abstentions

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 76, Against 27, Abstentions 6.

#### *Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament recognises the successes of Scotland's entrepreneurial businesses and the potential of all of Scotland's people; welcomes the collaborative approach to increasing and supporting entrepreneurship between the private sector and the Scottish Government; notes the crucial role played by Scotland's entrepreneurs and the all-sector enterprise support network in developing the "Scotland CAN DO" approach, including through the Unlocking Ambition Challenge; further notes the role of the public sector in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation through organisations such as CivTech; welcomes the commitment to build on this momentum, as set out in the Economic Action Plan; notes the report from Women's Enterprise Scotland highlighting barriers for women entrepreneurs getting support; further notes concerns about the fragmentation of support for start-up businesses, especially for social enterprises, worker co-operatives and sole traders, while budgets for Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise decrease, and calls on the Scottish Government to provide streamlined support to business start-ups and to ensure that such support should continue in order to discourage successful businesses being bought over, rather than grown rooted in the Scottish economy.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-15514, in the name of Graeme Dey, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)

McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

#### **Abstentions**

Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 82, Against 0, Abstentions 27.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (Tax Rates and Tax Bands etc) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2018 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S5M-15552, in the name of Graeme Dey, on a committee meeting at the same time as the chamber, be agreed to.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that, under Rule 12.3.3B of Standing Orders, the Environment, Climate Change and

Land Reform Committee can meet, if necessary, at the same time as a meeting of the Parliament, after Topical Questions, on Tuesday 29 January 2019 in order to consider its draft report on the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill.

**The Presiding Officer:** That concludes decision time.

## Adult Learning

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-15186, in the name of Colin Beattie, on celebrating the reach of adult learning. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament acknowledges the partnership established between Midlothian Council's Lifelong Learning and Employability Service and Melville Housing to assist tenants to improve their digital skills through cooking, specifically supporting people on low incomes in the Dalkeith, Mayfield and Easthouses areas; believes that, by providing a unique adult learning programme that develops digital skills, financial capacity, research and use of online information, this has helped tenants become more aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle; understands that the participants were able to develop social networks to reduce social isolation; welcomes what it sees as the outstanding contribution that community-based adult learning makes to people, and welcomes debate about the impact and effect of adult learning in disadvantaged communities across Scotland.

17:11

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** I am very pleased to introduce the Scottish Parliament's first ever debate on the reach of adult learning in Scotland's disadvantaged communities.

I congratulate Midlothian Council's lifelong learning and employability service and Melville Housing Association on their joint adult learning project. I am particularly pleased to highlight it not only because it is running in my constituency but because it illustrates how such educational interventions can change people's lives. I know from colleagues in the Parliament that, across the country, there are many great examples of adult learning.

It is timely to discuss the issue now, in what can be seen as a year of celebration for adult learning in Scotland as well as in the Scottish Parliament. Significantly, this year we will mark the centenary of a revolutionary milestone in the history of adult education in the United Kingdom and internationally: the publication of the final report of the adult education committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction, which is better known as the 1919 report. It represented a hugely important statement of the value of adult education and its role in creating and sustaining successful democratic societies, animated by shared civic, social and economic goals. Not only did it recognise the wide impact that adult education can have on society, notably in responding to the massive social, economic and political challenges of the time, it accorded national and local

government direct responsibility for ensuring its adequate supply.

The 1919 report argued that adult education was not a luxury but was indispensable to national recovery and to sustainable, effective democracy. It also emphasised the social purpose of adult education in supporting enlightened and responsible citizenship and creating a well-ordered welfare state organised around the common good.

In 1919, the goal of all education included the advancement of citizenship. It promoted an understanding that access to adult learning was a right and that, as a skilled member of the community, each individual had responsibilities to help to meet local needs and reduce disadvantage. The report also argued that the main political, social and economic challenges that the country faced could be tackled only with the help of a greatly expanded, publicly funded system of adult education. It was decided that

"adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional persons ... nor as a thing which concerns only a short span of early manhood"

or womanhood. Rather, it was

"a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong".

The report stated that

"the opportunity for adult education should be spread uniformly and systematically over the whole community, as a primary obligation on that community in its own interest and as a chief part of its duty to its individual members ... every encouragement and assistance should be given to voluntary organisations, so that their work ... may be developed and find its proper place in the national educational system".

