



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 12 September 2019

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Thursday 12 September 2019

CONTENTS

	Col.
GENERAL QUESTION TIME	1
Dumfries and Stranraer Railway Lines (Upgrades).....	1
Rural Banking Cuts (Support for Highlands and Islands Businesses).....	3
Scottish Housing Quality Standard (Review of Guidance).....	4
Burntisland Fabrications Ltd.....	5
No-deal Brexit (Impact on Egg Production).....	7
Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme (Extension to Teenage Boys and Young Men).....	7
Short-term Lets (Regulation of Private Residential Property Use).....	8
FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME	10
Edinburgh Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Young People.....	10
Hospitals (Building and Procurement).....	13
Glasgow City Council (Prohibition of Marches).....	15
Type 31 Frigates (Construction Contract).....	16
Cystic Fibrosis Medication.....	16
School Climate Strike.....	17
Business Rates (Aberdeenshire).....	18
Brexit (Operation Yellowhammer).....	18
Knife Crime.....	20
Children (Scotland) Bill (Grandparents' Access Rights).....	21
Diageo Workers Strike.....	21
United Kingdom Parliament Suspension.....	22
Funeral Costs (Support).....	23
Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation (Residential Services).....	24
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (Patient and Staff Safety).....	26
DRUG DEATHS	28
<i>Motion debated—[Monica Lennon].</i>	
Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab).....	28
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP).....	31
Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con).....	32
Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP).....	34
Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab).....	35
Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP).....	37
Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con).....	38
Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP).....	40
Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab).....	41
Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green).....	43
Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP).....	45
James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab).....	46
The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick).....	48
PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME	52
CULTURE, TOURISM AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS	52
Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal (Benefits for Tourism).....	52
Media Freedom.....	54
Kashmir Conflict.....	55
VisitScotland (Meetings with V&A Dundee and Dundee City Council).....	56
Live Music (Inverness).....	57
POLICE AND FIRE REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2012 (POST-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY REPORTS)	60
<i>Motion moved—[Margaret Mitchell].</i>	
Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con).....	60
The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf).....	64
Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con).....	68
James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab).....	71
John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green).....	73
Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD).....	77

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)	81
Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con).....	84
Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP).....	86
Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab).....	89
Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP).....	92
Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con).....	94
James Kelly	96
Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con)	98
Humza Yousaf	100
Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)	103
DECISION TIME	107

Scottish Parliament

Thursday 12 September 2019

[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 11:40]

General Question Time

Dumfries and Stranraer Railway Lines (Upgrades)

1. **Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of its commitment in the programme for government to decarbonise the rail network, when the Dumfries and Stranraer lines will be upgraded to reduce emissions and improve journey times. (S5O-03523)

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (Michael Matheson): Last week, the Government committed to put plans in place to decarbonise Scotland's railway by 2035. Transport Scotland will set out details and actions in spring 2020.

Drawing on the successful approach that was adopted on the line north of Inverness, we also committed to identifying opportunities across the rural rail network in the south-west to exploit the value of those lines for the benefit of local communities and the wider economy. That work will include the prospect of line speed improvements and a review of service patterns. I expect that investigation to report by autumn 2020.

Emma Harper: Constituents and businesses regularly contact me with their concerns and frustrations about journey frequency and times on both those arterial routes, which they feel act as a barrier to attracting people and investment to Dumfries and Galloway. Will the cabinet secretary provide me with assurances that the Government is committed to improving the Stranraer and Dumfries lines, both to improve passenger satisfaction and to reduce emissions on the diesel lines, particularly given the climate emergency that the Scottish Government rightfully declared?

Michael Matheson: As discussed at the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee yesterday, the Government has set out its ambition to decarbonise the rail network in that area. Part of that will involve further electrification, but we will also consider alternative propulsion methods, including battery and hydrogen fuel cell. We are in advanced discussions with a range of parties to consider the prospect of bringing such types of train system into the Scottish network, which we will take forward over the coming months.

I can give Emma Harper the assurances that she is looking for. The work that we have commissioned to consider how improvements can be made—which should report by autumn next year—will specifically address the very concerns that she has raised on behalf of her constituents.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): In November of last year, I raised with the First Minister the closure of the Ayr to Stranraer line, asking whether better contingency plans would be put in place to avoid disruption in the future. I was pleased that the First Minister gave an undertaking to ensure that there would be no disruption in the future.

Given that there is on-going work at the Ayr Station hotel and that electrification is now being mooted, will the cabinet secretary confirm that those contingency measures are in place?

Michael Matheson: Yes. As mentioned at the time, Network Rail, through Transport Scotland, put a considerable amount of effort into addressing the issues around the Ayr Station hotel that were having an impact on the line. I know that the council is also seeking to have action taken forward in relation to the condition of the hotel.

I assure Finlay Carson that there is on-going work to consider how we can continue to help protect the line should anything unforeseen develop in the future. As he would expect, that approach is always considered on the rail network. As I mentioned to Emma Harper, a key part of what we are considering is not just electrification but alternative propulsion systems for trains, including hydrogen cell and battery systems, whose use would allow us to remove diesel trains from the network. All those issues are being considered and will be part of the work that we will continue to take forward as part of our decarbonisation of the rail network.

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): Battery or hydrogen trains are better than diesel trains from an environmental point of view. However, does the cabinet secretary accept that the Nith valley line from Glasgow to Dumfries and through to Carlisle is an increasingly important line as a diversion from the west coast main line, and that only investment in that track and electrification would allow trains that use the west coast main line to be diverted on to the Nith valley line and run at the speeds at which they run on the west coast main line? Without that investment, we will simply have the scenes that we had during the beast from the east, when the Pendolino trains from the west coast crawled along the Nith line because of the lack of investment in the track.

Michael Matheson: As I mentioned, the work that is being undertaken by Network Rail to look at the improvements that could be made on the line

will form part of our thinking about the further investment that we can make in that route. That includes the potential for electrification and the types of train that could be used on the route as an alternative to diesel trains.

We will look at all those matters, but I will not jump to a conclusion as to what will come from the report. I am sure that Colin Smyth will welcome the fact that we are looking at what further investment can be made in the route in order to improve journey times and reliability.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Question 2 was not lodged.

Rural Banking Cuts (Support for Highlands and Islands Businesses)

3. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support Highlands and Islands businesses experiencing losses due to cuts in rural banking services. (S5O-03525)

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): I recognise the on-going need for businesses in the Highlands and Islands to have access to banking services, particularly to withdraw and deposit cash.

The United Kingdom Government has legislative and regulatory responsibility for banking and financial services. Despite representations from the Scottish Government, and from MPs and MSPs across the political spectrum, the UK Government has made it clear that it will not intervene in branch closure decisions.

However, I continue to engage with the banks and other stakeholders, pressing regulators, banking providers and the UK Government to ensure that local banking services—in particular, access to cash—remain accessible.

Rhoda Grant: Businesses that deal in cash are especially vulnerable, because there appears to be an increase in the number of break-ins to such businesses. That is costing them financially, but it also impacts on business confidence. What is the Scottish Government doing to protect and support businesses that are vulnerable to break-ins?

Kate Forbes: Rhoda Grant raises a good point. Practical advice on how to develop business crime reduction and prevention strategies is provided by the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, which has received grant funding from the Scottish Government. There is also work going on with banks, particularly through the banking and economy sub-group of the Financial Services Advisory Board, to ensure that, between the Government and the banks, we give businesses the security that they need when it comes to dealing with cash.

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): As the minister will be aware, there are currently no bank ATMs between Ullapool and Thurso. Will the Scottish Government confirm whether it is in discussions with banks—as I am—to try to rectify that?

Kate Forbes: I have been in discussions about that. I have had meetings with, for example, Link and the Payment Systems Regulator to look at how we can ensure that there is access to cash. Edward Mountain will be aware that there is a strategy in place just now to look at preserving an ATM when there are no other ATMs within a certain parameter. However, far more work needs to be done and it is important to work across parties to put pressure on the regulator and the UK Government.

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (Review of Guidance)

4. John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government when the guidance on the Scottish housing quality standard will be reviewed. (S5O-03526)

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): Everyone deserves to live in a warm, safe and affordable home, and, for the social sector, the Scottish housing quality standard is crucial to delivering that. I made a commitment to John Mason in May this year that any review of the guidance on the standards would consider the recommendation for five-yearly electrical safety inspections. I am happy to reiterate that commitment today.

A range of activity is currently under way that will improve or has already improved the Scottish quality housing quality standard on safety, fire safety and energy efficiency standards, which are now being adopted by the social housing sector.

John Mason: I thank the minister for the tone of his answer. Can he be more specific about the timing of a review of any guidance? When might a five-yearly inspection be brought into the social rented housing sector?

Kevin Stewart: Standards for different tenures have evolved separately over time, as Mr Mason is well aware. A review looking at improving consistency between tenures concluded with recommendations from the common housing quality standard forum. We have already started making identified changes to the repairing standard, and we are currently reviewing the tolerable standard, which applies to all housing in Scotland. The few changes that were recommended for the Scottish housing quality standard included the requirement for five-yearly electrical safety checks, which are already best practice in the sector.

Any further changes to the Scottish housing quality standard will be undertaken in close liaison with partners in the social rented sector, as Mr Mason will understand. That process will determine the timing of changes to the standard, but he can be assured that I will continue to keep in contact with him about how we will move forward.

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): When this month will the minister respond to the recommendations of the tenement maintenance working group? Will it be in the form of a statement to Parliament or some other way?

Kevin Stewart: I cannot confirm how the response will be relayed to Mr Simpson, but we will respond, as we said that we would. I will be happy to talk to Mr Simpson about how we will move forward on that front after today's question time.

Burntisland Fabrications Ltd

5. Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what action was taken during the summer recess to secure contracts and future employment at BiFab. (S50-03527)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work (Derek Mackay): The Scottish Government continues to work collaboratively with BiFab's majority shareholder, DF Barnes, in pursuit of a strong future pipeline of works for the company, with the aim of securing and delivering future contracts and increasing employment opportunities. Claire Baker was in attendance at a very helpful briefing that I had with members who have an interest in BiFab.

Claire Baker: This Saturday in Kirkcaldy, there will be a fighting for our future march and rally with the BiFab workforce, the local community, trade unions and supporters. The workforce and the people of Fife are showing commitment and determination to bring jobs to Levenmouth. It is important that all who have a stake in the future of BiFab work together. What preparations are in place for the next offshore wind supply chain summit, and when will it be?

Derek Mackay: Those points are very helpful. I appreciate the efforts of all politicians to help the Government to pursue work in that regard. We propose to take the range of actions that I discussed at the last summit and to challenge the United Kingdom Government about the contract for difference process. There have been welcome investment decisions, but it is crucial that we secure some contracts that will lead to the positive benefits of expansion and growth for BiFab. A range of actions are under way, and I am happy to

provide a further briefing. I am working very hard to secure contracts here and now.

It is important to make the point that we must not confuse a campaign for work with poor industrial relations, because industrial relations are really strong with the workforce, trade unions and management as they try to secure work for the BiFab yards.

Annabelle Ewing (Cowdenbeath) (SNP): Further to the cabinet secretary's discussions with the UK Government, will he provide an update on when it will act to address the failings of its contract for difference process, in which we regrettably see no conditionality that would support indigenous supply chain companies such as BiFab?

Derek Mackay: Annabelle Ewing is absolutely correct in saying that a change in the CFD process would be materially significant to the outcomes and prospects for the UK and Scottish supply chain, which would be really important to BiFab. The UK Government could make that decision, but it has not done so; it is reviewing the CFD process. I do not have much more to offer at this time. We are trying to make progress with the UK Government in that regard, but it seems somewhat distracted on many other matters. It is a matter of priority for this Government and could make a difference, which is why we will pursue a process that would allow conditionality. It would ensure that work can and will come to Scotland if the UK Government made that decision about the contract for difference process.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): I was pleased to hear about the partnership with Lews Castle College that BiFab announced recently, which will bring new engineering training opportunities and work placements at Arnish. Prior to the DF Barnes takeover, a complaint that I often heard from Arnish workers was that no training or apprenticeships were being offered, which is an especially important issue given the workforce's older age profile. Does the cabinet secretary agree that ensuring access for young people to such training opportunities is vital if we are to keep the yard sustainable and maximise local benefit?

Derek Mackay: I agree absolutely with those comments. We want to secure the pipeline of work that will further enhance job numbers and opportunities for training apprenticeships. I welcome that collaboration, which is why we are focused on securing contracts that will lead to further positive benefits for BiFab and to Arnish, in particular, as well as other sites that will benefit from those opportunities.

No-deal Brexit (Impact on Egg Production)

6. Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential impact on the egg production sector of a no-deal Brexit. (S5O-03528)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): Unfortunately, our assessment is that egg production is another of our successful food and drink sectors that will be negatively impacted by a no-deal Brexit. That is particularly true if, as expected, the United Kingdom Government leaves the sector without the protection of tariffs or quantitative restrictions on egg products coming into the UK. That would leave Scottish producers at an unfair disadvantage, with the potential for imported products of much lower quality and welfare standards to flood the market here.

Joan McAlpine: I have many concerns about the issue, as there are a number of major egg producers in my South Scotland region. Does the cabinet secretary share the British Egg Industry Council's concern that a no-deal Brexit threatens the provenance of Scotland's production and the quality of the food that we all eat because of the risk of eggs that are produced under much lower welfare standards entering our food chain? What is the Scottish Government doing and what more can it do to protect our producers and our reputation for high-welfare egg production?

Fergus Ewing: I share that concern. The UK Government's reckless approach of allowing complete trade liberalisation in the egg production sector beggars belief and could wipe out the sector in one fell swoop. That would not only leave our hard-working egg producers unprotected and vulnerable to cheaper imports but could lead to consumers unwittingly eating eggs and egg products that are produced to lower welfare standards than apply here thanks to our membership of the European Union.

The issues were raised with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ministers on Monday, but, yet again, they were completely unable to give us any reassurance whatsoever to alleviate those real and practical concerns. The response was completely inadequate and utterly shambolic.

Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme (Extension to Teenage Boys and Young Men)

7. Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it plans to expand the HPV vaccination programme to include teenage boys and young men. (S5O-03529)

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): Boys in secondary 1 will be offered the HPV vaccine from this academic year, which is 2019-20. Uptake of the HPV vaccination programme for girls continues to exceed 80 per cent. We know from the evidence and the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation that extending the programme to include S1 boys will help to reduce diagnoses of HPV-related cancers and will save lives in the years to come. Since July 2017, the HPV vaccine has also been available in Scotland to men who have sex with men, up to the age of 45, through sexual health and HIV clinics.

Rona Mackay: I welcome that response. Last week, the Teenage Cancer Trust launched its jabs for lads campaign, which is aimed at securing the vaccination for boys and young men. Will boys who have missed the vaccination because of their age be offered the opportunity to get it?

Joe FitzPatrick: It is important that everyone who is entitled to the vaccination takes up the offer. Our approach is based on evidence. Vaccination policy in Scotland, as in the rest of the UK, is based on the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which is an independent expert panel that provides evidence and impartial advice on matters relating to vaccination. The JCVI has not recommended a catch-up HPV vaccination programme for boys. Should that change, I would not hesitate to act and extend our programme.

I take the issue seriously, so I was keen to find out whether the reason why we were not being advised on that issue was because we had not asked the question. Therefore, the chief medical officer wrote to the JCVI, seeking its expert view, and the rationale for it, on a catch-up HPV vaccination programme for boys. The committee did not recommend that approach. The argument is that, because the HPV vaccination programme for girls has been highly successful and has achieved a high uptake, it will help to stop the spread of HPV to boys, through what is known as herd immunity. Clearly, there is a group who would not be protected by herd immunity among girls and women, which is men who have sex with men, and that is why we encourage anybody in that category to ensure that they get the vaccination.

Short-term Lets (Regulation of Private Residential Property Use)

8. Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to regulate the use of private residential property for short-term lets. (S5O-03530)

The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning (Kevin Stewart): The Scottish Government is committed to working with local

authorities, communities and business interests to ensure that local authorities have the appropriate regulatory powers to balance the needs and concerns of their communities with wider economic and tourism interests. Our consultation on the regulation of short-term lets closed on 23 July, having attracted more than 1,000 responses. We are considering those responses and we will announce our plans later this year.

Daniel Johnson: I note the consultation over the summer, but the only mention of the issue in the programme for government is the setting up of a working group. Does the minister agree with what Kate Campbell, the Scottish National Party convener of the City of Edinburgh Council's housing and economy committee, said about short-term lets? She said:

"We are absolutely clear that we need a licensing regime because it would mean that we can set local policies that address the particular challenges we face in Edinburgh".

Surely, it is right that we regulate the commercial use of residential property.

Kevin Stewart: As I indicated in my initial answer, we received more than 1,000 responses to the consultation, which we will need to analyse very carefully before we decide how to move forward. We will need to take cognisance of different circumstances in different parts of the country.

As well as the analysis that is under way, the Government has commissioned research to explore the positive and negative impacts of short-term lets on communities, with a focus on neighbourhoods and housing. The research involves looking at short-term let hosts, residents, local businesses and community actors across five places in Scotland: Edinburgh, the east neuk of Fife, Fort William, Glasgow and Skye. The report on that research will be published before the end of the year.

We must get our response right. We must listen to all. We should not move forward rashly without taking cognisance of all the responses that we have received.

First Minister's Question Time

Edinburgh Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Young People

1. **Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con):** Given that today is his last First Minister's question time after 20 years, I take this opportunity to thank Sir Paul Grice for his service to our Parliament and to wish him well. [*Applause.*]

This morning, we heard good news for people in Rosyth and excellent news for those enduring cystic fibrosis—both were first-class announcements.

There was less good news, though, for people who were hoping to attend the Royal hospital for children and young people. Formally proposed in 2008 and originally scheduled to be open by 2013, the sick kids hospital has had repeated delays to its opening. There have been four health secretaries, blunders and cost overruns, yet it was only yesterday that the Scottish Government decided to appoint a troubleshooter to sort out the mess. Is that not just too little, too late?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I, too, take the opportunity to thank Sir Paul Grice for his incredible contribution to the Scottish Parliament. That the Parliament has become the established institution of our democracy over just 20 years is in no small way down to his efforts and contributions. I am sure that the whole chamber wishes him well for the future. [*Applause.*]

I, too, warmly welcome the news this morning that Babcock has been selected as the preferred bidder to build the five type 31 frigates. That is good news for Rosyth, and I hope that it will also be good news for the wider supply chain across Scotland. The Scottish Government will certainly work hard to ensure that that is the case.

Given that it has also been mentioned, I welcome the fact that the Scottish Government has reached an agreement with the manufacturer of two cystic fibrosis drugs to ensure that those drugs are available to patients. We are the first nation of the United Kingdom to do so. The news will be warmly welcomed not just across the chamber, but across the country.

Turning to the Edinburgh sick kids hospital, I make it abundantly clear that the situation is unacceptable. To say that the health secretary and I are angry about it would be an understatement, and I know that that anger is shared by patients and staff. The Scottish Government's focus is on putting the situation right.

At the start of the summer, the health secretary made it very clear that we will not allow the hospital to open until we are satisfied about patient

safety. The health secretary instructed work to take place to, first, establish the work that requires to be done to bring the hospital up to specification and, secondly, establish the reason for the problem with the critical care ventilation system.

Both those reports were published yesterday and the health secretary is meeting Opposition spokespeople today. We have escalated our oversight of the project to level 4, so there will be closer scrutiny and oversight. There is an absolute focus on making sure that the problems are rectified. I think that that is what the public, patients and staff would expect from the Scottish Government.

Jackson Carlaw: Anger is all very well, but one did not need to be a high-ranking Government minister to know that there were major problems with this vital project going back years—one only had to read a newspaper.

We have had a Scottish Government with its head buried in the sand, so let me ask a specific question. In November last year, independent assessors made it crystal clear that the hospital could not be made operational. So deep were the problems that staff were emailed and told that they could not even be given a completion date. Did that not ring alarm bells?

The First Minister: To be clear, a number of issues were identified and publicly reported before July 2019. Those issues were why the hospital was already late in opening. In fact, the KPMG report provides a comprehensive summary of those issues.

However, the issue that has resulted in the delay that the health secretary confirmed to Parliament yesterday is one that relates to the critical care ventilation system that only came to light at the start of July this year. If Jackson Carlaw is telling me that he knew about that issue before then, perhaps the question is why he did not bring it to anybody else's attention, because I did not know about it and the health secretary did not know about it.

That is the issue that has prevented the hospital from opening now and that is the issue that the health secretary is focused on rectifying. We will continue to focus on that work, as the health secretary set out in her statement to Parliament yesterday.

Jackson Carlaw: That was a new spin on project management shift, I must say.

The sick kids hospital is just 10 minutes' drive from where we all are now and yet it seems that four successive health ministers either chose not to know or simply failed to ask about the full extent of the problems until way, way too late.

The truth is that when it comes to this project, confusion has reigned. For example, in June, the health secretary was confident enough about the project to tell members in this chamber that everything was on track and yet, just a week later, the health board told her that those assurances were unfounded—what an absolute shambles. Does that sound to the First Minister like joined-up Government?

The First Minister: The previous issues that were identified had been resolved, which is why the health secretary made those comments in June. The issue that has resulted in this delay did not come to light until the start of July. I did not know about it; the senior management team in the health board, as far as I am aware, did not know about it; and the health secretary did not know about it.

As soon as the issue came to light, the health secretary acted properly and appropriately. It would have been wrong to allow the hospital to open before assurances about patient safety could be given. Substantial work has been done over the summer to make sure that any other issues have been identified; that was the subject of the NHS National Services Scotland report that was published yesterday. Substantial work has been done to set out a timescale to carry out rectification, particularly of the critical care ventilation system, and for the opening of the sick kids hospital and the department of clinical neurosciences.

That is the responsible action that the health secretary has taken, and we will continue to make sure that that work is carried out so that the hospital opens. I deeply regret that the hospital will be opening extremely late. It is important to make sure that every issue that has been identified is addressed so that when the hospital opens, it is safe for the patients who use it.

Jackson Carlaw: That is all very well, but, in relation to accident and emergency alone, since January 2013, when it was supposed to open, more than 300,000 children have been denied access to the new sick kids hospital that they and their parents were entitled to expect.

This is a saga from which nobody emerges well—not the health board, not the contractor and certainly not this Government. It is a saga that, sadly, is altogether too predictable: ministerial assurances are given, completion dates are put back, costs spiral out of control and, at the end of it all, it seems that absolutely nobody is held to account. I think—and the country thinks—that, for once, heads should roll. Does the First Minister agree?

The First Minister: Yesterday, the health secretary set out the work that will be done to

establish issues of accountability within the health board. It is important that that is done in line with due process. The focus is on making sure that the rectification work is done, particularly in the critical care unit, although there were other aspects of work that were identified in the NSS report that will be taken forward in parallel with that.

Yesterday, the health secretary also confirmed that, as I announced last week in the programme for government, we will set up a new national body—a centre of excellence—to oversee in particular the construction and technical specification aspects of such new builds. Traditionally, the Scottish Government oversight looks at finances and delivery timelines.

It is absolutely the case that lessons must be learned from what has happened. I very much agree that the situation regarding the new children's hospital in Edinburgh is completely unacceptable, but our focus will remain patient safety, and that should be the priority of everybody who has anything to do with the project.

Hospitals (Building and Procurement)

2. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab):

I add my thanks and best wishes to Paul Grice, whom I have known for longer than either of us would probably care to admit. He has been a figure of great stability in the Parliament since its very inception, as well as a source of wise counsel. He will be a very hard act to follow, and we wish him well. [*Applause.*]

In March this year, my colleague Daniel Johnson asked the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport in the chamber whether the issues at the Royal hospital for sick children Edinburgh,

“coupled with the issues at the Queen Elizabeth hospital, point to wider problems regarding hospital building and procurement in the national health service in Scotland”.

With her customary disdain, the cabinet secretary replied:

“I do not think that the issues point to wider problems.”— [*Official Report*, 12 March 2019; c 6-7.]

She also accused Daniel Johnson of being “wide of the mark”, but he was not, was he?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Richard Leonard is absolutely right to point out that there have been issues with the Queen Elizabeth university hospital, and there are clearly problems with the sick kids hospital. Other hospitals have been built without such issues.

The question, of course, is about how we ensure appropriate oversight. That is why I referred to my announcement about the establishment of a new body, which I had hoped Labour would welcome. Its purpose is to make

sure that we reflect carefully on the issues that have arisen in the two hospitals.

Our focus is very much on ensuring that the problem that was identified in early July with the ventilation system at the sick kids hospital is put right. That has been the focus of the work that has been done over the summer, which has allowed us to get to the point that the health secretary announced yesterday. That focus will continue. We owe it to the patients and staff of the sick kids hospital to put those issues right and to make sure that the new hospital will, when it opens, be safe for the patients who will use it.

Richard Leonard: Is the First Minister really telling the people of Scotland that the answer to that abject failure in new hospital building is the creation of another, as yet unnamed, public body?

The report that came out yesterday told us some important truths. First, it told us that the Scottish Government was on the project board for the hospital. It also told us that “frequent” meetings were held between NHS Lothian and the Scottish Government

“in order to allow the Cabinet Secretary to be briefed”,

yet, in March, the cabinet secretary told Parliament that

“It is excellent news that the board will take over the hospital from July and that patients will be in it from then.”— [*Official Report*, 12 March 2019; c 7.]

We know who is “wide of the mark” now.

Yesterday, the health secretary was forced to come to Parliament to admit that this

“major facility of strategic importance”— [*Official Report*, 11 September 2019; c 33.]

will not now open until autumn 2020.

The cabinet secretary was wrong in her response that the hospital would open in July. Does the First Minister accept that the cabinet secretary was also wrong to dismiss the wider issues in hospital building and procurement?

The First Minister: Nobody is dismissing any of those serious issues.

When the cabinet secretary made her statement to Parliament in June, at that point it was our firm expectation that the hospital would open in July. All the issues that had been identified previously had been resolved: that was the information that the cabinet secretary and the Scottish Government had. An issue then came to light that was not previously known to us.

The KPMG report that was published yesterday—it is a long and technical report—sets out, in summary, that a particular document called the environmental matrix had contained, in part, the wrong specification for the ventilation system.

That is something that the board should have picked up—the report sets out when there were opportunities for it to have done that, but it was not done. When that came to light at the start of July, the health secretary took the action that has been reported to Parliament, and set in train the work that is required in order to rectify the problem and ensure that the hospital opens safely. That is the responsible conduct of a health secretary who is focused on making sure that patient safety is the overriding priority.

Richard Leonard: Completion of the hospital was already way over timetable. Does the First Minister not understand just how angry people are? We have in Edinburgh a children's hospital that cannot open its doors, and we were reminded at the weekend that we have in Glasgow a hospital, which was built by the same contractor, that has been closing the doors of its children's cancer ward. Audit Scotland is saying that there needs to be a review of "whole-project contracting" to

"help with ... preventative and reactive measures".

We need to get to the bottom of the matter; we need full public transparency in order to restore public trust. What will it take for the First Minister to listen finally, and to deliver a full public inquiry into the abject failure of governance and the Government?

The First Minister: The Scottish Government will continue to do the work and to take the action that is needed to rectify the issue that has been identified at the sick kids hospital in Edinburgh. That is the responsible thing to do.

Richard Leonard asked whether I understand the anger. Yes—I absolutely do, and I share the anger that patients and staff feel about the thoroughly unacceptable situation. The health board's responsibility was to ensure that the hospital was built to the right specification. In respect of the problem, it has not discharged that responsibility and there are questions that must still be asked.

Our job now is to make sure that the work is done to rectify the problem as quickly as possible, to the requisite standards, and to make sure that when the hospital opens it is a safe environment for the patients who will use it. The Scottish Government will remain absolutely focused on discharging that responsibility.

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are some constituency supplementaries.

Glasgow City Council (Prohibition of Marches)

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Given the problems around marches in Glasgow over the past two weekends, does the First

Minister agree that Glasgow City Council has made the right decision by prohibiting marches this weekend?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, I think that the city council has arrived at the right decision to not give permission for the marches that were planned for this weekend. I believe, as I said last week, that the right to march is an important part of our democracy, but people who are abusing that right are jeopardising for others. It is vital that the rights of the majority who are law-abiding citizens are protected and given priority.

Glasgow City Council has taken the right decision. It obviously takes such decisions in the light of the advice that it receives from the police. There are longer-term questions about whether changes are required to the law; we will continue to have that dialogue with Glasgow City Council.

Type 31 Frigates (Construction Contract)

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): The First Minister will, as I am, be delighted by the news that five new type 31 frigates will be built at Rosyth by a consortium led by Babcock International. That contract will secure millions of pounds of investment in my region—Mid Scotland and Fife—and will guarantee hundreds of jobs. An order of that nature being guaranteed and secured goes to show, once again, the outstanding skills of the Scottish workforce and the strength of the United Kingdom. Will the First Minister join me in welcoming that boost to the Scottish economy?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes. That contract is good news for the Scottish economy. It is also a real tribute to the expertise of the workforce at Rosyth. I will not, because that is good news, dwell on the fact that promises that were made years ago about the number of type 26 frigates were not kept.

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work spoke to Babcock this morning to congratulate it and give it assurance that it has the full support of the Scottish Government. Our job now is to work with Babcock to ensure that benefit is realised not just to Rosyth—which is obviously significant—but to the whole Scottish supply chain. We hope that there may also be benefits to Ferguson Marine in the course of the work. We will continue to work with Babcock and the workforce to ensure that all the benefits are realised.

Cystic Fibrosis Medication

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I thank the First Minister and Jeane Freeman for listening to cystic fibrosis campaigners, including my constituent Kelli Gallagher, and for agreeing a deal with Vertex Pharmaceuticals Incorporated to make Orkambi and Symkevi free for all on the national

health service. What arrangements are in place with health boards to ensure that patients receive medication quickly?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We will ensure that the impact of the announcement about the agreement between the Scottish Government and the manufacturers is fully reflected in the decisions that are taken by health boards. It is good news. It has not been an easy agreement to reach and there have been several complexities. The fact that we have arrived at a five-year agreement that will allow data about the benefit of the drugs to be gathered is also good news. There might be lessons in that for our approach to other drugs.

I know that there are cystic fibrosis patients and their families across the country today who will be very relieved about the announcement. I know that everyone will welcome what is exceptionally good news.

School Climate Strike

Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green): First, on behalf of the Scottish Green Party, I congratulate Paul Grice on his 20 years of service, good humour and wise counsel to us all.

The First Minister will be aware that there is a planned school strike for climate change next Friday. She might also be aware that the City of Edinburgh Council has refused permission for the planned rally to use some streets in the capital. Although such decisions are properly for the council, there have been media reports that young people might face arrest or be locked up. In the light of those reports, does the First Minister agree that such action is nonsense and that no young person should face such action for exercising their right to peaceful protest? Does she agree that we should all reassure young people that they have the right to protest peacefully, and that they should be encouraged and supported to exercise that right?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): There are two things to say on that. Issues of permission to use roads are for the council to consider, and issues around arrest and criminal justice in general—I am not talking about this particular matter—are for the police. It would be thoroughly inappropriate for me to comment on operational matters.

I have made my views in relation to the climate strikers very clear in the past; I think that my views accord closely with those of Andy Wightman. It is very positive, heartening and uplifting to see that the younger generation feel so passionately about climate change that they are prepared to protest and make known their views, as they are doing. I hope that all of us will listen to that and take

account of what the younger generation is telling us. I know that the Scottish Government is doing so; I hope that Governments across the world are doing so, too.

I wish those who are taking part in the protest next Friday the very best.

Business Rates (Aberdeenshire)

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): Last weekend, Kiko Milano in Aberdeen announced that it would close, with the loss of all jobs. It was reported that that was partly down to the eye-watering business rates that are faced by businesses in our city. Will the First Minister heed the demands of businesses in Aberdeen and instruct her Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work to review the rates regime, or will she stand by while more Aberdeen businesses go under?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The business rates regime has been reviewed very recently and several changes have been introduced. Individual decisions are taken independently through the valuation system.

We have one of the most competitive business rates regimes in the UK, and we will continue to look at how we support businesses in all parts of our country—especially given the increasingly difficult circumstances that they face as a result of Brexit.

Brexit (Operation Yellowhammer)

3. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): I, too, thank Paul Grice for his work and wish him well for the future.

We are closer than ever in our efforts to stop Brexit. The publication of the yellowhammer paper lays bare the mass disruption of our way of life that would come with a no-deal Brexit and yet that is what Boris Johnson's Conservatives want to embrace. What is most shocking is that those horrors are the prediction of the Conservative Government, yet the Conservatives still plough on.

Can the First Minister tell us whether any of the details that were laid out in the yellowhammer paper that was published this morning were new to the Scottish Government? If they were, what new measures is she putting in place to mitigate that damage?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): The publication of the yellowhammer planning assumptions yesterday lays bare for the public the horrors of a no-deal Brexit. It is shocking that it has taken so long for the information to be published.

I say very directly to Willie Rennie, in terms of yellowhammer planning assumptions, what we in the Scottish Government have seen is what was published last night. The only difference that I can confirm is in the title of the document. The version that we had, had the title “Base” scenario rather than “Reasonable Worst Case” scenario, which is what appeared on the document that was published last night. It is for the United Kingdom Government to explain whether there is any significance to that difference.

The document is dated 2 August and we have been expecting an update of it, which we have not yet received. We also receive the papers for the cabinet sub-committee meetings that we are invited to, which has only been four meetings out of around 30 since the new Government took office. The Deputy First Minister has just come from one of those meetings this morning. We also know that there is a series of mitigation plans lying behind the planning assumptions.

With regard to our work, we are planning on the basis of the yellowhammer assumptions—although we continue to await the update of that document—and we have a range of mitigation plans in place. We are currently considering what format of the information it would be most helpful to publish, and we intend to make a statement to Parliament about that as soon as possible.

Willie Rennie: The issue is affecting real people’s lives right now. Anna-Ruth Cockerham from St Andrews has a chronic condition called functional neurological disorder. She takes controlled medication that can be prescribed for only 28 days at a time. Any break in medication worsens her seizures and the pain can last for weeks. Her prescription is due at the end of October and she is anxious about her health in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Those are the real-life consequences of the Conservatives’ cavalier approach to Brexit.

Anna-Ruth wants the Government to allow prescriptions of such controlled drugs to be issued two weeks early, to ensure that there is no break in the supply. Has the First Minister made arrangements for that to happen?

The First Minister: I am happy to provide more information on that specific point. We are doing everything that we can to mitigate any impact on drugs and medicine supplies. Obviously, the key player in this is the UK Government, and to some extent we are dependent on the information flow that comes from it.

We have a range of mitigation plans in place. I undertake not only to Willie Rennie, but to Parliament generally, as I said a moment ago, to consider how we best publish the information

about assumptions as well as our mitigation plans, which will inform Parliament and the wider public.

Willie Rennie is right to say that it beggars belief and is completely outrageous that we have a Government that is prepared to contemplate a scenario that, as it says in the UK Government’s planning assumptions, could result in delays to the supply of medicine. The yellowhammer document that was published last night is very clear about the restrictions of stockpiling to mitigate against those impacts.

I share Willie Rennie’s deep concern about the matter and I share his anger that we are in this situation. I give an undertaking that the Scottish Government will do everything that it can to mitigate the impacts. However, I also have a duty to be frank with people. We will not be able to do everything to mitigate every impact, and it is important that, over the next few weeks, we have a very frank dialogue with this Parliament and with the wider public as we help members of the public to prepare as well as they possibly can.

The Presiding Officer: There are a few further supplementary questions.

Knife Crime

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): In advance of a major United Kingdom-wide conference tomorrow on the serious problem of knife violence, and given the fact that a five-year study in Edinburgh found that, of the sharp instruments that are used in homicides, 94 per cent are kitchen knives, does the First Minister agree that Scotland can be at the forefront of the campaign to replace sharp, pointed knives—which have been proven to have significant penetrative capabilities—with round-ended ones?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, there is the potential for Scotland to be at the forefront of such initiatives. Maureen Watt is right to raise this very important issue. Tackling all forms of violence, including knife violence, is a priority for the Government and indeed for any Government. Our approach to knife crime in particular is focused firmly on prevention and early intervention.

Over the past decade, police-recorded crimes of handling an offensive weapon have fallen and emergency admissions to hospitals have also fallen. We recognise the devastating consequences that violence has on individuals, families and communities, so we know that much more needs to be done. That is why we continue to invest in the no knives, better lives programme, the Scottish violence reduction unit and Medics Against Violence. As I said at the outset, we are open to exploring any evidence that shows that

anti-stab knives are an effective approach to tackling violent crime.

Children (Scotland) Bill (Grandparents' Access Rights)

Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con): Last week, the Government published the Children (Scotland) Bill. Many respondents to the consultation on the bill, including two of my constituents who are in the public gallery, asked that there should be a presumption in law in favour of granting grandparents an automatic right of access to contact with their grandchildren. Prior to the bill's publication, on three occasions in the chamber, the Minister for Community Safety advised that next steps in regard to that were being considered. Can the First Minister advise the reason why that presumption was not included in the bill, and whether this Government will ever introduce or consider such a presumption?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I welcome Michelle Ballantyne's constituents to the chamber.

I will say two things. First, I will ask the relevant minister to write to her to give detail of the consideration of that particular provision and the reasons why it is not included in the bill.

The second and perhaps more important point, to which Michelle Ballantyne alluded, is that the bill is at its early stages. It is open for consultation. It will go through the normal stage 1 process. It is open to individuals, organisations and members of this Parliament to bring forward suggestions for amendment. There will be opportunity for the Justice Committee and Parliament as a whole to consider them. If Michelle Ballantyne's constituents feel that they have evidence to bring to bear, I encourage them to take part in that consultation and that process.

Diageo Workers Strike

Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): Next week, Scotland's whisky workers will take unprecedented strike action to try and win a pay offer that meets the cost of living. Their employer, Diageo, is a large and important employer that plays a key part in Scotland's economy and has a strong reputation nationally and internationally. This year, it recorded a pre-tax profit of more than £4 billion and it awarded a 30 per cent pay rise to its chief executive.

Does the First Minister agree that that business can afford to give its workers at Shieldhall in Glasgow, Leven in Fife and distilleries all around Scotland a fair pay rise? Will she join me in calling on Diageo to get back around the table with the GMB and Unite unions and find a fair resolution?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, I am aware of the dispute in general terms—as Anas Sarwar alluded to, Diageo is a private company. I am not aware of all the details of the dispute but I hope that my commitment to fair work and to the fair treatment of workers is well known. I join Anas Sarwar in calling on Diageo to get back around the table with the trade unions, Unite and GMB, to find a fair resolution to the dispute in the interests of the workforce.

United Kingdom Parliament Suspension

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): How does the current suspension of the United Kingdom Parliament affect the First Minister's Government and this Parliament's preparations for Brexit? If prorogation is unlawful, why is Westminster not back to work?

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): First, when it comes to the practical implications of the UK Parliament being suspended, particularly in light of the publication last night of the operation yellowhammer planning assumptions, it is vital that Parliament is there to scrutinise and hold to account the UK Government. That would be a helpful process for the Scottish Government's planning; we need to get as much information out of the UK Government as possible.

The big question for the Prime Minister and the Government this morning is why Parliament is still suspended. Yesterday, Scotland's highest civil court declared that the prorogation of Parliament is unlawful. Parliament should be back to work, scrutinising the Government, because, if any Government needed scrutinising, the UK Government certainly does.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green): Yesterday, the Court of Session ruled that the First Minister acted unlawfully by proroguing—*[Interruption.]* I beg her pardon. *[Laughter.]* I would never suggest any inappropriateness on the part of our First Minister.

Yesterday, the Court of Session ruled that the Prime Minister acted unlawfully by proroguing the UK Parliament. Regardless of whether we agree with any individual judgment, does the First Minister agree that it is outrageous that Downing Street sources seek to undermine the court, with a minister on television implying that the judges were biased? Can the First Minister outline what action the Scottish Government will take to defend the judiciary from those outrageous and unfounded attacks?

The First Minister: I am glad that John Finnie clarified that, yesterday, the Court of Session found the Prime Minister to have acted unlawfully.

Yesterday's judgment is of huge constitutional significance. As I said yesterday and today, the

political implications of it should be straightforward. Parliament should immediately be back in session.

If that was not bad enough yesterday, what we heard, directly and indirectly, from people within the Conservative Party, who attacked the independence and integrity of the judiciary, was absolutely disgraceful and shocking.

I was glad to hear Jackson Carlaw and other members of the Tory benches here defend the integrity and independence of the judiciary. Whatever our views on individual judgments, our court system and the separation of powers are a vital part of our democracy. It is not just wrong but deeply dangerous for politicians of any party to attack the independence of the judiciary. It is incumbent on us all to stand up for that.

Funeral Costs (Support)

4. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what support the Scottish Government is providing to people struggling to meet funeral costs. (S5F-03537)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): From next Monday, we will start providing funeral support payments, which will provide people on low incomes with much-needed help with the cost of arranging a funeral. As with all Scottish benefits, we have simplified the process and removed barriers to applying for payments. We have also made changes to eligibility, so that around 40 per cent more people will be able to access support than would receive help under the predecessor United Kingdom Government scheme.

The funeral support payment complements work that the Government has undertaken to tackle funeral poverty, including our guidance on funeral costs, which encourages providers to make the cost of their services more transparent and accessible.

Richard Lyle: I welcome what is being done.

This month marks the first anniversary of Social Security Scotland. It is clear what a positive difference the Scottish Government has made by using its new powers over social security, especially when we compare the approach in Scotland with the UK system that it replaces.

That is welcome, but does the First Minister think that the Scottish Government will always be limited in what it can achieve while the majority of powers remain in the hands of an incompetent and uncaring Government at Westminster, which is entirely distracted by Brexit chaos?

The First Minister: Richard Lyle is absolutely correct; in Scotland many people are receiving financial support who would not be receiving support if the Scottish Government had not taken

responsibility for those benefits. We are demonstrating, day in and day out, in practical and tangible terms, the value of powers lying in the hands of a democratically elected Scottish Parliament, and not in the hands of a Westminster Government, particularly a Tory Westminster Government.

It is common sense to look at the experience of our delivery of benefits so far and come to the conclusion—if one was not already of this view, as of course I was—that the sooner we have the entirety of welfare decisions in the hands of this Parliament and out of the hands of a Tory Westminster Government, the better for all of us.

Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation (Residential Services)

5. Alexander Burnett (Aberdeenshire West) (Con): To ask the First Minister when an action plan for delivery of residential services for drug and alcohol rehabilitation across the country will be provided, in line with its drug and alcohol strategy. (S5F-03530)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): We are engaging with stakeholders on the draft action plan for the rights, respect and recovery strategy, with a view to publishing the finalised plan in October. The plan will include actions on residential rehabilitation and support the development of more effective services across Scotland.

The recent drug deaths figures show that we are facing a public health emergency, which is why we have announced an additional £20 million over the next two years to support efforts across the country to bring the numbers down.

Alexander Burnett: I thank the First Minister for her announcement. I understand that she is including the action that is called for by the Aberdeenshire alcohol and drug partnership, and I thank her for that. However, that was communicated to the partnership yesterday by telephone, it seems in response to my lodging the question and *The Press and Journal* picking up the issue. When will the First Minister's Government start to tackle the issue proactively, rather than in reaction to bad headlines?

The First Minister: My genuine apologies; I am not entirely aware of the phone call to which the member referred. I would be happy to look into that.