The report laid the foundation for what became a publicly funded adult education sector, in which local education authorities were encouraged to see non-vocational adult education as an integral part of their activities. It recognised that all men and women had the capacity to participate in a humane and liberal education and to contribute to the democratic life of the country. It also saw that different approaches to teaching and organisation were required for adults, emphasising the reality of their lives and the breadth of their interests, along with their need for the fullest self-determination in their learning.

One hundred years later, the Scottish Government has been laying the foundation for a strong culture of community learning that helps to build individual and social capacity. The strategic guidance to community planning partnerships, the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 are the keystones that support community-based



learning and see the power for change rooted in and flowing from Scotland's residents.

Between 1919 and 1945, each education authority was responsible for ensuring the delivery of adult learning and worked closely with the voluntary sector and universities for support.

It was not until 1975, with the publication of the report "Adult Education: The Challenge of Change" and the reorganisation of local government that we saw the emergence of discrete community education services, in which adult education, youth work and community work were brought together to target disadvantaged groups. Those three strands of work now form the three national priorities for all community learning and development providers in Scotland.

For much of the next 25 years, a shift in focus to community-based adult learning enabled individuals and groups in local communities to participate in the widest possible range of education and/or training opportunities. The report, "Communities: Change through Learning", which was published in 1998, focused on the development of a national strategy for community-based adult education, youth work and educational support for community development.

Those developments focused on social inclusion and lifelong learning. The acceptance of the report's recommendations resulted in the Scottish Office guidance of April 1999 providing direction to local authorities on the provision of community education. It also detailed the requirement to produce community learning strategies with authorities' partners.

With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, "Partnership for Scotland: An Agreement for the First Scottish Parliament" set out Government priorities for Scotland, including the development of an enterprise economy through investing in jobs and skills. Adult learning was seen as key to achieving those goals, and a focus on literacy, numeracy and employability was introduced into the programme.

The Scottish Government is working with others, including the national strategic forum for adult learning, to develop a strategy for that in Scotland. Initial consultations with adult learning providers and learners have taken place. Hearing directly from learners helps us to empower communities and remember that education has a purpose beyond solely promoting skills growth.

Our predecessors in 1919 recognised that education had relevance to people's livelihoods and success and to the nation's prosperity. Further, they were just as concerned with values, citizenship, the nature of a good society and the intrinsic benefits of learning.

The infrastructure of adult education has increasingly been challenged at a time when the challenges that are posed by changes in technology, climate, demography and politics seem to demand much more adult education, not less.

The centenary of the 1919 report provides a much-needed moment for introspection and reflection on what we think adult education is for and why we value it. It is an opportunity to put adult education once again in the spotlight and to recognise the importance of thoughtful civic engagement through citizenship and to show how adult education can help us to renew our democracy and become a kinder, smarter and more cohesive, open and prosperous society.

The Scottish Government has made a good start by introducing guidance and legislation to promote community engagement and empowerment. I look forward to hearing from the minister how we can now go forward by resourcing community learning to give districts across Scotland the ability to deliver an education that meets the aspirations and needs of communities of geography or interest, especially those where a reduction in disadvantage can be delivered most effectively by those who understand how to challenge it best.

17:19

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I start by apologising to you, Presiding Officer, the people in the public gallery and colleagues in the chamber, because the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee has a meeting in Galashiels tonight and, after I have spoken, I will depart to catch a train to get me there on time.

I am sure that this will be an entertaining and interesting debate. I thank Colin Beattie for giving us the opportunity to discuss this very important topic and I also thank my intern, Bella Nguyen, who has done the research and written my speaking notes for me. It is always a challenge for somebody when they come to the Parliament to be invited to look at a policy area that they have never looked at previously and to come up with something, and it is always quite revealing how quickly they can find that we are doing quite a lot. The important point is that, although we all say that Scotland aspires to be a welcoming and inclusive country for all and that part of that is about ensuring that adults in Scotland have a good social network and support, many continue to experience severe social exclusion. The emphasis in the motion before us on developing social networks is therefore very welcome.