The Government is responding to and dealing with the issue proactively. We have acknowledged—rightly, and I think that this view is shared—that we face a public health emergency. We recognise that increased investment is necessary, which is why the £20 million to which I

referred was announced in the programme for government.

We also recognise that we need to do things differently and to be open to new approaches. That is why, for example, we continue to press the Home Office to allow, or to devolve powers to the Scottish Government that enable us to allow, the safe consumption facility that Glasgow is so keen to have, because experts say that such a facility can make a difference. That is just one part of the overall solution; it is not the whole story.

We will continue to invest and we will continue to be open to new approaches, as I encourage all members to be. This is an issue on which we absolutely should be prepared to come together, and which we should be determined to tackle.

Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP): On those new approaches, can the First Minister say what communication the Scottish Government has had with the UK Government on the drug deaths crisis, including the use of supervised overdose prevention rooms to help to reduce drug deaths in Scotland? Does she believe that the approach of the UK Government reflects the spirit of working together on this important issue?

The First Minister: Towards the end of last week, we received communication from the UK Government confirming its current position on the safe consumption room proposal. I deeply regret its response. I believe that we all have a duty to look at new approaches. I readily concede that it is not the only answer, but experts say that it is a significant part of the answer. Therefore, I call on the Home Office again to reconsider its position.

Also regrettably, the Home Office indicated that it would not be prepared to take part in the drug summit that we will convene in Glasgow. Again, I think that that is the wrong decision, and I take this opportunity to ask it to reconsider.

We should be coming together. I recognise the principal responsibility that lies on the shoulders of my Government, but drugs law is largely reserved. Therefore, we need the active co-operation of the UK Government to make sure that we take a full holistic approach to the issue. I hope that the UK Government will think again about both aspects referred to in its letter and come to different conclusions.

The Presiding Officer: I note that, yet again, there is a lot of interest across the chamber in asking supplementaries on this issue, but we do not have enough time. There will be an opportunity to participate in our members' business debate later.

Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (Patient and Staff Safety)

6. Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): The members' business debate starts immediately after First Minister's questions, so please do not rush away.

To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to reported concerns for patient and staff safety at the Queen Elizabeth university hospital. (S5F-03523)

The First Minister: The safety and wellbeing of staff at the Queen Elizabeth university hospital, and indeed at all hospitals, is the absolute priority. We welcome the input of NHS Education for Scotland and the General Medical Council, which is part of an independent scrutiny regime across NHS Scotland, with regard to doctors in training. I expect NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to work closely with those bodies to implement their recommendations. I know that the GMC has welcomed the progress that has been made so far.

Following recent concerns, the health secretary commissioned an independent review of the hospital's process of procurement and delivery, and of how that contributes to effective infection prevention. The co-chairs of that review made a call for evidence in June, and are currently assessing the responses that have been received so far.

Monica Lennon: *The Herald* and the *Herald on Sunday* have reported that children with cancer have been hit by infections at the hospital. The kids cancer ward remains closed to new admissions. Safety faults at Edinburgh sick kids hospital were caught hours before patients moved in, but the problems at the Queen Elizabeth hospital became public only after it opened and are affecting some of Scotland's sickest children right now.

Both hospitals were built by the same contractor. Can the First Minister vouch for the safety of children and other patients at the Queen Elizabeth hospital? Is she satisfied, and will she apologise for the shocking failings there?

The First Minister: As I have said in this chamber before, I have no hesitation in apologising to any patient who does not get the treatment that they have a right to expect in our national health service. The overwhelming majority of patients do, but when the NHS falls short of the expected standards, there is a duty for lessons to be learned and for apologies to be made. I have never hesitated in doing that.

In terms of its safety, the Queen Elizabeth hospital provides some of the best healthcare anywhere in the world. It has some of the best

healthcare staff, who provide exemplary care, day in and day out. When issues arise, it is essential that the right actions are taken. There are issues that are not unique to that hospital. As we have debated before, unfortunately, infection is a challenge for healthcare systems across the world. Infection prevention and control are vital, and we expect health boards to put in place the right process to keep patients in their hospitals safe. Everybody has a right to expect that from our national health service.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes First Minister's question time.

In the 20 years in which I have had the pleasure of knowing our clerk and chief executive, Sir Paul Grice, I have never known him to be at a loss for words. I should explain to members, those in the gallery and those who are following proceedings that our officials are not allowed to take in part in formal proceedings, other than in swearing in members, so Paul could not respond to any of the kind tributes that have been paid to him this afternoon. However, there will be an event after parliamentary business this evening at which I, other members of staff and members of the Scottish Parliament will be able to talk about Paul's leadership role in building the reputation of this institution, and he will be able to respond and tell us, unencumbered by office, what he really thinks of the members of the Scottish Parliament. *[Laughter.]* On that note, I suspend the meeting briefly before we resume with members' business. *[Applause.]*

12:45

Meeting suspended.

12:51

On resuming—

Drug Deaths

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-18420, in the name of Monica Lennon, on Scotland's drug death public health emergency. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. The debate is highly subscribed and members will have to keep tightly to their timings or some will have to drop off the speakers list. It is in members' hands.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament considers problem drug use across Scotland, including in the Central Scotland region, to be a national crisis; is saddened and concerned at reports that 1,187 people lost their lives due to drug-related causes in 2018, which it understands is the highest level ever reported; further understands that the rate of drug-related deaths in Scotland is the highest in the UK and across the EU; believes that every life claimed by drug misuse is a preventable tragedy, and notes the calls on the Scottish Government to legally designate the crisis a public health emergency and to urgently direct councils, integration authorities, Police Scotland, NHS boards, the Scottish Ambulance Service and all other relevant public bodies to assess, prevent and address the consequences of the emergency, by working together to save lives and reduce drug-related harm.

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): Every seven hours, a life in Scotland is being lost to drug overdose. This is a national emergency, and it needs an urgent emergency response.

I am grateful to the members who signed my motion because, in doing so, they have made it possible for this debate to go ahead today and for Scotland's drug death emergency to be recognised in our national Parliament. We are tight for time today, so we need to have a longer debate in Government time and to have regular updates. That is the very least we can do.

One drug-related death is a tragedy, so it is horrifying that almost 1,200 people died from drug overdose during 2018. The death toll has doubled in a decade and, if that was not shocking enough, Scotland's drug death rate is the highest in the United Kingdom, the highest in Europe and the highest in the world.

Thousands of grieving, trauma-stricken families are being left behind, and they feel ignored and abandoned by us and our public services. For the purposes of officialdom and statistics, those who have died are described as drug users or addicts, but they were people who, like all of us, once had hopes and dreams.

When I look around the chamber, I see members who are sincere in wanting to tackle this

crisis. However, we must not kid ourselves that we are doing enough. When I picked up “Protecting Scotland’s Future: the Government’s Programme for Scotland 2019-20”, which was unveiled by the First Minister last week, I was shocked when I flicked to page 102 and read these words:

“We are doing everything we can ... to save lives.”

That cannot be serious. As someone who lost a parent to alcoholism, I have the self-awareness to know that I get a bit emotional about this and that I have a heightened emotional response. However, the First Minister is kidding herself on if she thinks that there is no more that her Government could do. Treatment and support services are underfunded and struggling to provide help to everyone who needs it, our prisons are rife with drugs, drug users are still called horrible and dehumanising names—whether on the streets or in newspapers—and stigma is real and stigma kills.

More than half of people in Scotland believe that, if someone goes through a hospital door because of drug or alcohol misuse, they should pay something towards their care. Mothers and fathers are burying their sons and daughters, children are being left without their parents and friends are losing multiple friends to drug-related illness and suicide—and the statistics probably do not even tell the full story.

During the lifetime of the Scottish Government’s 2008 strategy—“The road to recovery: a new approach to tackling Scotland’s drug problem”—6,418 families lost a loved one. Scotland’s drug death emergency is tragic, heart-wrenching and shameful, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

The programme for government clearly states that drug-related deaths are preventable; on that, ministers are absolutely correct. The motion that we are debating asks the Scottish Government to

“legally designate the crisis a public health emergency”

and not just talk about one. The legislation that allows ministers to do that—and to bring forward regulations if so required—is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Scottish Parliament’s highly respected and independent research unit, the Scottish Parliament information centre, or SPICe, has confirmed that. The Scottish Government’s “Preparing Scotland” document explains that the act is concerned with how to deal with consequences of emergencies, which it defines as events that threaten

“serious damage to human welfare.”

What would that legal designation do? It would allow ministers to direct, co-ordinate and monitor the response of our public bodies, such as health boards, councils and the police, to make sure that

our communities and people are getting exactly what they need.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Monica Lennon: I am sorry, but I will continue.

The situation in Dundee, which my colleague Jenny Marra will address, is different from what is happening in other parts of the country, for example, Glasgow. We need to know that targeted action and progress are being achieved—there needs to be transparency and accountability.

I do not know whether I will get extra time to take an intervention. I say to Stuart McMillan that I am really sorry.

We know that alcohol and drug services have faced real-term cuts in recent years, which has made it very difficult for them to support everyone. An emergency response must be supported by the resources that are needed to address this.

This morning in Parliament, an event was held in partnership with the *Daily Record* that gave people who have direct experience of substance misuse the chance to be heard and to be visible in Parliament. Many of them—there are a lot of them—are in the public gallery. I thank all of them, including my constituents who have come from Hamilton, and representatives of Blameless Charity, which is based at Hamilton Accies. I also thank the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing for being there today, and the *Daily Record* for its campaign to put the drug death emergency higher up the political agenda. In particular, I thank Mark McGivern, who is the journalist who has largely been driving that.

Today, MSPs from all parties signed up to a *Daily Record* pledge board, which is very positive. I hope that all MSPs, including the public health minister, will sign it, because it is a pledge to recognise that Scotland faces a drug death crisis that should be treated as a national emergency. It is a pledge to do everything that we can to end the crisis of substance misuse in every part of Scotland and to campaign for significant new funding for harm reduction and recovery services. We cannot stand by and watch vulnerable people die every seven hours. We are supposed to be a progressive and compassionate country.

It is not good enough to announce a ministerial task force in March, to count our dead in July and to wait until the middle of September to get people in a room. The task force is accountable to ministers and, in the end, ministers are accountable to the people. When the minister gets to his feet to speak, will he confirm whether he believes that the Government has acted quickly enough? Is there more that could be done? Does

he expect to see a reduction in the number of drug deaths when the 2019 figures are published?

I ask, urge and beg the Scottish Government to show the leadership that I know it can show, to show compassion and to activate and co-ordinate an emergency response to this national tragedy. Our most vulnerable citizens cannot be left to die from this preventable disease.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I say to those in the public gallery that it is inappropriate for them to show appreciation or otherwise for members' speeches. Perhaps they can speak at the end of the debate to those who have contributed.

13:00

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I thank Monica Lennon for raising this important issue in Parliament today, and I welcome the extra £20 million that the Scottish Government has promised for this area in the programme for government.

I appreciate getting the opportunity to speak in this drug deaths debate, though I am sad that a debate on the topic is needed at all. Scotland has a serious drug problem, which is very evident in my constituency, Glasgow Shettleston, where drug addiction and drug deaths are highly visible.

I have two main points to make. First, we need to recognise that there are usually underlying reasons for drug use; it might be the result of something deeper. Secondly, I absolutely agree that we should treat drug use as a health issue, although I accept that there are impacts beyond health.

With most addictions, including drug addictions, people often have underlying problems, including the breakdown of family relationships, major financial problems, mental health issues and a lack of hope. Therefore, we cannot deal with drug usage on its own and must take a wider, preventative approach to the issue. In that respect, there is not one simple solution. It is urgent, but it will take time to turn around.

I note that the motion focuses almost exclusively on the public sector. The public sector is a major player but, on its own, it cannot prevent deaths linked to drugs. For a start, families and the third sector have a major part to play. They can give individuals the time and support that they need, which the public sector is unable to do.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab): Will John Mason take an intervention?

John Mason: I am sorry—time is too limited.

I was interested to read an article in the *Evening Times*—another paper that has been campaigning on this issue—on Monday that focused on the

Family Addiction Support Service, or FASS. One of its volunteers was quoted, who said that her 50-year-old son had been involved with drugs for 30 years. She made the point that individuals have to want to change, which is an important point for us to remember when we talk about all drug deaths being preventable.

I agree that this is a health issue, and we should treat it as a health problem, crisis or emergency, as people see fit. Safe consumption rooms can therefore be part of the answer. If other parts of the national health service both look after the patient and provide the medication that they require, that should surely also be the case for treating drug addiction. A system that relies on people buying their drugs illegally from organised criminals—perhaps forcing a partner into prostitution to get the money, as happens in my constituency—and involves drug gangs, which leads to violence, cannot be a good system.

If this is a health issue, as it is, we need to emphasise the likes of heroin-assisted treatment as the preferred route. I understand that HAT is already legal, although there a number of conditions around it. Perhaps those are too restrictive and need to be reviewed.

I gather that Switzerland has a long history of providing HAT. The Swiss model of HAT combines prescribed supply, which has associated benefits, such as purity, with supervised use in a safe and hygienic facility. Since the introduction of HAT in Switzerland, health outcomes for heroin users have improved significantly, illicit heroin consumption has been reduced, medically prescribed heroin has not made its way into illicit markets and the medicalisation of heroin has reduced the initiation into its use by new users.

In the UK, medically prescribed heroin has been legal since 1926, yet programmes are not widely available. Glasgow city health and social care partnership is pushing ahead with plans to open a HAT centre in Glasgow, which I welcome. However, let us remember that this is a long-running problem and, sadly, the answers will not be quick or easy.

13:05

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): I thank Monica Lennon and the Labour Party for today's debate, which is the second opportunity to discuss drug deaths. The Conservatives had to use our business time for the previous one, and I hope that the minister has heard the message that we should have Government debate time on this issue as soon as possible.

Over the summer recess, I undertook a number of visits across Scotland to meet people who run drug services. We need to start by asking where

we have gone so wrong. People who work on the front line are quite clear that this is a public health emergency, which they cannot deal with because of lack of resource. We need to be clear about that, too.

I visited the minister's constituency and met people in the Lochee hub, who told me how their work with Addaction adult services makes a difference. However, they said that youth Addaction services had all been cut in Dundee's secondary and primary schools after this Government cut funding, which has had an impact on services. I am concerned that services across Scotland are threatened and are closing. We need action from the Government now to prevent those service closures.

Mental health support is very important, and I hope that we will not wait for the task force to take that area forward. Everyone I have spoken to has made clear that people cannot start with holistic support around mental health until they are seen to be clean or under management. That is wrong, because most people want to start that support straight away. We must look at capacity. In our debates here on access to mental health services and the crisis for child and adolescent mental health services, it has not been clear where that capacity will come from or what it will look like, but we must look at where the third sector can step in to provide support.

We have welcomed the task force and those who serve on it, but it is clear that families and people with lived experience do not feel that they have adequate representation on the task force. They are not confident that they will have their voices heard when feeding in their experience, although lots of organisations do positive work—many are in the public gallery today. Will the minister at this stage consider expanding the task force and including more people with lived experience and families? They have put that forward; it is sensible and I think that it would attract cross-party support.

Above all, as the task force brings forward positive contributions on how we can turn this situation around, I hope that we will see on-going commissions of work. The minister has agreed to meet us monthly, as Monica Lennon said. We need to drive forward change and service reform as a Parliament. I hope that we can have a Parliament-wide view on this issue. Every party is committed to that, and we have all put forward policy suggestions. Last year, I published our life plan policy, and I hope that all the policy areas where we want to see change and reform will be looked at and not just put to one side.

This is a national emergency and the Scottish Government and every minister should look at portfolios collectively and take responsibility, with

local government, the health service and education services all stepping up to make an emergency response. When we have a Government debate, I hope that all ministers will take part in it.

13:09

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I thank Monica Lennon for securing the debate and express my condolences to any family that has lost loved ones who have died as a result of the effects of alcohol or drug use. Everyone who has experienced harm from alcohol or drug use issues must be treated with dignity and respect and must be supported.

I put on record my thanks to the minister for the work that he has done on the issue. During the recess, he visited Paris to observe and hear about the approach that is taken there. Documents have been published, and he has given the issue time.

As we have heard, the issue is claiming many lives and is complex. I have many notes in front of me just from attending the round-table session on the issue this morning and hearing about people's lived experiences. As a nurse, I can talk about the complex physiological process that happens to people who overdose. Sometimes, folk who suffer the effects of harmful use are also smokers, and smokers often have issues related to poor lung health or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which can lead to baseline oxygen saturation levels that are perhaps not the healthiest. When other drugs are taken on top of that, that can lead to an oversedation issue in the body, which causes further oxygen saturation reduction, leading to critical events.

Even if we had safe consumption facilities, many people who take drugs in rural areas would not necessarily have access to those facilities. When people take drugs on their own, that is a real risk, and that has to be addressed and challenged, especially in rural areas.

I thank the minister for attending the river garden Auchincruive centre in Ayrshire with me just before the summer recess. The centre, which is run by the charity Independence from Drugs and Alcohol Scotland, has a great team of people, including service users. It is a peer-supported place, where people who have lived experience can live together, work together and support each other. From listening to the experiences of Natalie, Sharon and Darren at the round-table session this morning, I know that that approach can help. Following Darren's apology for being so aggressive, the minister noted Darren's passion and said that, if we lose our passion, it means we do not care any more. We need to continue that

passion and continue to care so that we can help to save more Scottish lives.

I am interested in the Scottish Affairs Committee's pursuit of the issue at Westminster, and I attended a meeting of the committee with my colleagues Dave Stewart and Brian Whittle. I see that Ged Killen MP, who is a member of the committee, is in the public gallery today. The committee's inquiry has the simple aim of better understanding drug misuse in Scotland. In the meeting that I attended, the committee took evidence from many experts who are also asking for a radical change, such as Professor Iain McPhee from the University of the West of Scotland.

One challenge is that we cannot just change the policies and do what we want. I ask the minister to continue to lobby the United Kingdom Government so that we can do things differently, just as Portugal and other countries across Europe have done since the 1970s.

I will stop there, but the issue is worth further debate.

13:13

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): I thank Monica Lennon for bringing forward the debate, but it says everything about the Government's approach to this national crisis that we are debating drug deaths only in Opposition time. Surely, a non-debate about a citizens assembly does not have greater priority than discussing how we end our shameful accolade as the drug deaths capital of Europe or how we end the HIV outbreak among homeless drug injectors in Glasgow. The last time that we debated drugs in Government time in the Parliament was 8 November 2012, which was seven years ago, and that was when half the number of people were dying on the street compared to now. That is simply not good enough.

People say that we must have consensus on the issue. I disagree with that, 100 per cent, because it is passive consensus that has got us to the situation that we are in. We need anger and direction to Government on the issue, because its response has been pathetic. In 2016, we had a 24 per cent cut in the budget for alcohol and drug partnerships. I am pleased to see the former Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport here. I hope that she contributes to the debate, because she can explain why, on her watch, those ADPs had that massive cut in their budget, which resulted in poorer care and attention for people going through addiction and more people dying on the streets. A task force was set up, but it has not met during the six months since it was announced, which exemplifies the problem.

The fact that a paltry £10 million of additional funding will be provided over the next two years exemplifies the ambivalence that is being shown. Let me put that into context. We will spend £1.4 million a month to keep a hospital in Edinburgh closed, with no patients. We will spend an extra £76 million on an information technology disaster to deliver farm payments. We are spending £76 million on computers that dinnae work and millions of pounds on a hospital with no patients. However, we are spending a fraction of that money on our fellow citizens who are dying on the streets of Edinburgh and every other city and community every single day.

If the problem was bird flu, foot and mouth disease, another health threat to animals or another disease, there would be emergency meetings of the Government's resilience division. Resources would be freed up immediately. There would be a genuine emergency response. If any task force that had been set up to deal with such emergencies had not met for six months, the minister would have been out the door a long time ago. However, we are, of course, talking only about drug users and people who are going through addiction; politically, those people are easy to ignore. To the Government, they are miles down the list of priorities.

Here are some of the suggestions that I have heard from people who are drug users, people who have been supporting them and people in their families. They have said that we should stop jailing people who are unwell and need help, and treat them instead. They have said that police, community and public health funding should be brought together to address the problems that people face. Mental health teams should be set up in police stations—that was the top ask from the police when I went out on a shift with them over the summer. Drug users who have not responded to other forms of treatment should be allowed to be prescribed heroin in a medical setting. The application of naloxone should be extended. There should be an early warning system for changes in behaviour on the streets. Cuts to alcohol and drug partnership budgets should be stopped, and we should properly invest in mental health services. The current services are completely and utterly swamped and inadequate. People talk warmly about the charities and voluntary organisations in their area, but all of them have had their budgets cut year on year. That is the reality.

We should extend the testing of ecstasy and other drugs. We should take long-term gradualist action against the prevalence of antidepressants, so that people do not go on to the streets to pick up counterfeit drugs.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Neil Findlay: We need a concerted and co-ordinated drugs service. We need to stop discharging people from hospital on to the streets, and to address our homelessness crisis.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Neil Findlay: There is so much more that I want to say. Please, let us not have any more guff about consensus; we need to get things fixed.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The first speakers from all parties—the Greens aside—have gone over their time. I cannot allow anyone else to go over their time, because business in the chamber must resume at the normal time for a Thursday.

13:18

Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP): I welcome Monica Lennon's debate and the powerful speech that she made at the outset.

I also welcome the proposals that the Scottish Government set out in last week's statement on tackling drug-related deaths. Everyone in the chamber—and those who are not in it—cares deeply about the issue, whether it affects our communities or many of our friends and families.

I echo the sentiment that the minister expressed when he met the new chair of the Scottish Government's drug deaths task force. The group needs to identify areas for change or improvement quickly, rather than meet for months and then issue a final report. That is the right approach.

The task force will meet for the first time on 17 September. In his response, will the minister say whether a timescale for output, in relation to the task force's remit, has been discussed and agreed? I understand that the task force will report to ministers and make recommendations for short, medium and long-term actions. Given the need to act now and the concerns that are shared by many members across the chamber, will the minister agree to allot time for the provision of regular updates on the progress of the task force?

In his statement, the minister acknowledged the work of the Dundee Drugs Commission, which recently published its report "Responding to Drug Use with Kindness, Compassion and Hope", which was presented by the Dundee Partnership. I, too, thank those who were involved in the report—especially those who have been directly affected by drug use—for their work in highlighting the issues that are faced in Dundee and across Scotland and for their numerous recommendations, many of which have been acknowledged in the Scottish Government's strategy documents. When I met some of the commissioners, I was impressed by the fact that

they are looking at radical and different approaches, which is absolutely the right course of action.

One of the key recommendations in the report is the full integration of substance use and mental health services and support, which Miles Briggs touched on. There is a particular need in Dundee to join up and integrate those services, which have been far too siloed. Someone being unable to access services because of a possible underlying mental health issue is not the right approach.

Trauma, violence, neglect and social inequalities lie at the root of both mental health problems and substance use problems. We know that they are interlinked. I do not think that anyone would advocate the idea that there is one simple solution to this.

Neil Findlay: Will the member give way?

Shona Robison: No, thank you—I have only four minutes for my speech.

The idea that there is one simple solution is not being suggested. We have to look at all the potential solutions, some of which are radical and may not even have been raised as a possibility 10 years ago in this place but are now being discussed openly and have support across the chamber. It is absolutely the time for radical action. We all need to look at those potential solutions and be willing to open our eyes to the possibilities. I am certainly willing to do that.

Given the potential of such an approach and the need for urgent action, I am pleased that the minister is meeting me later to discuss the recommendations—particularly those on dual diagnosis—in more detail. I would appreciate it if he could touch on how Dundee could be at the forefront of implementation, because we face complex issues. It is right that we have a strategy that looks at the needs of particular locations, because there is no one solution for the whole of Scotland. I would like the minister to reflect on that in his closing remarks.

13:22

Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con): I, too, congratulate Monica Lennon on bringing the debate to the chamber, and I agree that it is about time that we had significant Government debating time on this topic. For far too long, too many people in society have not mattered. It is not just those who are caught in the web of addiction who are suffering, but the families, friends and local communities who suffer the emotional fallout from addiction and the trauma of losing loved ones to addiction.

I have been introduced to a very uncomfortable phrase: "a hierarchy of death". The suggestion is

that how the bereaved are treated depends on how the deceased person died. They say that, at the bottom of the hierarchy, are families and communities who have lost loved ones to addiction—and they are, of course, correct. When we are discussing drug and alcohol deaths, let us not forget the devastation that is left behind. No matter what is written on the death certificate, the pain and trauma left behind are the same, so we need to develop services accordingly.

I recently attended an event called “A matter of life and death—recovery in East Ayrshire”, in which 110 stakeholders took part. There were several presentations, including one from the leader of the Government’s drug deaths task force, Professor Catriona Matheson. Not one of the actions called for by those 110 stakeholders in the break-out sessions lies outwith the competency of the Scottish Government, so, when I reread the minister’s statement from last week on Scotland’s drug deaths, I was disappointed all over again. I do not question the minister’s commitment and desire to tackle the issue, but it is blatantly obvious that the Scottish Government is on the wrong road. It continually talks about the levers that it does not have and keeps looking south, suggesting that its hands are tied. I think that the Scottish Government is hiding behind that excuse and that that narrow approach is strangling its options.

We want there to be safe spaces where further conversations can take place. In East Ayrshire, attempts are being made to raise the cash—we are not talking about much money, in the scheme of things—to open a rehabilitation cafe that will serve as a safe space where medical interventions such as hepatitis and aids testing can take place, where mental and physical health advice can be provided and where dental health services can be accessed. Such interventions are successful around the country; we do not always need to reinvent the wheel. There are many organisations and people with lived experience out there in the front line who are doing fantastic work. Much of the solution is about supporting and developing what is already working.

The most effective tools that we have at our disposal to tackle the crisis lie in education, health and the third sector, the responsibility for which has been totally devolved to this Parliament for 20 years. The inability of successive Governments to give sufficient investment and focus to the issue or to create legislation to deal with it represents an abject failure of this Parliament. Make no mistake: the Scottish Government has a significant toolbox to radically alter the approach that is being taken to addiction and, therefore, the outcomes.

I turn to a point that was raised by Miles Briggs. If people are to regain control over any kind of

addiction, they must have good mental health. We must stop the practice of withholding mental health treatment until an addict has stopped their habit, because many addicts are self-medicating to mask the pain of previous trauma and, without a mental health intervention, there would be no way to mask the pain that they seek to deaden. In many cases, a mental health intervention should be the starting point. We must treat the cause, not the symptom. It was Hippocrates who said that it is better to know the person with the disease than it is to know the disease that the person has.

I know that I must stop there, even though there are many more things that I would like to say. I again thank Monica Lennon.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Several members still wish to speak in the debate, so I am minded to accept a motion without notice, under rule 8.14.3 of the standing orders, to extend the debate by up to 30 minutes.

Motion moved,

That, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes.—[*Monica Lennon*]

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That does not mean that members have another 30 minutes. We are even tighter for time, so I ask the remaining speakers to aim for three and a half minutes.

13:27

Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): I thank Monica Lennon for securing the debate and for her very informed contribution. I welcome the people in the gallery.

I represent part of Glasgow city centre. Unfortunately, drug deaths are rife in that area. I have spoken to the professionals in Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and it is obvious to everyone that a unified approach is needed. It is true that we need a drug consumption room, but that is just one aspect of what is required. There has been support in this Parliament, in Glasgow City Council and at Westminster for the setting up of a consumption room. I would like that to happen but, unfortunately, that is not the wish of the UK Government.

However, I do not want to get involved in the politics of the situation. The issue is about people—people I see every day in my constituency, whether in the city centre, the merchant city or other areas of the constituency. It is not just the use of drugs that we need to tackle; a holistic approach needs to be taken to addressing what is causing people to be driven to take drugs. Austerity is a factor—it means that people cannot afford to live. The actions of the

Westminster Government mean that people with mental health problems are not being given any support or are being sanctioned. The whole situation needs to be looked at holistically; we must look at housing as well as health. It is absolutely a public health matter, and I thank the minister and others for recognising that.

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Sandra White: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

The fact that we are talking about a public health matter means that we cannot concentrate on just one area; we must concentrate on all the relevant areas.

I do not have much time, but I want to give coverage to one aspect of the drug use situation that never gets covered. I am talking about the “Trainspotting” generation.

During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a significant increase in the problem of drug taking in Edinburgh, Glasgow and other cities. We obviously know about the film, “Trainspotting”, but it is not said often enough that a lot of those people are dying. Last year, more than two thirds of drug-related deaths were of people aged between 35 and 54. That is not just because of the drug that they were using; they had, at that age, developed multiple morbidities with respiratory diseases and so on. We have to recognise that, and we want to prevent people from getting to that stage.

I repeat that more than two thirds of drug-related deaths last year were of people aged between 35 and 54 and we should not forget those people when we are looking at other aspects of drug deaths.

13:30

Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): This morning, the presenter on “Reporting Scotland” quoted the Scottish Government’s reaction to drug deaths, which was:

“The power to reduce drugs deaths is reserved to Westminster.”

It was simple, full-stop—the Government was washing its hands of the matter—and it was not completely true.

However, many people who watched their televisions this morning heard that line of blame, as will those who watch it throughout the day—that is many more than the number of people who will hear the complexity of this debate in the chamber and what the Scottish Government can actually do. My colleague Neil Findlay listed about 16 things that the Scottish Government can do. I

think that that list is endless and that the minister appreciates that.

First, let me add a couple of small points to that list. Minister, why do we not know how many drug users are receiving treatment locally, given that we know that treatment can save lives? In some European countries, 80 per cent of problem drug users are in treatment. In England, they manage to treat 60 per cent. In Scotland, we manage to treat 40 per cent—less than half—but we do not even have the information to tell us how many people are in treatment in areas where there are particular problems.

Despite the fact that we represent Dundee and that area, the minister and I do not know what percentage of the problem drug users there are receiving treatment. Frankly, I think that that is a disgrace. My feeling, given all the other evidence that I have seen, is that we in Dundee have an even lower treatment rate, but the Government will not collect the information to allow us to discover that and to plan services properly for those people. The lack of data is a technical issue, but it is an important one that the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee has raised many times. I hope that the minister will commit today to start collecting that information so that we can plan our drug services properly.

I turn to the Dundee drugs commission. It reported last month and the report made for grim reading. It said that the NHS drugs service in Dundee was not fit for purpose, and I understand that an earlier draft had even proposed shutting down the NHS service altogether, because it was failing so badly, and starting again.

The commission said that the service is entirely unaccountable, has no oversight, has been making maverick policy decisions without reference to best practice for years and has, at times, wilfully ignored national and regional policy on prescribing and drugs policy. The commission said that there is almost no data to understand the impact of the Dundee drugs service’s actions. Finally, the service refused to co-operate with the commission, despite the fact that the commission had the support of the council, the NHS and all of us politicians to do its work. The drug service blocked access to the information that was vital to the commission. Frankly, that is an utter disgrace and I would like to hear the minister’s reaction to that.

The Dundee drugs commission did not take any evidence on safe consumption rooms. As the minister knows, Scottish Labour has voted to support the transfer of powers, but I believe that we need to debate some issues around the technicalities that have been raised with me by Police Scotland.

Unfortunately, there is not even time today to raise those issues, so I again urge the minister to have a week-long debate on drug deaths. If he cannot agree to do that, we must at least have one debate.

I see that the Presiding Officer wants me to close. Please let me say this first, Presiding Officer: this is a public health crisis; this is a human crisis. Fellow citizens my age and mums and dads are dying in their droves. I think that, at the very least, the Government owes it to them to debate the issue properly.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I let you say that, Ms Marra, but doing so may affect your colleagues' speaking time.

13:35

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I, too, thank Monica Lennon for bringing the debate to Parliament today. It is truly a national shame and scandal that so many people have had their lives destroyed by drugs. The Greens have always been clear that it is a public health issue rather than a criminal justice issue. It is now a public health emergency.

When it comes to drugs, criminalisation has caused more harm than it can claim to have prevented. The "war on drugs" approach has clearly failed. That is no wonder—addiction is a complex illness that is clearly better tackled by trained medical professions than by the courts. Contributors at today's event said that

"We all need to take responsibility"

and that

"We need to help Scotland to get better."

Portugal used to suffer from drug-related death rates and HIV infection levels such as Scotland currently experiences. A radical change in its law in 2001 decriminalised use of all drugs, but not their production and supply. Subsequent years have seen dramatic drops in problematic drug use, in HIV and hepatitis infection rates, in overdose deaths, in drug-related crime and in incarceration rates. The success of the model clearly demonstrates that decriminalising possession, while adopting a health-based approach to substance-use problems, can dramatically reduce drug deaths.

I am heartened that we are discussing the Portuguese model. With a drug death happening every seven hours in Scotland, we need action and proper funding for that action. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said that the Portuguese model on decriminalisation

"was based on humanism, courage, evidence base and participation."

In the face of our public health emergency, we need all those elements.

Greens support the introduction of safe consumption rooms, which have been operating in Europe for the past 30 years. It is disappointing that Westminster is resisting that potentially life-saving change. It is clear that such rooms alone are not a solution. Addiction has a root cause—not just addiction to a particular drug—that needs to be addressed and treated. We need to address the trauma that causes addiction in the first place, so having a trauma-informed workforce is key.

It is a cruel paradox that as drug problems worsen, drug users become even more maligned. We need to address the stigma that continues to surround drug users, and we need to treat addiction as an illness and not as a personal failure. We need to respond to the emotional pain and shame that addicts and their families and friends experience. No one should ever be ashamed of being ill.

Treatment-wise, we need intervention by multidisciplinary health teams; we also need intervention by the third sector. Pharmacists have an important role to play in intervening and reducing drug dependency. In the past two years, community pharmacists in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have saved 15 lives through administration of naloxone to patients who have overdosed on opiates. That medicine must be made widely available.

We must address the wider health and social inequalities that Sandra White mentioned. Health and social care is one aspect of that, but we need also to consider housing, employment support, financial advice and care for prisoners. We need to care for people who are coming out of prison. They sometimes come out at the weekend and are being left on their own when they leave. That is simply unacceptable, and leads to a cycle of addiction. The Health and Sport Committee had an inquiry on the issue, and we know what needs to be done.

Drug deaths affect people of all ages and stages of life. I want to make sure that we hear the proper voices and have the right people in the task force. We need lived experience; we need, for example, the voices of families.

We need to make sure that beds in rehab facilities are not lying empty while people are desperate to access them. The Edinburgh access practice in my region does a fabulous job. We need non-judgmental services to be there when people need them. Workers in the access practice have told me that they know on which sofas the people whom they need to find will be sitting. At

the event this morning, one contributor said that if nothing changes, then nothing changes. We need change now.

13:39

Bob Doris (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP): I thank Monica Lennon for giving us the opportunity to debate the self-evident public health emergency of drugs deaths in Scotland. Unity of purpose across Government and Opposition parties will be crucial. We must consider solutions and the consequent funding that will be required.

We must listen carefully to people who have direct experience of drug use and addiction. It is such people's experience that I will use as the base for my comments this afternoon. My comments will echo the thoughts of various individuals in my constituency who I have met in recent times, many of whom have lost loved ones. When I met constituents ahead of the drugs deaths vigil that was organised in George Square, the testimony that I heard was challenging and harrowing, and cannot be ignored. I met them again this morning at Monica Lennon's event. I have also visited the Springburn addiction recovery cafe and spoken to several volunteers there. They all have direct lived experience and have progressed through recovery.

People are dying in Maryhill, in Possil, in Springburn and right across my constituency. It is not just a tragedy: it is also a public health emergency. I have been told stories about people who have been pursuing recovery being refused lower doses of methadone by their general practitioner despite the fact that they are trying to move into recovery. I have heard about people who have suffered a relapse but were still committed to recovery finding themselves being put on even higher doses of methadone than they were on before they sought recovery, when their GP found out about the relapse. They did not want that.

I have heard similar stories about constituents' experiences with addiction workers. On occasion, addiction workers have actively discouraged individuals from moving into recovery or into abstinence-based programmes, and it has been unclear why. The explanations that have been offered to me by people who have lived experience include that that is the addiction service's culture; that not enough people who have been through recovery are part of addiction services; that support pathways are weak, do not exist, or are not joined up; that addiction services are poorly resourced; and that addiction workers have too many clients and are not able to give the required individualised support.

I stress that I also heard good things about GPs and addiction workers: I want to put that on the record.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Bob Doris: I do not have time—I am sorry.

The drugs task force will meet shortly. I welcome that. It will not be judged by its meetings but by its actions, so the jury is out on it. It would be remiss of me not to mention the concerns that have been expressed about the lack of lived experience of addiction and recovery on the drugs task force. We need more direct representation on the task force; we will have to do something similar to what we did with the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. There needs to be an addiction and recovery experience panel, and it should not meet just once as a gimmick; it should meet regularly and feed in the lived experience of people who are in recovery to the task force's work. I hope that the Government can agree to that.

I also want to talk about the Rev Brian Casey of Springburn parish, in my constituency. I commend him for the love and support that he has sought to show to people who are in recovery. In the past five years, one third of all the funerals that he has conducted have been for people who have died drug-related deaths. That is one third of 500 funerals in Springburn. That is not acceptable. Something has to change. It is self-evident that what we are doing is not working. Families need policy-makers and public agencies to act to stem the tide.

Street Valium is killing my constituents right now, and we need a direct strategy for that as soon as possible.

Finally, we need a new consensus, and it will have to come at budget time. The bun-fighting between parties must end, and we must decide the resource that is required and the outcomes that we want to drive. We must come together as a Parliament.

13:43

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): I thank Monica Lennon for bringing this important debate to Parliament, and I congratulate the *Daily Record* on the campaign that it has run to raise awareness of this national crisis.

When we examine the statistics and hear about people's experiences, there is no doubt that this is a stark issue. In Scotland, one person a week is murdered, three people die on the roads, 15 people take their own lives, but 22 people a week die drugs deaths. That figure is absolutely stark and shows how serious the problem is.

Earlier in the year, we all gathered to celebrate 20 years of the Scottish Parliament, and everybody made nice speeches and said what a great institution it is. However, this particular area is a failure of devolution. It really is. We all have to take responsibility for that, but responsibility starts at the top.

Ten or 12 years ago, the Government launched its strategy, “The Road to Recovery: A New Approach to Tackling Scotland’s Drug Problem”. I supported it, as an MSP at the time, and I spoke about it at events and in the chamber, but we must acknowledge that it has not worked. Since that time, drug deaths have more than doubled. There is a real problem and there is a big challenge for all of us, as a Parliament, but especially for the Government, to do so much more.

The Government needs to draw in more expertise from people—both internationally and in Scotland—who know more about the issues. We need to acknowledge that that expertise has not been drawn on in the past 10 to 12 years. I also find it astonishing that the task force that has been set up includes only one person who has lived experience of drug use and addiction. That is a real failing.

What needs to happen is for every spending priority and every policy to be tested against how it will assist in tackling the crisis. For example, during the summer, the Government suspended throughcare from prison, although it is known that there is real vulnerability when prisoners leave prison and go into society. They are vulnerable and, sadly, some succumb to drugs again and end up passing away. By suspending the throughcare service, the Government has increased the number of vulnerable people who leave prison and go into society. Even now we do not have a date when the throughcare service will be reintroduced.

I appeal to the Government to listen to the speeches. The matter was raised at First Minister’s question time, but the Government is far too defensive. I agree with and support the call for consumption rooms, but that is such a small part of the debate. The Government needs to interact so much more with the other parties—with the people who are in the gallery. It really needs to up its game, because if it fails to do that and we fail as a Parliament, people and communities will continue to suffer, which will be totally unacceptable. As MSPs, we will be letting them down.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call on Joe FitzPatrick to respond to the debate in no more than seven minutes, please.

13:47

The Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing (Joe FitzPatrick): I thank Monica Lennon for securing the debate and for organising this morning’s meeting. I also thank those folk who spoke this morning and who are in the gallery now. It is unfortunate that the forum here does not allow their words to go on the record in the Scottish Parliament. Perhaps we need to think about how we can make sure that that happens, because I genuinely value the voice of lived experience and family members; it is crucial. I thank Monica for making that happen.

The number of people who died last year, who died in previous years and who continue to die is a tragedy. It is important, however, for us all to remember that it is not just about big numbers. Whatever the numbers are, the death of every single person is a personal tragedy, for them and for their family and friends. It is important that we put it in that context. However, when we put the numbers together, there is no question but that this is a public health emergency.

It is a good thing that I am seeing nodding across the chamber, and agreement that this is a public health emergency. That is important. We would not get that consensus in all parts of our democratic system, because there are parts of the UK where this is considered to be not a public health issue but a justice issue. That is one of the challenges that we have in taking this forward.

I agree with just about everything in the motion. There is just one bit that I cannot do—it is not that I do not agree with it, but I cannot do it. The motion mentions

“the calls ... to legally designate the crisis a public health emergency”.

I assure members that, if I had the necessary levers within my powers, I would absolutely use them to do that. However, it is good to see that there is support across the chamber for that.

Monica Lennon is absolutely correct to identify the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as the legislation that would allow such an emergency to be declared. I do not want to make the debate about a constitutional issue, but unfortunately the specific power to do that rests with the UK Government. I will continue to look for other ways within my existing powers to do so, but—

Monica Lennon *rose*—

Joe FitzPatrick: I will give way to Ms Lennon very briefly.

Monica Lennon: I do not want to get into a legal argument right now, but is the minister telling the chamber that he cannot co-ordinate and liaise with and direct public bodies to do X, Y and Z—whatever that might be? We are looking for there

to be an emergency response that we will all know about and on which the minister can report back to the Parliament daily, weekly, monthly—whatever it takes—until we can see that lives are being saved.

Joe FitzPatrick: That is an entirely different point. I do not have the power to declare a legal emergency—that rests with the UK Government. We all agree that the situation represents a public health emergency. Let us use the powers that we have. We can call on our colleagues elsewhere to engage in the debate and make a legal emergency happen. That would be helpful, but it is not the only answer.

Getting agencies together is exactly what we need to do. I do not need to declare a legal public health emergency in order to take that forward. That is what we want to do and it is what the strategy that was launched last November aims to do. I was very pleased by the range of support for the strategy that emerged not only across the Parliament, but from people with lived experience and others working with them across Scotland. It is important that we take—

Stuart McMillan: Will the minister give way?

Joe FitzPatrick: I do not think that I can. A number of important points have been made and the Presiding Officer will get on to me if I do not manage to get through as many of them as I can. Although we might want to extend the debate, the Presiding Officer will not be able to allow that, because members have to come back to the chamber for this afternoon's business.

Monica Lennon made an important point about stigma. I have spent a lot of time speaking to as many people as I can who either have lived experience or support others who are going through treatment. It is clear that stigma is one of the barriers for them. Part of the challenge will be for politicians to lead by example, be careful about our language and respect people who are in treatment. They should not be stigmatised, no matter what that treatment is. I know that there is some debate about the appropriateness of some forms of treatment as opposed to others. Whichever treatment is deemed appropriate for someone to receive as part of their recovery, it is crucial that they are supported in that in the round.

Bob Doris, Jenny Marra and others made a point about people's experiences with such treatment. I have heard similar comments from people with lived experience. I have also had constituents coming to me to seek support in getting the treatment that they want, whether that be methadone or other forms of support. Their experience has not been what it should be.

That is why it was good that the Dundee drugs commission was so frank and gave such clear direction. It also made points that will be important

for the whole of Scotland. The programme for government therefore includes a commitment to develop a national pathway so that we can ensure that best practice in relation to treatment is followed across the country.