NHS Health Scotland's report "Social Isolation and Loneliness in Scotland: a Review of Prevalence and Trends" talks about those who are particularly at risk, which includes

"children and adults who are socio-economically disadvantaged and those experiencing ... physical and mental health"

that is below the norm. A whole set of stigmas is associated with people on low incomes or people with disabilities who are isolated, so any initiatives that we can take that help people develop a better sense of themselves, which they should properly have because we value everyone in our society, would be helpful. However, we should also equip them to develop relationships that will be life long and beneficial to them.

The Scottish household survey reported that 8 per cent of responders disagreed that they could turn to friends and relatives in the neighbourhood for advice or support. That gives us some measure of the problem, which is perhaps bigger than we might have imagined. That survey also reported that 18 per cent of responders said that they had limited regular social contact in their neighbourhood. That leads, according to other research, to health issues that are sometimes readily measurable, such as high blood pressure, poor sleep and depression. More fundamentally, it leads to mental health issues, which can be more insidious, particularly at low levels where they are subclinical, the need to seek help is not necessarily recognised and help is not sought. We therefore need to reach out to that category of individuals in particular and ensure that there is a wide range of opportunities for them to participate in the range of things that most of society takes for granted. Through that participation, they can improve their social contact with others and allow others to see opportunities in supporting such people in the long term.

Technology is adding to the problem in many instances, rather than being a solution. If people do not have the skills, the incentive or the equipment to engage in the modern digital world, they are further isolated. The focus on ensuring that people have the ability to develop online and digital communication skills is as important as other initiatives. Our libraries and other public spaces are often very good places in which people can undertake such development. For example, in my Banffshire and Buchan Coast constituency, the community learning and development team is hosting small group sessions to address that digital issue, which is part of a wider national picture of activity that I very much welcome.

There are big opportunities and a lot to do, but we are making good progress.

17:24

**Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con):** I, too, thank Colin Beattie for raising awareness of the digital kitchen workshop in Midlothian through his motion for the debate. It is a timely initiative that appears to suit the twin needs that we now have as a society that is technology driven and has problems with food. We are, of course, surrounded by technology in everything that we do, as has already been said. Whether we are looking to find out basic information, such as shop opening times, or applying for a job through an online portal, technology is there.

Not having the access or skills to use that technology self-evidently puts people at a basic disadvantage. Last year, a Citizens Advice Scotland survey of 1,200 of its clients found that 18 per cent never used the internet. That is almost one fifth of people, particularly adults, who are being left behind as younger generations take the technology that they use for granted, because they grow up with it all around them.

That one-fifth figure is also significant for other reasons. In 2016, only one fifth of adults in Scotland consumed the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables on the previous day—I confess that I do not think I have eaten my proper number of portions today—which was a significant decrease from 23 per cent in 2009. As a result of that, we are facing a worsening obesity and diabetes crisis.

For people who have the skills, cooking may feel like rather a simple exercise, allowing them to use healthy food in interesting and tasty ways. However, people who do not have the skills must resort to more unhealthy options—or feel that they must—which are often more expensive, even if they are easier to buy and more conveniently available. Bringing adults together in surroundings in which they can develop digital skills and learn how to cook healthy and affordable meals is, therefore, an excellent use of finite time and resources, and a model to be used elsewhere.

The workshop reminds me of a similar housing association initiative that I visited towards the beginning of my time as an MSP. The Clovie community garden in Clovenstone, which is run jointly by Prospect Community Housing and the edible estates initiative, brings together people in the community to grow an impressive variety of fruits and vegetables in the heart of Edinburgh. A series of cooking classes is organised, in which the produce is used to make tasty and cheap meals. I was treated to potatoes from the garden patch that I can from my first-hand experience were extremely good. What pleased me most, however, was the way in which the garden and the workshops clearly brought together people in the community and taught them valuable life skills. As

Colin Beattie pointed out, those are especially important in areas of disadvantage.

I note that the Midlothian learning and development three-year plan for 2018 to 2021 highlights that an area for improvement is community empowerment related to food growing. Perhaps the next step for the digital kitchen workshop could be to replicate the Clovie community garden and grow the food, and I am sure that other parts of the country can learn from the good work being done in Midlothian.

Let me end by thanking everyone who gives their time to community-based adult learning. I hope that today's debate shows how much that work is appreciated and how important it is.