I have also heard members' calls on the subject of respite, regarding which people have said that they are not being given a choice. I do not feel that we should be putting one form of treatment above others; we need to offer what works for the individual who is involved. We need to understand the level of complexity and the driving factors behind many addiction problems, which were mentioned by a number of members including Shona Robison and John Mason. Often, a severe trauma that has happened in a person's life will have been part of the process, so we need to be as supportive as we can in that respect.

Shona Robison also mentioned the Dundee drugs commission in relation to its recommendation on mental health issues and drug use. She is right that the approach in Dundee was highlighted as a particular problem, but I have spoken to people across the country and I understand that people who are in treatment for drug use or seeking treatment are finding that having a dual diagnosis is a barrier. The additional diagnosis is not always a mental health issue; it can be something else. We need to treat and support the person. That is why there was an announcement in the programme for government in relation to dual diagnoses, including regarding mental health issues. I would be pleased to discuss that further with Shona Robison after the debate.

I am conscious of time and there are a few points that I really want to cover.

Jenny Marra: Will the minister give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The minister is just finishing, Ms Marra.

Joe FitzPatrick: James Kelly made a very important point that we have not really discussed. I was equally concerned when I heard about the decision on the throughcare service. I am keen to ensure that we get some alternative support in place. It is probable that the support that was previously in place was not ideal. From what I have been hearing, if throughcare support is provided by people with peer experience, it might be far more useful. It is an area of vulnerability. Alison Johnstone made the point that most of the people we are talking about should not be in prison anyway, so we should not be having to have that throughcare. However, while we still have people in prison and leaving prison, that care is a crucial part of the jigsaw.

On the drug death task force, I am happy to engage further. It is crucial that the task force can

hear from the widest range of lived experience. I know that Professor Matheson is considering how she can do that. I hear the point that it is vital that such experience is heard.

I have tried to get people in the task force who are not just talking, but can hear that lived experience and then go and make things happen. We need action. I get the point that there has been a lot of talking—and I hear that people want more discussion, which is fine; we will have further debates—but it is important that we look at how we can take action.

I thank members for the way in which they have approached the issue in the debate. We can make a difference here, and it will be easier for us to make a real difference if we work together.

13:57

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Portfolio Question Time

Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Good afternoon. We continue business with portfolio questions.

Maurice Corry does not appear to be here to ask question 1, which is unfortunate. Question 2 was withdrawn, so we move to question 3, from Bruce Crawford. I am delighted to see you, Mr Crawford.

Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal (Benefits for Tourism)

3. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Cheery as usual, Presiding Officer.

To ask the Scottish Government how tourism in the area could benefit from the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city region deal. (S5O-03517)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Through the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city region deal, the Scottish Government is investing up to £15 million of capital investment to develop and augment key assets in culture, heritage and tourism in the region. That will support a programme of investments that is based around the potential for projects to grow the regional economy and deliver inclusive growth. It is a perfect opportunity not only to enhance the visitor experience but to attract new visitors, new businesses and new investment, delivering jobs and building a reputation for strong and effective partnership.

Bruce Crawford: It is no wonder that I keep cheery, Presiding Officer. It is great news that £15 million of Scottish Government funding has been allocated to culture, tourism and heritage investment through the deal.

Will the cabinet secretary say what progress has been made in identifying the projects that will benefit from the funding? Does she agree that a successful future for our high streets will, in part, be about appealing to local and tourism markets, and that the new creative hub that Creative Stirling has established in the city centre, which she visited recently, is a great demonstration of that?

Fiona Hyslop: The key projects are being developed in partnership between the national agencies and local business partners and will be set out when the final deal is signed and in delivery. Regional partners will prioritise projects,

to reflect local priorities and raise the standard of provision for tourists.

A key part of the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city region deal is about ensuring that high streets are thriving and successful. Indeed, it says in the heads of terms agreement that the partners' vision is

"a highly desirable place to live, work and visit: an attractive place in which to invest".

I was delighted to visit Stirling. I was impressed with the new creative hub and Creative Stirling's reach into the community. That is a good example of sustainable inclusive growth.

Given that we are talking about Stirling, and given that we did not have questions 1 and 2, with your indulgence, Presiding Officer, I will just say that the Wallace monument is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year and commend the people behind the Wallace wha hae! celebrations this weekend.

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

As part of the Stirling and Clackmannanshire city region deal and as a result of the hard work of my good friend Stephen Kerr MP, the United Kingdom Government has agreed to invest £10 million for the establishment of a national tartan centre in Stirling, which will showcase the unique and long history of tartan in Scotland. Does the cabinet secretary agree that that will be a significant boost for tourism and the local economy in the Stirling area?

Fiona Hyslop: In addition to the funding that the Scottish Government is providing to culture, tourism and heritage investments, I am pleased that the UK Government is contributing to the area, with a proposal for a tartan centre, at a cost of £10 million. I very much look forward to seeing the plans for the centre. I am sure that anything that can help to promote our history and heritage will be welcomed.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I welcome the announcement from both Governments about the city region deal and the £15 million for culture and tourism that the cabinet secretary referred to.

The cabinet secretary will appreciate that tourism in Scotland relies heavily on European Union workers and that we will face challenges in that area in future years. Can she outline the work that is being done to promote tourism as a career choice and tell us how we can raise employment standards across the tourism and hospitality sector? She knows that I have raised that issue before.

Fiona Hyslop: On that last point, we are working with the Poverty Alliance to ensure that good working practices, and indeed good pay, are

provided. We have identified funding to help the development of tourism as a career choice. We are also working with the UK Government on the tourism sector deal.

EU workers are absolutely essential. More than 11 per cent of our workers in the tourism and hospitality sector are EU citizens. They are very welcome here, which is why we have stepped up our support for the stay in Scotland campaign. Only this week, I spoke with both the Scottish Tourism Alliance and the British Hospitality Association about those very issues concerning EU workers. We are clear that addressing them will be key.

The idea that one can mess around with people's plans for themselves and their families by flip-flopping on the date for the ending of freedom of movement is absolutely disgraceful, and I am glad to see that the UK Government has now realised that that is problematic. It has set out a number of other additional immigration rules only this week. We will look at them and, once we understand what it is proposing, will report to Parliament and the relevant committees.

Media Freedom

4. Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to support the freedom of the media. (S50-03518)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): A free, independent and strong press is the bedrock of a well-functioning democracy. The Scottish Government is committed to doing what we can to ensure that it is maintained. That includes modernising the law of defamation, as well as considering the recommendations made in the Cairncross review of the future sustainability of journalism, and ensuring that freedom of the media remains at the heart of our considerations.

Monica Lennon: Recently, the Scottish Prison Service and Scottish ministers raised an interdict against the *Sunday Mail*, which has brought up issues concerning freedom of the press in Scotland. Can the cabinet secretary advise whether Scottish ministers have the power to veto such actions, and if so, can she advise why that power was not exercised by ministers in relation to an attempt to stop the newspaper reporting details of Allan Marshall's death in custody?

Fiona Hyslop: Clearly, our condolences remain with the family and friends of Allan Marshall. The issue that the member is addressing was discussed extensively at last week's First Minister's question time, which she attended. I am aware that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice wrote to the Justice Committee on 30 August, and I refer

to his update to Parliament on 3 September. I reiterate the issues at the heart of that matter, which are that the Scottish Prison Service, acting as employer—like any employer—can take the action that that it did. The other issues have been fully reflected in the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to the relevant committee.

Kashmir Conflict

5. Anas Sarwar (Glasgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what recent representations it has received from community representatives in Scotland regarding the conflict in Kashmir. (S5O-03519)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The Scottish Government has received written correspondence from two community organisations and four individuals concerned about the situation in Kashmir. In addition, ministers have met members of the community at events, and those people have passed on their concerns.

Anas Sarwar: There is huge concern among Scotland's Kashmiri, Pakistani and Indian community about the on-going issue in Kashmir, particularly about the drum beat towards war. The answer to the situation is not violence, but rather a political solution. Will the Scottish Government make representations to all whom they can to ask India to reverse the revocation of article 370, which gives special status to Jammu and Kashmir; immediately end human rights violations; allow the entry of humanitarian organisations; and finally deliver the international community's promise that the people of Jammu and Kashmir will have self-determination?

Fiona Hyslop: I will set out the Scottish Government's position. We are seriously concerned about the situation in Kashmir, and about reports of excessive use of force, large-scale detention restrictions and the application of restrictions on communications and freedom of movement, particularly at the early stages of the crisis. We are following developments closely, and we support calls for the situation to remain calm. It is clear that peace and democracy are the way forward.

It is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution to the situation in Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of Kashmiri people and respecting their human rights. We encourage the international community, through the United Nations, to support diplomatic efforts to pursue that political resolution. We also value Scotland's Indian and Pakistani communities and the important role that they play in enriching our life here.

We encourage Pakistan and India to engage in dialogue and find diplomatic solutions. Scottish Government officials have been in regular contact with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the rapidly moving and changing situation with regard to Kashmir, and I wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, about the issue on 10 August.

VisitScotland (Meetings with V&A Dundee and Dundee City Council)

6. Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government how many meetings VisitScotland has had with V&A Dundee and Dundee City Council in the last three years. (S5O-03520)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): The total number of meetings that VisitScotland has had with V&A Dundee and Dundee City Council since 2016 is not recorded. However, since starting in post in April, VisitScotland's newly appointed regional director covering Dundee has had six meetings with V&A Dundee and has had meetings with Dundee City Council quarterly.

Jenny Marra: We recently celebrated the anniversary of the V&A's opening in Dundee—I know that the cabinet secretary attended that—and there has been a 14 per cent increase in train journeys to the city since the V&A opened. How much investment from VisitScotland and how much time are being concentrated on trying to keep as many visitors as possible in the city to appreciate the whole of it and other attractions in it in order for the V&A to have a beneficial effect on the city's economy?

Fiona Hyslop: It is clear that the V&A has been a great success, and I am glad of the support of everybody who stood behind it. Jenny Marra was conspicuous in being very critical in respect of whether the V&A would be opened. However, I join her in celebrating its opening and the year's experience. There have been 750,000 visitors to the V&A to date, and *Time* magazine has said that it is one of the places in the world to visit in 2019.

Jenny Marra has failed to acknowledge the launch only yesterday of the Tay cities region tourism strategy, which was launched to promote the wider Tay cities region deal. I am more than happy to ask the relevant local authority areas of Dundee city, Perth and Kinross, Angus and Fife to inform Jenny Marra of the details of that strategy. It is clear that VisitScotland's role in supporting it is very important, and everyone needs to get behind it. I am disappointed that Jenny Marra is not aware of the significant tourism strategy launch that took place only yesterday in her region.

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): There was no mention of

the cultural youth experience fund in this year's programme for government. That fund was first announced back in 2017 and was to offer the opportunity for primary schools to visit Scotland's theatres, museums such as the V&A, and galleries. It has been promised three times, but it is nowhere to be found. Where is that crucial funding? Why has the Scottish Government promised the cultural youth experience fund but failed to deliver it three times?

Fiona Hyslop: It is clear that that commitment still stands, but we have had very tight financial settlement budgets, not least because of the United Kingdom Government's impact on our overall finances. We are working with relevant authorities, including Education Scotland, to identify the best way to support that provision. The V&A specifically and other galleries and museums work extremely hard in providing access for primary school pupils to visit them and in helping to promote that.

Rachael Hamilton might not be aware that one of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee's concerns in looking at the matter was that access for those in secondary 1 and 2 rather than primary schools perhaps should be concentrated on. We are looking at what might be the best provision in very tight financial circumstances. We want to have that access, but I will be realistic because we face financial pressures.

Live Music (Inverness)

7. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to protect the live music scene in Inverness, in light of the anticipated closure of the Ironworks. (S5O-03521)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Ironworks Music Venue Ltd, which leases the Ironworks building venue, is exploring alternative locations in the interest of continuing its business. That business and the live music scene in Inverness and the Highlands and Islands are supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which provides general business support as well as specialist support to the sector. The majority of specialist support for the sector is delivered through the successful XpoNorth support programme, and that support will continue to be available to businesses that need it.

David Stewart: The cabinet secretary will be well aware that the Ironworks is a phenomenal venue for the Highlands and beyond, and there are strong cultural, economic and social reasons for ensuring its survival. More than 2,000 people have signed my online petition calling for the venue's survival. Will the cabinet secretary make

specific representations to Creative Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to provide help in terms of financial support, advice and guidance?

Fiona Hyslop: I have taken a personal interest in the issue and have agreed to meet the member. I know that many elected representatives are interested in the issue. David Stewart is absolutely right to say that the issue is not just about a business concern, because it is also about the cultural provision of live music in Inverness and the Highlands more generally.

I have had discussions with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and I know that my officials have had conversations with Highland Council. Obviously, there are issues to do with planning in relation to the current site, and they will be resolved by Highland Council itself. However, we are keen to support the opportunity to find different venues or ensure that live music provision can be established. I have therefore asked officials at Highlands and Islands Enterprise and in the Scottish Government to work with the owner of that individual business and to think more generally about how we can maintain live music provision in Inverness. I will liaise with Creative Scotland in that regard, too.

As the member will be well aware, there are issues to do with the site that we are talking about, but that does not mean that we cannot work together to come up with some kind of creative solution that ensures that concerts as popular as the ones that we have seen in the Ironworks in recent years can continue.

The Presiding Officer: Question 8 has not been lodged, so that concludes questions on culture, tourism and external affairs.

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I came here on time in order to ask a supplementary question to Maurice Corry's question. However, because he did not arrive in time, that question was skipped and I was unable to ask my question. I believe that, if members do not turn up on time, it is a discourtesy not only to the wider chamber but to members who have put some effort into preparing supplementary questions and have come along in time to ask them. Could you remind the chamber that members should turn up on time if they have questions to ask?

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: Is it on the same issue?

Rachael Hamilton: It is in a similar vein—
[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Could Rachael Hamilton's microphone be switched on?

Rachael Hamilton: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

My point of order is in a similar vein to Mr Gibson's. Claudia Beamish withdrew her question, and I had a supplementary question to it. However, I think that we can be fluid in such situations, and I decided to change my question to enable it to be asked after another question. What I am saying is that we can be flexible.

The Presiding Officer: I appreciate both points of order. I recognise the frustration on the part of some members. In this case, Mr Gibson had a particularly regional question, and there were no other opportunities to ask it.

It is unfortunate when such circumstances affect individual members. I can notify all members that Mr Corry sent a note of apology and an explanation of why he was late. Two other members also withdrew questions. Alison Harris gave plenty of notice, and Claudia Beamish also gave notice. It is unfortunate that that has had an impact on members who wanted to ask supplementary questions, but such is the nature of the busy lives that all MSPs lead.

I would add one other point. Although the next item of business is not due to start until 10 to 3, it is follow-on business. That means that, although question time has collapsed slightly early, all the members who should be here for the opening speeches of the next item of business should have been here at the end of that item of business. I noticed that some of them were not, but I see that, thanks to the points of order from Kenneth Gibson and Rachael Hamilton, they have now been able to arrive in time. I remind all members to note that follow-on business might start early.

Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (Post- legislative Scrutiny Reports)

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-18818, in the name of Margaret Mitchell, on post-legislative scrutiny reports on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. I invite all members who wish to participate in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons.

14:50

Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con): The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 came into force on 1 April 2013. It is one of the largest public sector reforms that has been undertaken since devolution.

Given the five-year anniversary of the creation of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the media attention that the reforms have attracted, the Justice Committee decided that it was an opportune time to embark on post-legislative scrutiny of the act.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the committee on its findings in relation to establishing whether the policy intentions of the 2012 act are being met and assessing how the legislation is working in practice.

In relation to the police, the 2012 act abolished Scotland's eight police forces and replaced them with Police Scotland, a single national force, and the Scottish Police Authority, an oversight body. The main driver for reform was the need to make efficiencies in the face of spending reductions. The financial memorandum that was issued with the bill estimated that the single police service would achieve efficiency savings of £1.1 billion by 2026. However, that estimate was based only on an outline business case—OBC—and not on a fully developed set of costings.

In addition, the estimate failed to take into account the day-to-day challenges facing the police service, or the demands on the service as the responders of first and last resort. Unison described the basis of the OBC as "over-simplistic" and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents described the estimated savings as "unrealistic". Consequently, costs were underestimated and the committee found that the financial memorandum was not suitably robust. Despite that, Police Scotland has achieved accumulative cost savings of £330 million, due, in part, to the successful reduction in duplication of support services. The committee considers that that is to be commended.

Another benefit of reform is Police Scotland's ability to provide more equal access to specialist support and national capacity across Scotland. That is demonstrated by the way that it has transformed how it investigates domestic abuse, rape and other sexual crimes. During a recent visit to Galashiels police station, the committee heard about how it had requested, and received, helicopter assistance to trace a missing person. However, realistically, although local areas are able to bid for specialist resources such as counter-terrorism support, there is no guarantee that such resources will be available. The committee therefore concluded that the system is not perfect, but that, by and large, major resources that are held at national level are available and able to be provided locally if they are needed.

Another area where savings have been made is in the reduction in police staff numbers. The committee heard that the number of civilian staff posts has been reduced by more than 2,000. An unintended consequence of that decision is that, instead of being on the front line—as the public might expect—police officers are backfilling many of those vacated staff posts. That concern was raised during the passage of the bill and, six years on, it has still to be addressed. Staff unions in the police service told the committee of real concerns about staffing numbers versus the demands that are placed on staff. The committee therefore welcomed Police Scotland's commitment to carry out an analysis of demand data in early 2019, and we look forward to seeing the results of that analysis.

The Scottish Police Authority has a dual role of oversight and maintenance of the police service. The Auditor General has identified issues with regard to poor use of public money, leadership, governance and decision-making processes at the SPA. In evidence, a lack of engagement and transparency was raised, as were concerns about the influence of Scottish ministers in the appointment of the board chair and members. The committee accepts that there should be wide-ranging engagement on the appointments process and considers that all options should be explored. The SPA chair outlined a number of measures that are being taken to address those concerns.

The committee recommended that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority continue to focus on procedures and practices to avoid any repeat of previous issues, and on demonstrating that they have achieved the required culture change in leadership and governance. The Justice Sub-Committee on Policing was therefore disappointed to hear prior to summer recess that police unions and staff associations had been excluded from any pre-budget decision-making processes. Although there have been some improvements in governance and

accountability, there is clearly still some way to go. Therefore, the committee looks forward to the outcome of the review by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Scottish Police Authority in fulfilling its core role.

It is essential that a robust complaints-handling system is in place—one with independent oversight and in which the public, police officers and staff have confidence. That is a key area for improvement, as it is evident that the handling of police complaints, including Police Scotland's discretion in deciding how complaints are categorised and investigated, is not working as the 2012 act intended.

The committee's announcement of its intention to carry out post-legislative scrutiny was followed by the Government's announcement that it was commissioning Dame Elish Angiolini's review. That has been very much welcomed by the committee. Her interim report, which was published before summer recess, provides an opportunity for the Government to make changes quickly to the handling of police complaints. In response, the cabinet secretary has said that he was aware that public confidence in the handling of police complaints had been "dented", and he has undertaken to consider what could be done in the short term. The committee asks the cabinet secretary to provide details today of the changes that he intends to introduce.

The 2012 act intended to strengthen the connection between the police service and local authorities. The act provides for more involvement from local authorities in policing decisions. The committee believes that, although there are good examples of local partnership working, the policy intention has not been met consistently around the 32 local authorities, and more consistency around the country is needed.

In concluding the committee's comments about police reform, I note that the situation is improving after a very challenging start—particularly for the SPA—but that more remains to be done.

I turn to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which is now a single service.

Audit Scotland found that the fire service had managed the 2013 merger of the eight fire and rescue services effectively and continued to deliver emergency and prevention services while progressing a complex and ambitious programme of reform.

Currently, the fire service is on target to meet, and potentially exceed, the efficiency savings that were estimated in the financial memorandum. That is partly due to the reduction in duplication of its support services. It has maintained front-line services, with all 356 stations remaining open.

Less encouraging was the evidence the committee heard that current staffing issues present a risk to the fire service achieving transformation. Audit Scotland described the current model and contractual framework for the retained duty service as not “fit for purpose”.

Four out of five of Scotland’s fire stations rely wholly or in part on retained or volunteer firefighters. Some of the issues with the current system include the low basic pay of less than £3,000; the fact that, depending on where they are based, retained firefighters can be expected to cover a large area, which they might be unwilling or unable to do; and the expansion of the role of firefighters, which presents a particular challenge for retained and volunteer firefighters. The changing role of firefighters includes the provision of emergency medical assistance, which increases their responsibilities and training time commitment.

The fire service states that it is a priority to resolve the retained firefighter system; in fact, it is a fundamental issue that needs to be resolved. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Scottish Government considers how to address the issue and, in an effort to see some progress, it asks the minister to provide an update.

The 2012 act aimed to strengthen the relationship between the fire service and local authorities, enabling greater input from councillors and others to shape their local fire service. Engagement and working collaboratively are key priorities for the fire service that have helped it to meet the policy aim of strengthening local relationships and scrutiny. Nonetheless, further improvements could be made, first, to ensure that local impacts are considered when decisions on changes to national policy are made and, secondly, to provide greater autonomy to local senior officers to enable them to respond to priorities in their local areas.

The single police and fire services both plan significant changes to how they work, which will need to be managed, with officers and staff fully involved in the changes. Increased demands and expected efficiency savings, together with budgets that are set by the Government and the lack of resources that affect fleet, estate and police numbers, remain challenging issues. It is essential that these vital services are funded to meet those demands, and the Justice Committee will continue to keep the reforms under review.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Justice Committee’s 9th Report 2019 (Session 5), *Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 - The Police Service of Scotland (SP Paper 501)*, and its 10th Report 2019 (Session 5) *Report on post-legislative scrutiny*

of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SP Paper 502).

15:01

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf): I thank the convener for her opening remarks and the Justice Committee’s members and clerks for their report on this important issue. I am looking forward to a very constructive, although in some respects challenging, debate.

The debate will consider the ground-breaking Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act, which was passed by Parliament in June 2012 following detailed scrutiny. We recognised that the act would underpin the most significant public service reform in Scotland since devolution in a bold move to protect crucial public services from the impact of unprecedented cuts to public spending. As importantly, the act provided a clear and modern purpose and principles for both the Police Service of Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

I appreciate the committee’s robust scrutiny of the implementation of the 2012 act and the evidence that it took from a diverse range of stakeholders. The committee’s report recognises significant achievements, including the creation of national capabilities in policing and fire and rescue, which have improved the service to communities—and, as the convener said, it also reminds us where the challenges still exist.

Bringing together legacy arrangements into single services with appropriate governance and oversight has been challenging. However, reports that have been published by an independent consortium, led by the Scottish institute for policing research, demonstrate plausible and credible evidence of progress towards achieving the three long-term aims of reform.

Furthermore, Audit Scotland’s 2015 review of fire reform concluded that the merger of the eight fire and rescue services was managed effectively, the performance of the SFRS was improving and the move to a national organisation had enhanced scrutiny and challenge.

The first six years of the two national services have included many achievements and milestones.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Audit Scotland did acknowledge those things, but it also pointed out that the police were severely hampered by a capital backlog. Can the cabinet secretary comment on what the Government will do to ensure that the police can make the capital investments that they need?

Humza Yousaf: Daniel Johnson makes a good and important point, on which he has pressed me

before in the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. In the previous spending round, the chief constable, the SPA and others made pleas for additional capital funding, and this Government stepped up to the plate with an increase of 52 per cent, which is a £12 million uplift.

We hear from Police Scotland, the SPA, the Scottish Police Federation and many others that there is a need for further investment in the fleet, the estate and information and communications technology. I am open minded on that and will listen to those organisations—my door is open to them. My discussions on the issue with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work will take place in private, but the point about capital and the share of capital versus resource for Police Scotland is well worth making.

I have talked about one of the challenges for Police Scotland, but I want to focus a little on some of its achievements, which are hugely important. The evidence that the committee took in that regard was stark. The chief constable was clear that he thinks that, without reform, Scotland would not be as safe. Policing services in Scotland have been protected and improved and duplication has been reduced. One of the most powerful testimonies on the achievements of Police Scotland and the creation of a national single service was from Rape Crisis Scotland, which noted:

“the move to a single police force has transformed the way rape and other sexual crimes are investigated in Scotland.”

The organisation highlighted greater consistency in training and the use of specialist officers.

We now have more officers than at any time under the previous Administration. In the absence of sufficient United Kingdom Government funding, the Scottish Government has committed an additional £17 million this year to ensure that police officer numbers are sufficient to manage the impact of a no-deal European Union exit, if that should occur. The current number of police officers is 17,259, which is an increase of 1,025.

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I presume that the cabinet secretary accepts that 400 of those officers are funded directly by the UK Government and, I think, 300 are directly funded by our hard-pressed local councils.

Humza Yousaf: The funding comes from the Scottish Government, although I accept what the member says in relation to some of the officers. On the UK Government’s track record on police numbers, the majority of the officers that it funds are in forces in England and Wales, and the picture in that regard is not quite rosy. The UK Government has reduced officer numbers by around 20,000. I note with great interest that the

current Prime Minister says that he will reverse that, but it is just that—a reversal of the cut of 20,000 officers. Although I applaud the fact that funding is coming from the UK Government and local authorities, it is fair to say that the Scottish Government has stepped up to the plate by protecting police revenue funding and increasing capital funding, which has allowed us to have the 1,025 additional officers compared to the position that we inherited in 2007.

That does not mean that we are taking our eye off the ball. It is important that we continue to be challenged and pressed on police funding and additional resources. We will of course continue to listen to such calls and I will continue to engage closely with the chair of the SPA and the chief constable.

In talking about achievements, it is important to mention that Police Scotland has safely and securely delivered a number of major international events. Many members will have enjoyed the 2014 Commonwealth games and will be looking forward to major international events in which the police will play a role, such as the 26th conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is coming to Glasgow.

We will continue to protect Police Scotland’s revenue funding and we will continue to value our police officers. The Scottish Police Federation described the recent 6.5 per cent pay deal for officers as the best in two decades. We will continue to invest in the capital side. We will listen to the concerns on that and ensure that we fund the police appropriately.

The committee convener mentioned Dame Elish Angiolini’s interim report, which was published in June and which was a helpful and weighty report with a number of recommendations. The Justice Committee has challenged me and the Government to act quickly and to consider what can be prioritised. There are a number of priority areas that the partners can look at. One is the issue of clarifying what happens with complaints against those who are no longer serving in the police, which the convener pressed me on at the committee. I assure her that I am actively considering what legislative vehicle we can find to bring forward measures in that regard in the current parliamentary session, and sooner rather than later. We are constrained, because the parliamentary timetable is very full, but there may potentially be a way to do that by piggybacking on another legislative vehicle.

I can give the convener more detail in writing, if she wants. I confirm that the partners involved—the Scottish Police Authority, Police Scotland, the Scottish Government and others—will meet regularly to discuss how we take forward Dame

Elish Angiolini's review. Yesterday, I spoke to the chief constable about that, and I was due to speak to Dame Elish Angiolini today, but unfortunately that meeting had to be moved.

I will focus my concluding remarks on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. At the beginning of my speech, I should have said that the Minister for Community Safety has given her apologies. She would have liked to have been here, but unfortunately she is not feeling well and has had to head home.

The SFRS is the largest fire and rescue service in the UK. Although the number of incidents of fire and fire raising has gone down over the years, incidents such as last year's Glasgow School of Art fire and the huge wildfire in Moray earlier this year remind us of the need to ensure that our fire service is funded and resourced appropriately, and of the sheer bravery of fire teams, who are willing to put themselves in danger to assist others. I thank our fire officers for all that they do for us.

The committee's report rightly highlights that the SFRS has successfully worked through a major transition over the past six years. The 2012 act has facilitated the creation of a number of initiatives, operations and ways of working, such as increasing access to specialist equipment and expertise, which would simply not have been possible without the unified service.

Protecting front-line services is our priority for 2019-20. The budget provides an additional £5.5 million to allow the SFRS to invest in service transformation. I will say more about that in my closing speech at the end of the debate. That money is in addition to the increase in the spending capacity of the service by £15.5 million in 2018-19.

It is worth putting on the record and reminding colleagues across the chamber that, although funding challenges still exist, the Scottish Government will continue to push the UK Government to pay back the VAT. Police Scotland and the SFRS paid out £175 million in VAT, and I will continue to press for that substantial amount of money to be paid back. I hope that colleagues will join us in that call.

I have always acknowledged that reform is an on-going process. Change on such a scale is almost unprecedented, and there were always going to be challenges. However, the general sentiment from the committee's report is that we have managed to overcome the teething problems and difficult challenges that were encountered in the first years of the reform. We are in a good place, but there could be challenges ahead, so there is certainly no complacency from the Government. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): As members might have surmised, there is some time in hand, so I will be gentle with time, to a degree.

15:12

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): I am pleased to have the opportunity to open for the Scottish Conservatives in this debate on the Justice Committee's reports on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. Credit must go to the clerks for the report's production, and to the witnesses, in what I found to be a fascinating and highly informative inquiry.

The history of both services is well rehearsed in the reports, with the underlying principle being that the 2012 act would replace the eight police forces and the eight fire brigades with a single police service and a single fire service.

Underlying the reforms were three fundamental principles: protection and improvement of local services by stopping duplication while not cutting front-line services; creation of more equal access to specialist support and national capacity; and strengthening of the connection between services and communities. It was right to ask whether those aims have been met. Perhaps more important is that we need then to ask whether lessons are being, and have been, learned.

First, I will deal with the police report, which examined a number of issues with the governance structure. The report says that both the current chief constable and the chair told the committee that

"in the early days of reform, the governance arrangements did not operate properly",

and that the SPA suffered from a lack of clarity of purpose. That led, in 2017, following sustained criticism around governance and transparency, to the third chair in four years stepping down.

Then, last year, the chief executive changed again, which was not without controversy. Amid that turmoil, Chief Constable Phil Gormley resigned, and wrote in his resignation statement that events of November 2017, involving the then Cabinet Secretary for Justice, had made it impossible for him to carry on. However, the report is clear that the present chief constable, the SPA chair and the cabinet secretary all feel that the 2012 act does not need to change in relation to governance. The committee broadly agreed, noting that matters had been

"unduly affected by personalities".

The committee noted the need for a culture change, which is why it is somewhat concerning that the current chief executive of the SPA, who has been in post for less than a year, is leaving.

Such things cannot be predicted, and of course we wish Mr Grover well, but the lack of stability is not helpful.

I am keen to pick up on the issue of police officers backfilling police staff roles, which was raised during stage 3 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill. The report notes that it remains a live issue. That is hardly surprising, because police and fire services have, reportedly, lost 800 staff since 2013. I note from Dr Kath Murray's submission that staff roles were reduced by 40 per cent between 2010 and 2018. That is bound to have had an impact: it is notable that more than half of police divisions in Scotland have fewer officers on the front line since the 2013 merger. That is having an impact right now.

Humza Yousaf: First, I say that of course we should keep an eye on staffing, but does Liam Kerr agree that one of the purposes of the 2012 act was to reduce duplication by merging the eight forces into one?

Secondly, does Liam Kerr agree with Rape Crisis Scotland that with the creation of a single service, we have national capability, so although they are not on the front line, by providing a service nationally, officers are providing a service to local agencies in investigation of rape, domestic abuse and so on?

Liam Kerr: I understand the cabinet secretary's points. Of course the 2012 act was about reducing duplication, and yes, there are national services. However, we need to remember that if we remove officers from the front line, that will have an impact because, at the end of the day, they are the first point of contact for many people.

My point is that that is having a serious impact on the officers and the staff themselves. I know that Oliver Mundell will talk about the local impact in detail, but I hear from sources in Aberdeen that the ability of police in Aberdeen to crack down on drug-dealing in the area might be being compromised by there being insufficient numbers to cover Offshore Europe's conference and the Queen's court at Balmoral, for example, as well as patrols. That has to be of concern—I am sure that the cabinet secretary agrees—especially with leave being taken over the summer months.

That brings me to page 63 of the report, which deals with, *inter alia*, the needs of staff and officers both during and following the reform process. Just last week, Police Scotland's chaplain wrote to the cabinet secretary to highlight that underresourcing has left officers "tired, frustrated and depressed", and requested

"better resourcing and more officers employed".

The Scottish Police Federation says that officers are "run ragged" and cannot even go for a toilet break,

"never mind to have a sandwich or a cup of tea or coffee."—[*Official Report, Justice Committee, 23 October 2018; c 26.*]

I think—I am certain that the cabinet secretary will agree—that that is no way to treat people who put their lives on the line daily to protect us.

Gordon Lindhurst will speak to the news that at least £70 million extra is apparently required in order to avoid a further workforce reduction of 350 people, and that the police capital budget has been cut by £56 million. That last figure is especially concerning, because the submission from Police Scotland to the Justice Subcommittee on Policing, which was mentioned by Daniel Johnson in an intervention, shows that only 43 per cent of the police's capital funding requirements are being met.

The SPF says that that is why that police are driving "barely legal" vehicles, and it is why the federation reports that Oban police station is "unfit for human habitation". Maurice Corry will deal with digital, data and information and communications technology themes but, in brief, we know that the Scottish National Party has failed to fund the crucial technology upgrades that police officers need.

The UK Government has pledged hundreds of millions of pounds to boost the number of front-line officers. That will lead to Barnett consequentials of about £80 million. Perhaps the cabinet secretary will confirm in his closing speech whether he is demanding that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work pass on those consequentials to the police in the forthcoming budget.

I have little time left. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has been somewhat less high profile in the inquiry. There are good reasons for that, in so far as the report on the fire service shows that the SFRS merger has not been beset by challenges such as the police have faced. Credit for that should go to the people who were involved in the merger. In fact, the report concludes that

"the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board has managed the merger effectively and demonstrated good governance and management of the Service."

However, again, in making sense of looking back, we must look forward. The Fire Brigades Union says that there are 917 fewer firefighters than there were in 2010. Questions need to be answered—perhaps the cabinet secretary could do so in his closing speech—about whether the reduction will continue and, if so, at what point it will become challenging for the service to continue

to discharge the duties that it performs so well at present.

Margaret Mitchell raised some interesting points that Audit Scotland flagged up, on which it would also be good to hear from the cabinet secretary.

I commend the committee's reports to the chamber—not only for what they tell us about the process of the previous years, but for what we can all learn for the future.

15:20

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): It gives me great pleasure to open the debate on behalf of Scottish Labour. I thank the members of the Justice Committee, the witnesses and the clerks for the amount of work that they have, clearly, put into the process. It is clear from reading both reports that a lot of detail has been examined and that serious consideration and thought have been given to the conclusions. I hope that the Government will take the reports seriously.

I should say at the outset that the purpose of the process has been to consider the impact of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. It is essential that Parliament undertakes such consideration. I was involved in the debates and discussions that took place on the moves to a single police force and a single fire service ahead of the 2011 election, and during consideration of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill. Scottish Labour supported those moves in the belief that they would lead to an improvement in services, and to more efficiently run organisations. It is important that we have carried out post-legislative scrutiny to review how successful implementation and operation of the 2012 act have been, and to see what lessons can be learned. It is clear that there are issues on which to pick up in relation to both processes.

Liam Kerr touched on governance: it is clear that there have been governance issues relating to the SPA. There have been changes in personnel and there has been controversy about the appointment process. Some of the processes have been tightened up under the new SPA chair, Susan Deacon. In addition, questions have been asked about the role of the Scottish ministers in relation to the position of Chief Constable Gormley. The lesson to be learned is that there is a lack of clarity on the procedures that underpin the governance arrangements of the SPA, and on the role of the Scottish ministers. The Government would be well advised to take that lesson on board.

A big issue that runs through both reports is the need for adequate budgets to support—

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): On budgets, does James Kelly agree that the UK Government should fully refund Police Scotland with the £125 million that it paid in VAT between 2013 and 2018?

James Kelly: That issue has already been addressed by Scottish Labour.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): Will Mr Kelly take an intervention?

James Kelly: No, I will not take another intervention.

I want to address how Police Scotland is funded. It is a matter of concern that, in his evidence, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr indicated that there was a deficit of £35.7 million, which could lead to a shortfall of 700 officers. The Government would do well to heed that warning. It feeds into the issues of front-line police numbers and backfilling. Over the years, Unison and others have made the point that officers have been taken from the front line to backfill support and other posts. Ultimately, the concern is that the service that the police provide in protecting the public might be crucially undermined.

One of the big issues that the committee looked at was information technology. I think that even the Government would acknowledge that in the police service IT has been a real challenge. In 2013, a new system—i6—was specced out at a cost of £46 million. Ultimately, the contract with Accenture had to be terminated because of failures of delivery against spec and a breakdown of the whole process.

The committee made the point that the financial memorandum underestimated the cost that would be required for information technology. In respect of where we are now, it is a matter of concern that the Auditor General for Scotland was not able to give proper assurance that there would be sufficient IT capability in place to meet Police Scotland's IT needs. In any modern public service, especially the police, IT is really important, so there are clearly issues that need to be addressed.

I am conscious that I am running out of time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I can give you an extra minute to make your comments. I am being very gentle with you, Mr Kelly.

James Kelly: I appreciate that, Presiding Officer.

Briefly, on the fire service, it is interesting to look at the position of the Fire Brigades Union, which was very supportive of and vocal about the move to a single service, back in 2012. It saw clear advantages to that. However, in a submission ahead of this debate, the FBU has pointed out that there are now 648 fewer firefighters. The concern

is that there is not the same front-line capability as there was previously. That raises the question of whether the move to a single service has achieved the objective of maintaining and improving the front-line service.

When there is a move to a single service from multiple organisations or sub-organisations around the country, there will always be a tension between centralisation and local control. That was one of the big debates in 2012, and there are still some issues for the fire service to address. Yesterday, during justice portfolio questions, Lewis Macdonald raised the issue of gold commanders, who are responsible if there is a catastrophic incident. The three commanders are currently based at Cambuslang, and if there was a catastrophic incident in the north-east one of the commanders would be moved to Dundee. However, that is far away from Aberdeen and the North Sea, where there might be an incident on an oil rig, so there are still issues that need to be flushed out.

The reports that the committee has brought to the chamber today are important. It is right that we reflect on and learn the lessons from the move to single services. There are number of issues around governance, budgets and local accountability that the Government needs to look into: I hope that it will take on board some of the crucial points that the committee has made.

15:28

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):

I concur with James Kelly's comments that post-legislative scrutiny is very important. It is unfortunate that, due to work demands, we do not get the opportunity to do more of it in Parliament. I pay tribute to the people who gave evidence to the committee and, as ever, to the committee clerks.

It is often said that the issues that beset the police, particularly around governance and operations, were not replicated in the fire service. Although there is a lot to be positive about in the fire service, it is certainly the view of the FBU that there is further work to be done. For instance, the fact that it has taken five years to standardise terms and conditions, including the arrangements for flood work, indicates that everything has not gone smoothly.

The FBU has recirculated a brief that it previously provided to the Justice Committee, which says:

"We are willing to negotiate on expanding the role of firefighters, as long as this is negotiated in good faith."

There is no point in rehearsing the previous problems, but it is key that people have trust in engaging with the process. Much has been made of the challenges of the proportion of the Scottish

Fire and Rescue Service that relies on the retained service, but we have also heard that it is largely due to social changes that it has been difficult to recruit people. It is important to have the trade unions on board.

In my own part of the world, the Highlands and Islands, the enhancements to the training facilities in the islands, which mean that individuals do not have to leave the islands to undertake specialist training, coupled with the recruitment of more middle managers have been a real boon and have helped the situation.

I will comment on the section of the 2012 act that relates to human rights. When the legislation was going through Parliament, I was pleased to secure agreement to an amendment to provide that the oath sworn by police officers would be to uphold human rights. That is important. The committee heard from Diego Quiroz, from the Scottish Human Rights Commission, who said that human rights should be explicit throughout the 2012 act and throughout Police Scotland's processes and structures, particularly

"policy and strategic decision making; operational planning and deployment; training and guidance; and investigation, monitoring and scrutiny".—[*Official Report, Justice Committee*, 6 November 2018; c 36.]

There were well-documented challenges in that respect, not least with stop and search and the nationwide approach that was taken to that, although it was something that could have been more localised. The inquiry that looked into stop and search in Scotland has brought about a situation that may not be entirely to my liking but that has certainly stabilised matters. I commend John Scott for leading that inquiry. Key to its report was the comment by John Scott that the police are the front-line defenders of citizens' human rights. They should guard that role jealously.

That role has been put under threat by the way in which Police Scotland has approached issues such as armed policing and, more recently, cyberkiosks, which are seen as highly intrusive and were introduced in the face of little evidence. Of course, the Justice Committee and all its members wish to ensure that the Scottish police service has all the resources to tackle organised crime and keep pace with the technology that organised crime has access to. However, it must be proportionate. The potential for collateral damage associated with that proposal is something that we should be very aware of and continue to monitor.

That may take us on to issues such as facial recognition. When Police Scotland was asked simple questions about that, it was disappointing that it was unable to answer them. I hope that we will get an answer from the cabinet secretary on that issue today. The same applies to the counter-

corruption unit and the little-known parts of policing where intelligence is gathered covertly. It is absolutely essential that the integrity of the police service is not brought into question, particularly when it is such a large organisation.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission also said that section 2(3) of the 2012 act states that the SPA must

“try to carry out its functions in a way which is proportionate”

but that it would like the words “try to” to be removed from the provision, meaning that the authority must carry out its functions in a proportionate way. I understand that the cabinet secretary told the committee that he would meet the Scottish Human Rights Commission to consider that recommendation. I know that he will engage on that subject with an open mind.

I want to talk about the C-word—centralisation—that often peppers our discussions. I will be parochial for a minute. One of the challenges when looking at legislation is to consider how the legislation has impacted on the operations of the day, and, in order to do that, a comparator is needed. Reflecting back, the single officer station that I used to occupy no longer exists, the section station where the sergeant was no longer exists and two other stations in that area no longer exist—that function was all centralised. It was centralised not by Police Scotland but by Northern Constabulary, and that situation is replicated across the country.

I understand why people talk about officer numbers and front-line numbers—as Mr Kerr did—but it is sometimes difficult to get a baseline to measure that, because it is not a comparison of like with like.

We do know that police demands are shaped by the legislation—for instance, the demands that are placed on the police due to domestic violence and the regard that Police Scotland, quite correctly, has in dealing with domestic violence. As the cabinet secretary said when he referred to Rape Crisis Scotland, there has been a transformation in that regard. I have said that in the past, and I will continue to say it.

Domestic violence work is resource intensive. The committee visited Forfar police station, where we met officers who are occupying space that, at one time, might have been occupied by uniformed officers—I accept that—but who were providing a function over a wider area and dealing with the pursuit of serial domestic abusers. That work is very labour intensive and very intelligence intensive, and it involves collaboration with the prosecution services. That might mean that there are officers off the street, but a very important function is being undertaken.

I think that people understand the centralisation—

Liam Kerr: Will the member take an intervention?

John Finnie: Yes, indeed.

Liam Kerr: I do not necessarily dispute John Finnie’s point, but I presume that he will accept that the increased pressure and responsibility that is placed on those officers who remain on the front line is going to cause them significant challenges, which we have to be aware of.

John Finnie: Indeed, and I was just coming to that point. We have heard—most recently on the committee’s visit to Galashiels—that, if officers are called to a domestic abuse incident in the morning, it takes up their entire shift. On a previous visit, we heard that, if two uniformed officers are deployed on such a case, they will be answering to five officers in an office who will be doing all the behind-the-scenes work. It is an inevitable consequence of policing that the resource can come from only one place—the front line—so I absolutely accept the pressures that are on front-line officers. However, perhaps that has to be balanced against some of the benefits that come from having those specialist and more widely accepted services.