17:27

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** I, too, thank Colin Beattie for securing the debate and I wish the partnership between Midlothian Council's lifelong learning and employability service and Melville Housing Association every success.

The opportunity for lifelong learning must be universal, and it is fundamental to improving the lives of people across Scotland. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

"Everyone has the right to education."

Investment in lifelong learning for adults must be seen as preventative spend, particularly in areas of adult literacy and numeracy, digital access and social isolation. Unfortunately, in this age of austerity, cuts to education affect the opportunity to access learning for people of all ages.

The financial settlement for local authorities will deliver real-terms cuts to budgets, as it has done in recent years. If we want to be proactive in supporting adults to learn, particularly those with the poorest literacy or numeracy skills and those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and communities, we need to recognise that local authority budget cuts will limit how proactive we can be.

Reaching out and engaging with adults who could benefit from programmes such as the one in Midlothian is a difficult task, and cross-agency partnerships are key to overcoming that barrier. Community learning and development has a key role in helping people from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups to access learning and prepare for study and employment. Engaging with adults in their own communities limits the barriers or fears that some may face when thinking about education. Many of those whom we are talking about have no qualifications and no post-school education, so creating a safe place to learn is crucial to that engagement.

Although the aim for adult learning is rightly focused on some of our most disadvantaged people, it is crucial to ensure that some of our smaller groups—often the most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees—can access adult learning programmes. I was pleased to see a focus on community learning and development in the Scottish Government's "New Scots: refugee integration strategy 2018-2022".

In speaking about adult learning, it would be remiss of me not to mention adults in prison, given my interest in that area. Statistics show that levels of poor literacy and poor numeracy are high in the prison population. There are education and learning programmes in the prison system, but we must ensure that CLD is available to those who are being released. Again, that is about engagement and preventative spend.

Community learning and development is necessary to tackle the problems that are associated with isolation and poor levels of numeracy, literacy and digital access. It must be properly resourced. We need a national strategy for adult learning that reflects the importance of community learning and development and the critical role that those who work in the sector can play.

17:31

**The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Richard Lochhead):** I congratulate Colin Beattie on securing the debate on this important subject. As he said, it is the first such debate, so it is highly significant. I also note that it is the centenary of the seminal report that recognised the importance of adult education, which Colin Beattie brought to our attention. That takes us on a journey through the history of the subject, back to 1919. It is appropriate that we are discussing the issue in 2019.

I am particularly pleased that we have had the opportunity to debate the contribution that community-based adult learning makes to Scotland, and to hear about the specific impact that is being made by the partnership of Midlothian Council and Melville Housing, about which Colin Beattie spoke.

I thank members for their insights and their contributions. Gordon Lindhurst, Stewart Stevenson and Mary Fee, from whom we have just heard, all discussed topical issues including digital exclusion, which can in this day and age lead to social isolation, and to people who do not have digital skills being disadvantaged in our communities. That very important dimension was brought into the debate.

I particularly want to acknowledge the huge effort that goes into the partnership that has been

undertaken by Melville Housing. As the minister with responsibility for community learning and development, I have already, in the past few months since I took on my role, seen the difference that community-based learning is making through partnerships across Scotland. From what I have seen across the country and what I have heard tonight, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that Scotland absolutely must recognise the role that community learning and development can play alongside early years provision, schools and colleges, so that we can support each other and every one of our children, adults, families and communities to ensure that they succeed.

As our society and economy change we must, as members have said, ensure that as many adults as possible are engaged in their communities, in order to improve their life chances and so that they can make the contributions that our communities and our economy need.

In 2014, the Government rightly prioritised young people at a time when Scotland and the rest of Europe were experiencing unprecedented high levels of youth unemployment. In response, the Scottish Government launched the developing the young workforce programme. We now see youth unemployment at a record low, and have achieved our target three years ahead of schedule.

Although we are rightly proud of that achievement, we know that austerity has impacted on delivery of adult learning at the local level, which Mary Fee mentioned in her speech. We now want to respond and ensure that our approach is fit for purpose, as we move forward. Scotland's workforce challenges evolve, and as the focus moves increasingly towards upskilling the ageing population—including those who are in work and those who are out of work—we are committed to supporting adult learning and the role that it can play in delivering on Scotland's ambitions for inclusive economic growth.