I do not know how much longer I have, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I do not know how much more members in the chamber want. I am not putting it to the vote. [*Laughter.*] You can have another minute, if you wish.

John Finnie: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I do not hear anybody sighing—they are being very kind to you, Mr Finnie. Please, go ahead.

John Finnie: Aye, it is a good day.

There will always be challenges, such as the challenges that exist around the capital budget in relation to the estate. By ensuring that, in consolidating into two central services, we do not replicate things eight times or, in many instances, 10 times, we will have liberated some buildings that have fallen into disrepair. I would like there to be no reputational damage to Police Scotland and to ensure that we dispose of those buildings quickly. I recently went through a village in the Highlands in which the police station is empty and has been for some time. Given the housing lists, it would be good to ensure that such buildings are disposed of.

Likewise, we want roadworthy vehicles, but let us not base their replacement on an arbitrary figure on a milometer. We should replace them when we need to replace them rather than give

the fleet companies more money than they already have.

I will leave it there.

Humza Yousaf *rose*—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Finnie has left it there, cabinet secretary.

As members can tell, I have about 15 minutes in hand, so I can be quite easy going, which makes a change.

15:38

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I welcome James Kelly to his new position and look forward to working with him on the Justice Committee and on the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. I pay tribute to Daniel Johnson by thanking him for his contribution to both committees, and I wish him well in his new post on the Education and Skills Committee.

I also thank colleagues, clerks, the Scottish Parliament information centre and all those who gave both written and oral evidence during the course of what was a lengthy inquiry. John Finnie is absolutely right: all too rarely do we have the opportunity to undertake post-legislative scrutiny. The fact that we have done it on an act of such importance and on such a contentious piece of legislation is entirely appropriate.

Members in the chamber will probably not need to be reminded that my party consistently opposed the centralisation that lies at the heart of the 2012 act. However, the committee was right to draw a distinction between the process in relation to the police force and the process in relation to the fire and rescue service. The conclusions that were reached in that regard are entirely fair. Centralisation is not without its challenges, but a number of benefits came through the process.

John Finnie was right to identify some of the additional investment in facilities in Orkney and other parts of the Highlands and Islands. It has been a long time coming, but it is very welcome for all that.

However, the Scottish Liberal Democrats repeatedly voiced our concerns about the loss of accountability and transparency in policing. We warned of the risks of concentrating power in the hands of a few individuals and moving towards a one-size-fits-all approach to policing. At every stage, the Government rejected those concerns and ignored the warnings. As a result, it was slow to act on the concerns about the loss of local accountability, which the then Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, dismissed. Yet, in an interview at the weekend, Chief Constable Iain Livingstone acknowledged the high-handed way in

which decisions were taken immediately after centralisation.

There can be no question but that, under Sir Stephen House, the so-called Strathclydisation of policing removed discretion from local officers across the country and undermined the ethos of community policing. Again, contrary to Kenny MacAskill's adamant stance, during our inquiry, evidence from the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents bore out the scale and complexity of centralisation, which the Government had underestimated.

Humza Yousaf: I appreciate that Liam McArthur has to make that point, but he is fighting battles of the past. We agree with the current chief constable's assessment that, if it were not for the reform of the service, we would not be as safe as we currently are.

Liam McArthur: I disagree with that. The Government has attempted to look at crime figures generally and at the trends of crime figures in Scotland and draw a direct causal link between police reform and the achievement of those outcomes. We see those trends across the UK, and they began before police centralisation.

The committee was right to acknowledge that the reform of specialised policing was necessary. That concentration of specialised resources did not require the creation of a single police force. During the course of our deliberations, the Justice Committee visited Norway. Norway's model of policing has not created a single force but has delivered the specialisms that are necessary in modern policing.

Of course, it did not help that, in the early stages, the relationship between Police Scotland and the SPA was dysfunctional. As well as the unedifying spectacle of a public turf war that fatally compromised the effective oversight of what Police Scotland was doing, Dr Ali Malik, in evidence to the committee, said that

"the SPA was mostly reactive, and the public accountability of the police was led by the Scottish Parliament, and the Scottish press."

It did not help that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice at the time and the Government in which he served were so tin-eared. Public alarm at armed officers being deployed in routine duties was brushed aside as an operational matter. The justice secretary similarly dismissed as scaremongering concerns over industrial levels of stop and search, including of children under the age of eight, concerns over the centralisation of call handling and a lack of support for the staff in those centres. In each instance, the justice secretary was wrong and subsequently was forced to take action. However, in the case of the call handling, that was not before the tragic events that

saw Lamara Bell and John Yuill left for dead at the side of the M9.

We are now told that those problems are in the past, that things are different, that the personalities have changed and that a new, more considered approach has been ushered in. I accept that Humza Yousaf, Iain Livingstone and Susan Deacon have a different outlook from that of their predecessors. However, it is not unreasonable to view the assurances that are offered now in the context of those that were offered in the past. The recent example of the botched merger of the British Transport Police into Police Scotland is a case in point. There was no detailed business case for it; questions and concerns that BTP officers and staff raised were never taken properly into account; and requests at least to delay, if not to abandon, the plans fell on deaf ears.

John Finnie: Given Liam McArthur's view on civil liberties, does he not share my concern that the transport police service of 220 officers, who can effect arrests, enter people's premises and crave warrants, has no public accountability?

Liam McArthur: During the evidence that we took, that concern was not raised by any of the stakeholders or the public at large. The service was working effectively. For political reasons, as the independent inspector made apparent, it was merged into Police Scotland without a detailed business case. Again, that concern was met with allegations of scaremongering. Meanwhile, the recent issues surrounding the proposed roll-out of so-called cyberkiosks exposed the need for Parliament to continue to play a role in robustly scrutinising the decisions that Police Scotland makes and the oversight that SPA performs.

Susan Deacon, for whom I have the utmost respect, is due considerable credit for many of the reforms that she has introduced since she took over as the chair of the SPA. However, it was disappointing to hear her call into question, at a recent SPA board meeting, the role of the Parliament and MSPs. On cyberkiosks, she is reported to have said, in May:

"We have now received more correspondence asking even more questions of detail about this particular programme. I really don't think that that is desirable or sustainable."

She added that every hour that officers and SPA board members spend explaining their decisions to MSPs is an hour when officers and board members are not doing their main jobs.

I make no apology for the way in which this Parliament and the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, in particular, have discharged their responsibilities. The failure to address from the outset fundamental issues around human rights, privacy and transparency in relation to the roll-out

of cyberkiosks is recognised by Police Scotland, and that change of heart had nothing to do with the SPA, which happily waved the project through unchallenged, without raising concerns. I think that the public expect the Parliament to continue to perform its role and not to allow Police Scotland and the SPA to mark their own homework.

The other key area in which promises and assurances that were made in the early stages still cast a long shadow is the budget. As Audit Scotland has said, and as witnesses from Police Scotland to Unison testified, the promised savings and efficiencies from centralisation have failed to materialise. As Unison told us, the claims were based on "over-simplistic reasoning".

Some 1,700 civilian staff have lost their jobs, and buildings and equipment have deteriorated to a point at which they present a danger to officers and staff. The sub-committee heard at its lunchtime meeting today that there is every likelihood that the situation will get worse. The IT system is not fit for purpose and leaves police struggling to perform their duties and keep pace with the increasing sophistication of cyber-enabled crime. All those concerns have been graphically laid bare by the SPF and others over recent months and have been a focus of the sub-committee's deliberations, including today.

Rona Mackay: Will the member take an intervention?

Liam McArthur: Yes, I will.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Generous though I am, there are limits, and you should be winding up. Ms Mackay, you will get a little extra time in your speech.

Liam McArthur: I am terribly sorry, Presiding Officer.

I have great respect for the current justice secretary, chief constable and SPA chair, who have undoubtedly made progress in addressing some of the more shambolic consequences of the centralisation of policing. Staff, too, deserve credit for keeping things going and, as best they can, mitigating the damaging impact of the centralising reforms.

However, given the police's extraordinary powers as a single national force, the exercise of those powers should be subject to unparalleled scrutiny. Regrettably, Scottish Liberal Democrats still believe that the centralisation, which has concentrated power in the hands of a limited number of individuals, is unhealthy and unnecessary in meeting the needs of modern policing.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: In the open debate, I can be a little generous, although the extra time is ebbing away.

15:47

Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP): It is great to hear that you can be generous, Presiding Officer. We usually have to get our speeches right on the minute when you are in the chair.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, no—I have some time in hand. I am keeping you informed—

Fulton MacGregor: No, no, I know—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr MacGregor, bear with me and sit down a minute. I would not want to disappoint you. The clerk tells me that we have nine and a half minutes in hand. Exciting days.

Fulton MacGregor: Thank you again, Presiding Officer—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, but all that time is not for you. You are not getting nine and a half minutes. That is information for the team here.

Fulton MacGregor: I understood that.

It is right that the Justice Committee was able to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, as all members said. That work is another example of this Parliament getting on with the day job of scrutiny, while we witness the debacle and assault on democracy that is going on in London.

The bringing together of the eight legacy forces into one was a significant change. In our various evidence sessions, it was pleasing to hear witnesses generally talking about positive changes. For example, the Scottish Police Authority chair, Susan Deacon, who made herself available to MSPs for questioning, said:

“the reforms were absolutely the right direction of travel to choose. I think that the country is better for it.”—[*Official Report, Justice Committee*, 30 October 2018; c 4.]

The public recognise that the changes have been positive. The statistics show that the majority of adults believe that the police are doing a good or excellent job in their area. That cannot be hard for MSPs to understand. It is certainly not hard for me to understand.

The police in my area are very responsive to local issues, and are always on hand to attend meetings or provide feedback. Just a couple of weeks ago, we were having some issues in Coatbridge town centre, so I pulled together a stakeholder meeting. Two police officers came, attended the whole meeting, reassured residents and others, and were part of the plan for moving forward that we put together. That is just one small example. I am sure that MSPs have examples from across their constituencies.

Since the Scottish Government first came to power, overall reported crime has dropped by 42 per cent, and people feel safer. I hear Liam McArthur’s point about linking the statistics to the change in the police service, but, by the same token, I would say that there is no evidence that those statistics are not linked the change.

Daniel Johnson: Indeed, those things are contemporaneous, but the statistics are the same throughout the western world. Is their occurrence, wherever it may be in Europe, due to the creation of Police Scotland?

Fulton MacGregor: I do not think that the statistics are the same. Many of the statistics compare Scotland with England and Wales. For example, Scottish people have personally experienced less crime than those living in England and Wales, and non-sexual violent crime here is at the lowest level in almost 50 years.

I do not dispute with Daniel Johnson and Liam McArthur that perhaps the statistics are due to other factors. I am saying that they would need to provide evidence of that, and that we might find that it is a combination of both—of factors going on elsewhere and changes to the police service.

That is not to say that recommendations were not made for improvement and, as we have heard already, further information around budgets has come to the fore since our report on the police service was published. It is good to hear the cabinet secretary indicate that he will take on board our report’s recommendations.

I will concentrate on that report first. There was strong evidence from a number of witnesses that the police service has benefited greatly from the formation of Police Scotland. As a result of the forces being brought together, the service has been able to deploy specialist officers all across Scotland. The report noted that this was particularly beneficial in some cases, such as for victims of domestic and/or sexual abuse, to which a consistent approach is taken across the country. I cannot stress how powerful the evidence on that was when we heard from witnesses.

As well as allowing for the deployment of specialist officers, the merger has enabled Police Scotland to achieve a higher level of consistency in training. Officers are now trained in various areas. I remember that when people were speaking about BTP integration, the particularly strong point was made that officers would be trained across a number of police roles and functions.

It is important that we stand up in this chamber and thank the police. Just today, at the justice sub-committee, during pre-budget scrutiny, we had a discussion around the sectarian issues relating to marches that have taken place over recent weeks.

It is important to remember that our police force has to respond to such incidents without prior warning. They deploy officers on the ground to keep us all safe, in response to those and other types of incidents. We must thank police officers, but I also urge the Government to take such situations into account when budgeting—a matter that is fresh from discussion at the sub-committee.

I will talk a wee bit about the report on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Generally speaking, the establishment of the Fire and Rescue Service has also been widely regarded as a success. As the committee convener said, Audit Scotland noted in its 2015 report that the consolidation of the eight services was “managed effectively”, and that the movement to a single national body had “enhanced the scrutiny” of the service, thus increasing its performance and effectiveness.

However, it is important that we learn lessons where we can and reflect on criticisms. Members will be aware—some have already referred to it—that the Fire Brigades Union has been vocal about its views of the Justice Committee report. The FBU has challenged the assertion that the 2012 act has been unambiguously good for Scotland. The FBU noted that although there has been a recent upturn, the overall number of firefighters has decreased since the 2012 act was passed. Perhaps worryingly, the FBU recognised that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service does not compare favourably to services in other UK nations when it comes to gender diversity. As noted in its report, cuts in recruitment and an apparent lack of funding have led to some discontent amongst firefighters. We must take that on board.

I have some direct experience of that. My office is only a few hundred yards from Coatbridge fire station, which is locally referred to as Coatdyke fire station. Over the years since my election, several officers there, who are also constituents, have spoken to me about concerns relating to changes in staffing, shift patterns and the number of appliances. They have raised concerns of unease among the staff team and real worries that several fires on any one night across a huge geographical region could stretch the service too far. I think that other members have raised that point, because I see that the Presiding Officer is signalling to me.

To be fair, chief officers have always given me robust reassurance on those concerns but, as MSPs, our duty is to recognise when there is a disparity between what management says and what those on the ground say. That goes for services anywhere. I ask the Government to consider that and possibly even organise another

visit to Coatdyke fire station. The previous minister did that, and I know that that went down very well.

Our police and fire services do a fantastic job—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. You misunderstood. There is not nine and half minutes just for you.

Fulton MacGregor: I am summing up.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. Just conclude. It is a wonderful speech.

Fulton MacGregor: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please sit down.

15:56

Gordon Lindhurst (Lothian) (Con): We all owe a huge debt to our emergency services and all those, including the police, who stand ready at all hours and in all circumstances to come to the aid of others who need it. They are a huge credit to our country. As others have said, we should never lose sight of that when we are discussing the police or emergency services in our country.

In this debate, some seven years after the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 came into force, we should, of course, look carefully at whether the promises that were made when the legislation was passed have been fulfilled. There are areas of concern, some of which have arisen as a direct result of a lack of funding, forethought and long-term strategy.

In March, the Scottish Police Authority reported that the police force will face a mammoth £56 million funding gap in the next financial year. That has been compounded by Police Scotland's warning earlier this week that it will require £70 million in further funding in the next financial year simply to maintain its current level of service. I am sure that the cabinet secretary agrees that continuing gaps in funding will undermine the stated intention that the measures that were taken in 2012 were to make the emergency services more financially viable.

Humza Yousaf: I do not disagree with Gordon Lindhurst's points on financial stability, but I am sure that he will accept two things. First, there is no doubt that some of that instability is because of recent political events. Police Scotland has had to increase the number of police officers to deal with a potential no-deal Brexit. Secondly, where there is a deficit, the Scottish Government will, of course, fund that deficit. Although there might be a deficit, we will always try to provide Police Scotland—as we have over the years—with certainty that that deficit will in no way mean that it

will have to make drastic cuts to officer numbers or, indeed, any other part of the service.

Gordon Lindhurst: Of course I accept that there are changing circumstances, which any Government or police force has to respond to, but that does not fully answer the point. For example, with the Prime Minister promising funding for 20,000 more police officers, there will be direct Barnett consequential for Scotland. Is the cabinet secretary willing to commit that funding directly to our police force in Scotland to address the funding gap here? He may wish to come back to that question.

Issues of funding and numbers have, of course, been mirrored between the police and fire services—that has already been referred to. Last week, the Fire Brigades Union told us that there are now more than 900 fewer firefighters than there were a decade ago, and those who remain have experienced a real-terms pay cut. The police service shows a similarly gloomy picture, with seven of the 13 divisions across Scotland reporting a drop in front-line divisional officers since Police Scotland was created in 2013.

The systems that our services require to work with continue to be inadequate. Chief Constable Iain Livingstone, among others, has described the current IT systems as akin to “an analogue world”. The Scottish Government’s failed i6 programme lost the unified force almost £200 million in promised savings. As a result, the Police Federation itself told the committee in its written submission that preventative work is considered “a luxury” that it can scarcely afford. Just think about how we could improve our police presence in our communities across Scotland, including Edinburgh and Lothian, if we had proper operating systems in place to back up our police officers.

John Finnie: I agree with the member’s last point. Will he join me in welcoming the roll-out of the digital devices that will mean that officers will be able to do work when they are out rather than having to queue up at an outdated machine back at their office?

Gordon Lindhurst: I agree with the member and I would join with him in welcoming any improvements in the equipment and services that the police have at their disposal. They no longer have to run to the nearest blue police box to place a call and, clearly, technology and technological improvements are important in ensuring that police officers can do their job well and in terms of the efficiency of our police force. As a generality, I agree with the principle and the approach that he is talking about.

However, that does not deal with some of the issues that I have been raising. The problem is the perception in our communities. Awareness of

police presence in communities has fallen from 56 per cent when Police Scotland was created to just 40 per cent in 2017-18. Ultimately, too, total crime in Scotland is still on the rise, and two thirds of crime continues to go unreported—a figure that has not changed in more than a decade.

In the words of Unison police staff Scotland branch, the benefits of reform have been “grossly embellished”. It is difficult to see how the change has helped to deliver more effective emergency services across Scotland.

The cabinet secretary should accept that centralisation has made our communities feel that there is less of a police presence in the streets. Even the new chief constable accepted that Police Scotland was too centralised at the start and that it did not listen to communities, and he has said that it is now trying to move away from the one-size-fits-all approach, which is welcome.

I do not know how much time I am allowed to use of the nine and a half minutes that you mentioned, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You can speak for up to seven minutes.

Gordon Lindhurst: Given the time constraints, I will not go into detail on a number of issues, such as the complaints investigation and handling procedures, which have been described as inadequate and confusing. No less than nine different bodies and a variety of internal and external processes can be involved in the handling of any one complaint, resulting in what the report described as a “disproportionate impact” on the effectiveness and morale of the service.

Other problems with the procedures have been identified, such as ambiguous definitions of what characterises simple misconduct or gross misconduct, and what Kate Frame, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner, identified as the “inappropriate recording” of complaints.

A number of other issues have been identified as needing to be addressed, and I am sure that the cabinet secretary will want to address them and will indicate in his closing remarks how he will try to do so.

I will conclude there.

16:03

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): I add my thanks, on the record, to the Justice Committee clerks for their help and support in pulling together the committee’s reports and, of course, I thank the witnesses who gave evidence and sent submissions.

In 2012, Barack Obama was re-elected as the President of the USA, London held the Olympics and I was still in my 20s—2012 was not yesterday. Seven years ago, reforming the previous eight legacy police forces into a single national force was a transformation in how we deliver public services. However, as we have heard today, it did not come without its challenges. The context of reform, as acknowledged by the report, was the predicted fall in real terms of the Scottish Government's budget. Indeed, as the report notes,

“the Government consistently stated that maintaining eight police forces was unsustainable and that without structural reform smaller forces, in particular, would be vulnerable to cuts in front-line services”.

Additionally, changes to the perceived traditional role of policing and accountability concerns, as highlighted by HMICS, compounded the case for reform.

There were undoubtedly challenges during the first few years, particularly, as Liam Kerr mentioned, between the role of the Scottish Police Authority and that of Police Scotland. However, in evidence from the SPA's chair, Susan Deacon, the committee heard that a number of measures has been implemented since her appointment. As the convener mentioned, those include improvements to governance and scrutiny arrangements, an increase in SPA staff numbers and work to strengthen the board structure in the organisation. The committee therefore recommended that HMICS instruct an evaluation of those changes to ensure that the challenges have been appropriately addressed.

The policy memorandum to the original bill referenced an extra 1,000 police officers to meet the Scottish Government's commitment to maintain police officer numbers at 17,234.65. The most recent publication of police numbers, from June of this year, confirms that there are currently 17,259.306 police officers nationally.

In its submission to the committee, Police Scotland made clear that, prior to the 2012 act, access to specialist resources across the legacy forces was inconsistent. Police Scotland also stated that there is now more consistent access across the country, which has been particularly compelling in relation to crimes of a sexual nature. The latest national statistics show that 60 per cent of sexual crime and 76.1 per cent of violent crime was cleared up in 2017-18. As highlighted by the cabinet secretary, Rape Crisis Scotland commented:

“In our experience, the move to a single police force has transformed the way rape and other sexual crimes are investigated in Scotland. It has allowed far greater consistency of approach, including to the training of police officers and to the use of specialist officers.”

Its chief executive, Sandy Brindley, added that that could be improved further if

“issues with attitudes, training and culture”

within policing were addressed. On that point, it would be helpful if, in summing up, the cabinet secretary could respond to Ms Brindley's point, as I know that tackling violence is a priority for the Government.

The act also aimed to avoid duplication of police work while protecting front-line police officer numbers. Police Scotland noted in its evidence to the committee:

“The frontline has been protected as result of the 2012 Act, with most police officers in local policing, based within our communities and supported by national, specialist resources ... Everyone in Scotland now has access to an improved level of service and protection, balanced between equal access to specialist national resources and local policing that meets the needs of our geographically diverse communities, whether they be remote, rural, urban or island.”

That evidence was supported anecdotally by the committee's visits, most recently to Galashiels in the Scottish Borders, which the convener mentioned, and, last year, to Angus, which John Finnie mentioned. On those visits, officers confirmed directly to members of the committee that they had far greater access to nationally available specialist resources such as the use of police helicopters in missing persons cases.