Also in 2014, the Scottish Government set out its commitment to adult learners in "Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition", in which we recognised adult learning as

"a central element of personal and community empowerment."

Since then, the Government has been grateful to the members of the national strategic forum for adult learning for all their efforts in safeguarding Scotland's work in adult learning. The forum's work on the learner voice has ensured that adult learning has been learner centred and learner driven.

The forum's commitment has been matched by resources from the Scottish Government—

members have mentioned resources—with more than £1 million per year being invested in adult learning organisations since 2014, through our adult learning and empowering communities funding. I am pleased by the work that those funds have facilitated across the breadth of adult learning organisations, including Scotland's Learning Partnership, Lead Scotland, the Workers Educational Association and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, all of which have a direct impact in places including Midlothian, which Colin Beattie represents.

We want adults to be able to participate in a range of learning opportunities. In that regard, we are grateful for the work of other institutions and organisations in Scotland. An example is Newbattle Abbey College—also in Midlothian, coincidentally—which is working internationally to build Scotland's adult learning reputation through its support for the development of adult achievement awards. As we address the question of parity in learning pathways, it is vital that we have a framework for recognition of achievement, which gives currency to learners who want their learning to be recognised by others.

As I look ahead, I am mindful that the strong foundations that have been created by the statement of ambition for adult learning should be built on through the creation of a national strategy to guide that work. As partners work together to develop the strategy, I make it clear that it must recognise the ways in which adult learning is central not only to personal development, but to community empowerment, which I mentioned.

I also want to bolster the sector and ensure that it is well placed to address the challenges that we face today, and that we will face in the times ahead. That is why I want to ensure that the forum is supported to lead the work, and that it is in the best shape to engage learners to work with officials to evaluate progress and identify future priorities.

In Scotland, we are lucky to have a successful adult learners week—the next one will be in May 2019. Adult learners week is supported by Scotland's Learning Partnership and is widely recognised across the world as being at the forefront of learner developments. During this year's events and at others, it is important that we maximise learners' voices in informing our current activity and future strategy. In the spirit of adult learners week—one theme in it is called "Never too Old to Learn New Tricks"—I am committed to the Scottish Government doing new things in support of adult learning, and in particular to supporting greater alignment across other ministerial priorities, particularly further and higher education and science.

I will keep stressing the importance of partnership as we deal with the complexity of the fall-out from Brexit. We are operating in an increasingly difficult environment. These are challenging times, and we can combat the challenges only by working closely together. Collaboration will have to be at the heart of our approach.

The example that Midlothian Council and Melville Housing have set clearly demonstrates how the provision of a learning opportunity based on shared interests—cooking, in this case—can easily have positive outcomes in a number of areas. Gordon Lindhurst talked about the importance of cooking skills, which have a variety of benefits, from health to affordability and tackling poverty. By capitalising on the opportunities that just one skill offers, the partners have shown that adult learning has wider impacts on learners' lives.

There is a lot to do. Collaboration and partnership will not be easy, given the many challenges that we face, but we must move forward. The overcoming of entrenched inequalities, often while managing the impact of decisions that are made elsewhere, and especially the consequences of Brexit, will be challenging for years and years to come. However, the Scottish Government is committed to doing what it can do to reduce the negative impact of such decisions. We will not let those decisions curtail our ambitions or halt Scotland's progress.

I recognise the challenges that members have mentioned, but I am pleased by the progress that is being made. We take great pride in leading the agenda in the Scottish Government. I commend the motion to Parliament, as we all continue to support adult learning in Scotland. As other members have done, I congratulate and thank all the people who contribute to adult learning in our communities.

*Meeting closed at 17:39.*

## Correction

Jeane Freeman has identified an error in her contribution and provided the following correction.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman):**

*At col 33, paragraph 3—*

*Original text—*

Members will be pleased to know that, of the 262 staff across Scotland and England who are entitled to redundancy payments, 244 have now received the payments to which they are entitled from the redundancy payments service.

*Corrected text—*

Members will be pleased to know that, of the 144 staff across Scotland and England who have submitted claims for statutory redundancy pay, 71 in Scotland have now received the payments to which they are entitled from the redundancy payments service.



This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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