The committee also heard strong examples of partnership working such as the missing persons framework, the mental health strategy and the suicide prevention strategy, all of which were cited as examples of greater consistency in working practices. In June 2018, the previous cabinet secretary announced an independent review of the police complaints process, and the interim report was published in June of this year. One of its key recommendations was that complaints that involve senior officers should be dealt with more quickly, which I am sure was welcomed by fellow committee members.

As the committee reported, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority both have a non-statutory deadline of 56 days to investigate and conclude complaints, which is often not met. The committee therefore recommended the introduction of a set time for Police Scotland and the SPA to acknowledge receipt of complaints and inform officers who are the subject of complaints, and for witnesses to be interviewed following receipt of a complaint. It was welcome to note the interim report's recommendation that

“officers should be made aware that they are the subject of a complaint against them at the earliest practicable point.”

The creation of Police Scotland did not come without its challenges—there were eight legacy

forces with eight very different ways of doing things. That notwithstanding, greater consistency has been delivered nationally, particularly when dealing with crimes of a sexual nature. In addition, specialist resources are now being shared at a local level and police officer numbers have been protected. As we witness the impact of an austerity agenda that is squeezing our services across the public sector, there will continue to be challenges for the organisation.

However, to reflect on our current politics in closing, I note that, in recent days, we have witnessed the Conservative Government reverse its policy on convergence uplift payments for Scottish farmers and—yesterday—climb down on post-study visas. A cynic might say that an election is in the offing. I have to say that Liam Kerr, who is not in the chamber, had a bit of a cheek to mention the SNP's record on police funding. There was not a peep from the Tory benches today about the £125 million that has already been paid to the UK Treasury. To James Kelly, I say that Labour's policy on this issue is about as clear as its policy on Brexit.

Our officers in Scotland have helped to contribute to a hefty Boris bonus. It is depressingly predictable that, yet again, not a single Conservative member can stand and be counted and argue for that money to be rightly returned to the communities that our officers help to keep safe every day. Policing in Scotland has successfully reformed—perhaps it is time that the Scottish Tories followed suit.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): I say to the three gentlemen having a triangular conversation that that is not polite when another member is speaking.

16:10

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): I apologise for that, Presiding Officer.

In addition to the usual thanks that we give to our fellow committee members and the clerks, I extend particular thanks to colleagues on the Justice Committee. I have hugely enjoyed my time on the committee.

Looking at justice and, in particular, criminal justice matters, I am left with the conclusion that criminal justice issues span the vast swathe of public services. The issues that are dealt with in criminal justice are where those services fail, and it is those failures that result in people coming into contact with the criminal justice system, which, in one sense, makes them the most fundamental public policy issues that we examine.

My time on the committee has also instilled in me a huge admiration for police officers, who do

an outstanding job, putting themselves in harm's way to keep us safe. Whatever police reform issues we bring up in debate people should be under no illusion: it is all said with admiration for the work that police officers do.

We need to look at the demands that we place on our police. The issue with SNP police policy is that it has been focused on two crude measures: the creation of a single police force and 1,000 extra police officers. However, every Administration since 1970 can claim to have increased police officer numbers by at least 1,000. That has been true since Heath onwards.

That leaves us with a conundrum. If we are to believe that we have the lowest level of crime in 30 years and also the highest number of police officers, why are police officers overstretched? That overstretch is certainly real. When the committee visited a police station in Galashiels, we were struck by how tidy and neat the staff mess-room was. The reason why it was so neat is that police officers do not often get the opportunity to use it.

Why do we have such high numbers of police officers but such overstretch? In part, that is about the changing nature of crime, such as the increase in online crime. We also deal with matters differently now. We have new sensitivities and thoroughness of approaches where, in the past, we would have used old-fashioned, blunt methods.

The fixation on those two measures—creating a single force with 1,000 extra police officers—has meant that other numbers have been ignored. The cabinet secretary pointed to the increase in capital funding in the most recent budget, but the brutal reality is that we have the fifth worst capital funding per employee of any police force in the United Kingdom. Our capital funding would have to be almost doubled to reach the average level for UK police forces, and it would need to be increased fivefold to reach the level of funding per employee of the Metropolitan Police.

The low level of capital funding has resulted in a lack of investment in the systems and IT that the police need to do their job in new and challenging circumstances and in a single police force. That is the cruel irony: the creation of the single police force was meant to be about freeing up police officers by creating a single set of core functions that would allow them to do their job rather than getting caught up in centralised bureaucracy, but it has resulted in police officers being used to backfill civilian roles, the centralisation of officers in central units and a reduction in the number of response officers. Although I freely admit that it is important to have specialised officers, officers at the point of need on the ground are now forced to go running from call to call—pulled from pillar to post—rather than being able to deal with people in

the everyday situations that occur in their communities, which is where they need to be.

Brexit is now creating a crunch point for our police. According to Will Kerr, Police Scotland needs to reduce the number of officers by 700 due to a deficit of £35.7 million. That should be a wake-up call to us all—not just the figures but the fact that police officers feel the need to speak up publicly, which they do with reticence.

The police force needed investment to make a success of the reform. Five years on, that has still not occurred; we still have eight crime reporting systems and only in recent months have police officers got a single sign-on so that they do not need multiple logins to access emails, depending on where they are in the country—that is not acceptable for any 21st century organisation.

The issues go beyond investment. The structure and the governance of the single force were contentious through the passage of the bill, and history has borne out many of the concerns. One was about local accountability, which Liam McArthur, who is no longer in the chamber, was right to point out many of the issues with when we saw a stratification of our police. The irony for people in this part of the country was that it led to the break-up of the house-breaking team, only for it to have to be reinstated when that policy failed.

Other members have spoken about the complaints procedure, which I will mention briefly. It is too complicated and undermines the confidence that people have in the police, not least because, for many people, the first port of call is to report a complaint directly to the very body that they had an issue with in the first place. I hope that Dame Elish Angiolini's review will address that matter.

The key central issue with governance was demonstrated by the departure of Phil Gormley, the previous chief constable. Although the people around the estate may have changed, the central issues have not been dealt with. There are still issues with regard to the Government's powers of appointment and direction. The decision that he should stay on suspension was perhaps the right one, but the way in which the decision was made was wholly inadequate. If the SPA chair had no other option, I find it difficult to understand how that was anything other than a direction. How that should have been dealt with—putting the matter before Parliament—simply did not happen. Until the relationship between Government and the police is resolved, we will continue to have issues around governance. It could be dealt with through greater transparency and explicit protocols; that happens with other forces, using approaches that I have raised in Parliament.

Ultimately, although we all support the police force, this is a model of how not to undertake transformation. It could have been done differently, and investment is still needed to make the success of the single force that we all want to see.

16:17

Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP): I thank fellow members of the committee for their contributions during our deliberations in the lead-up and their input into the reports' final content. I wish Daniel Johnson well in his new committee; he has been a thoughtful contributor to the Justice Committee and has just delivered yet another thoughtful speech—he will be missed. I also thank the clerks and support staff for all their work on the reports' collation and publication.

As has been said, the creation of Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was, and is, the biggest reform of the police and fire services since the Parliament's inception—in fact, they are probably the biggest reform of public services over the 20 years of this Parliament. It has been challenging, but progress has undoubtedly been made.

It is worth remembering and reiterating the three main policy intentions of the 2012 act: to protect and improve local services despite financial cuts; to create more equal access to specialist support and national capacity; and to strengthen the connection between services and communities. The committee's remit was primarily to scrutinise whether the policy intentions of the 2012 act have been realised and are being delivered.

The report into policing noted that a major driver of reform of the police service was the reduction in the Scottish block grant, estimated by the Scottish Government to be £3.3 billion in real terms between 2012 and 2016—it is worth reminding the chamber of that and putting it on the record. The committee recognised that, in the face of cuts from Westminster, it was essential to protect front-line delivery, and that is what the Scottish Government has done. As my colleague Jenny Gilruth highlighted, front-line policing numbers have been maintained. It is worth pointing out to Gordon Lindhurst that that is in stark contrast to what we have seen elsewhere. In the past nine years, police numbers in England and Wales have decreased by 14.8 per cent. Indeed, the number of officers in England and Wales is at its lowest since directly comparable records began in 1996. Therefore, it is fair to say that, although things here might not be perfect, they stand in stark contrast to the shambles down south, where community representatives regularly raise legitimate concerns. It is worth remembering that.

The committee also noted that reform of the police service was proposed to respond to the changing nature of policing in 21st century society and in response to a discussion paper that was produced by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary in Scotland, which described the development of the system of police governance over the previous 50 years and highlighted what it called the

"weaknesses in police governance and accountability which have perpetuated since the 1962 Royal Commission and which, it is contended, must be redressed in support of any future model of policing for Scotland."

The Scottish Government indicated that the new governance arrangements that were proposed in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill would respond to the weaknesses identified in that discussion paper.

For many practical reasons, reform was essential and the legislation was finally enacted in 2012. Seven years on, the act has been evaluated through a four-year programme that was established by the Scottish Government and that began work in 2015. So far, three evaluation reports have been published and a fourth is under way. The third report concluded that the evidence suggested that the first two policy aims of reform had largely been achieved but that the third policy aim, which is viewed as a high priority, is "the hardest to achieve". That is a fair assessment.

Those findings are echoed by the committee's findings. Its report states:

"Police Scotland has successfully reduced duplication of its support services and maintained the police service, despite significant financial constraints."

It goes on:

"the creation of a single police service has achieved the policy objective of providing more equal access to specialist support, most notably improving Police Scotland's approach to the investigation of sexual crimes and domestic abuse."

We have heard powerful evidence from organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland that backs up that assessment. The committee noted, however, that it

"would be concerned if this has led to any unintended consequences, such as officers from local areas being redeployed and not replaced."

The committee has invited the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to respond directly on that issue.

With regard to the third main policy intention of the 2012 act, which was to strengthen the connection between services and communities, the committee found that

"there were clearly issues with Police Scotland engaging effectively with local authorities in the early days of reform."

That was in the early days, and there is an acknowledgement that the situation has improved. As the committee has been out and about, the feedback has been that matters have improved, particularly in the past 12 to 18 months. Again, that is a fair assessment of matters to date. The committee also welcomed

"the commitment by the Chief Constable of Police Scotland to include local scrutiny bodies earlier in the decision-making process",

which again is to be welcomed.

Undertaking public sector reform is never easy. Sometimes, there are 101 reasons not to do something, but that does not mean that we should not do it. Sometimes, not everything will be perfect in the process of doing it. However, I am struck by the performance of Police Scotland, whether that is in its detection of crime and solving of murder cases, the huge improvement in the investigation of sexual offences or the revolution in support for victims of domestic abuse when compared to the unfortunately poor experience of too many women under the previous forces.

Police Scotland is not perfect but, without doubt, it is better and improvements are being made to deal with some of the weaknesses that have been identified over the piece, not least on governance. Police Scotland compares very well not just with forces in England and Wales but, most importantly, with those in the international arena. Police Scotland, particularly the police officers, should be commended for their work.

16:25

Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): As a former member of the Justice Committee—it now seems like I was a member in the dim and distant past—I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this important debate. For once, I am glad to be speaking towards the end of the debate, because it has been interesting to listen and follow the pattern of contributions.

It is fair to say that the verdict on the new police force, in particular, and the fire service is mixed. Although I am sure that my constituents, who are so close to the border, will be pleased that the SNP has such a keen eye on what is happening in England, they will still struggle to understand why some bad decisions were made at the start of the reforms. I will come to those decisions later in my speech.

The 2012 act came in long before I was elected, so I will express a personal remark. I still find myself agreeing with the Liberal Democrats—I note that Liam McArthur is not in the chamber to hear that—that there would have been other ways of achieving the same outcomes, without going through so much disruption at such a rapid pace.

I am extremely grateful to the Justice Committee for all the hard work that it does on behalf of the Parliament in providing much needed and continuous scrutiny. Whatever the on-going issues are, my experience locally has been that political and public interest in the job that our police and fire services do has kept up the pressure and helped to deliver—albeit slowly—the significant changes in how front-line services operate under the new structures. Many of the concerns have now been picked up and are being listened to.

However, there continue to be concerns. Recently, I heard that front-line police officers will no longer be available to answer questions for local media. Instead, local media will be directed back to the national service, which will not necessarily provide the accountability that people are looking for, although I understand the need for the organisation to have a central media-handling team.

Humza Yousaf: I know that Oliver Mundell's concerns are sincere, but does he agree that, although such issues are, of course, for this debate, they relate more to the operational independence of the chief constable.

Oliver Mundell: I am pleased to hear the cabinet secretary make that point in one sense, because I do not think that such issues are for politicians. However, it highlights another problem—I was going to come to it at the end of my speech—which is that, when things are not quite as they should be and not as the public would expect, when there are issues with transparency and when things do not work as envisaged, politicians always say that those are operational matters; whereas, when credit is to be claimed for falling levels of crime and other bits and pieces, politicians are always keen to step in. We have to take a balanced approach. In order to ensure transparency and that our police service is accountable to our constituents, we have a job to do in raising concerns about what is happening operationally. There is a balance to be struck.

I pay tribute to the local officers in Dumfries and Galloway who work on the front line in both the police and fire services. They have worked very hard to make the best of the single force and single service, even when they have had personal reservations. Many of my constituents have greatly valued the efforts that many officers who serve locally have made to fight for the flexibility that is required to ensure that the positive local and community focus in Dumfries and Galloway, which is so highly regarded, has been retained. Often, that has required significant pushback against, and resistance to, institutional cultures that have been imported from other parts of the country—as we have heard from several

members—and a perceived pressure to homogenise services.

That is one of the issues. A lot of how the public feel about policing is about perception and that is where more careful handling would work. We heard the minister speak earlier about fighting the battles of the past, but the problem is that the impact of these decisions lives on in our communities; people were left with a sour taste at the beginning of the process because there was a failure to recognise that not all parts of Scotland are the same and that strategies that work well in one area or community may not be appropriate in another. Many of the problems that we have seen since have stemmed from that failure.

There has also been a feeling in the police service that local knowledge and community engagement were not recognised at a national level as being important. I am pleased to say that some of this is changing and I credit Chief Superintendent Linda Jones and her predecessor Gary Ritchie for restoring—in so far as resources allowed—the appropriate systems and community-style policing that have proved so successful in tight-knit and largely rural communities for generations, where people feel the value of the police presence, want to work closely with the police and see them as an integral part of their community. In that light, I am particularly pleased about the adoption in recent months of voluntary opportunities for young people who are interested in policing. That will secure the legacy of the previous force in Dumfries and Galloway as we continue to make the best of the new model.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches. It is disappointing that not all the opening speakers are present in the chamber for these to begin.

16:31

James Kelly: This has been a useful debate and the range of topics that members have covered show the committee's breadth of work on both the reports. I reiterate what I said at the start: as John Finnie also said, we just do not find enough time to carry out post-legislative scrutiny in the Parliament. It is an important task and, as MSPs, we should reflect on that issue.

As others have done, I pay tribute to Daniel Johnson for his time on the Justice Committee. Daniel has gone from strength to strength after being elected as an MSP in 2016. He has the twin qualities of being able to be robust and hold the ministers to account but also being able to work in a constructive and consensual manner. I think that that is why he was so respected by members across the committee and I am sure that he will continue to do well and make a mark.

A number of interesting issues were raised during the debate. Daniel Johnson was right to make the point about the capital budget. The Government would point out that the capital budget has grown to £35 million in the current budget settlement. However, £88 million is required for ICT developments alone so there is clearly a shortfall there, which has to be addressed.

John Finnie made some interesting points about human rights, which can often be overlooked. Police Scotland would do well to take those points on board, particularly the points made by the Scottish Human Rights Commission and Unison Scotland about having an independent human rights adviser and human rights training for officers. It is an issue in which forces in Scotland and internationally have taken a greater interest in recent years and the committee's work on that is important.

Both Shona Robison and Liam Kerr made the point that one of the original aims of the 2012 act was to strengthen the link between the service and local access to communities. In fact, Oliver Mundell has just been talking about the importance of people being able to see their police officers out and about in the local area.

I know that, in the area that I represent, community officers play a crucial role in having links with local community groups. It is clear that, as the 2012 act has been implemented, there has been a tension around the objective of improving local links. Calum Steele made the point that he felt that, when there were budgetary strains, local resources were sometimes the ones that were sacrificed. We need to do more to get the balance right in that respect. Daniel Johnson mentioned the disbandment of the teams in Edinburgh to tackle housebreaking, which is an example of a good local initiative that was compromised.

Liam Kerr made the valid point that we should take international examples on board. We are still going through a process of change. The committee visited Norway, which has gone through a reform process, where it took on board some valid points. It is important that we continue to learn.

Gordon Lindhurst said that there was a funding gap. From the evidence that Police Scotland gave and the discussions that the committee has had, it is clear that that is a challenge that will be an issue in the coming budget round. The cabinet secretary acknowledged that there would have to be discussions about that in the context of the budget-setting process.

Jenny Gilruth and Margaret Mitchell spoke about the police complaints process, which is an important issue. I know from casework that I have

dealt with over the years that there is frustration among the public and serving police officers about the way in which complaints are dealt with. The process often takes longer than expected and there is a lack of transparency. I welcome the review that is being carried out by Dame Elish Angiolini. It is important, because it is clear that there are many concerns in that area.

The reports and today's debate indicate that much is still to be done to achieve the objectives of the 2012 act. There are three areas in particular that the Government needs to take into account. If the police service and the fire service are to be able to meet the policy objectives that are set out in the 2012 act, they need to be properly funded. There needs to be proper local accountability and local input. Local communities must have confidence that the local operations are serving the objectives of their area. There have been issues to do with the governance of the SPA and the role of the Scottish ministers, and those matters need to be clarified and tidied up.

The exercise that the Justice Committee conducted and today's debate have been useful in bringing some of the issues out into the open, and I am sure that the cabinet secretary will take on board many of the points that have been made.

16:38

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): I am pleased to close for the Scottish Conservatives in this afternoon's important debate about the Justice Committee's post-legislative scrutiny reports on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. I will deal mainly with the IT aspects of those reports, but I want to thank our police and fire and rescue services for keeping us all safe; I appreciate all the work that they do, sometimes in the most difficult of circumstances. I also join my colleagues in welcoming the work of the Justice Committee on its reports and the excellent work of its team of clerks.

The committee's scrutiny of the 2012 act goes a long way in showing what improvements might be working five years later. It also opens wide the areas in which progress could be better achieved in practice. We must not forget that, as John Finnie so eloquently and rightly stated, our police are "the front-line defenders" of our citizens.

We have heard about the original motivations behind the proposed changes to the police and fire services. Both services faced considerable cuts to their budgets but arguably needed a more sustainable and streamlined way of operating without duplicate forces. To deliver that transformation, the 2012 act was to bring in equality of access, strengthened links between services and communities and improvements to

local front-line work. However, on the whole, it has not gone far enough to achieve lasting efficiency.

Of course, improvements have been made, as we can see from the committee's findings. Having a single police service has encouraged a greater emphasis on national units, meaning that crimes such as rape and sexual assault can be better investigated. Moreover, the approach in the investigation of murders and unexplained deaths has also seen a marked improvement. We have heard that in the face of significant reform all 356 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service stations have continued to operate well. However, such an overhaul has created some unintended issues that are in clear need of long-term solutions through adequate funding. We must keep our police officers and fire and rescue personnel safe.

My colleagues have brought to light the worrying lack of a modern IT system, which was referred to recently by Chief Constable Iain Livingstone, who stated that IT capability was poor in Police Scotland. We cannot expect to have an efficient and streamlined police force when officers are hindered by the incapability of their IT system. At the moment, police officers cannot connect to another force's IT system if they are out of their area. The fact that a new strategy has been only partially funded by the Scottish Government is a concerning oversight. As the vice-chair of the Scottish Police Federation said last year:

"The wastage in time and efficiency is staggering."

A lack of proper investment in IT services could have a detrimental effect on the ability of police officers to carry out their duties as swiftly as possible. In some cases, police officers have even been sent to the wrong addresses. Both the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland have raised concerns that the draft budget for 2019-20 does not allow for full implementation of an ICT strategy.

A key aim of the 2012 act was to remove duplication and I am not alone when I suggest that that cannot be achieved without a national and updated ICT system. The roll-out of digital notebooks this summer in places such as Dundee and Kinross is a step in the right direction, but the Scottish Government must go much further in its funding of a new and updated IT strategy that optimises police officers' use of time.

The lack of Government funding of vital resources for both services significantly limits their ability to serve the public. For instance, there are challenges in funding equipment and training for firefighters, which is an on-going concern. Without transformative financial investment, fire vehicle and station repairs cannot carry on. Clarity is needed—there needs to be a clear understanding of the SFRS's long-term financial plan. For the

sake of firefighters on the ground, we need to know exactly what investment will be planned for its vehicles, equipment and property.

Further issues have been raised about policing resources. Evidence came to light of the poor condition of some police stations, such as Lochgilphead and Oban in the west of Scotland, and it was of particular concern to me to read of the Clydebank rape and domestic abuse unit in my region, where a staff of 10 have only two cars to share between them and the mileage is probably pretty high.

Such reform surely needs to be accompanied by effective resource funding. With that we could have police and fire services that operate to their utmost capability. My colleague Margaret Mitchell raised the serious issue of police officers backfilling police staff roles. As the committee found, that takes away vital numbers from front-line policing and it must obviously be minimised. With violent crime on the rise, we need local and visible policing in our communities.

A reduction in the number of front-line firefighter jobs means that communities have not benefited from the reforms as much as possible. If issues surrounding firefighter recruitment and retention can be addressed, I believe that that service can easily be transformed in the way that the 2012 act intended. However, I realise that there are issues in the more rural areas.

At the centre of the changes, it is paramount to bear in mind the impact of the legislation on the mental wellbeing of police officers and firefighters. That is something that the committee reports shed light on. With the reduction in numbers across both services, the responders are dealing with a heavier workload, longer shifts and an underlying frustration that they are unable to respond to incidents as quickly as they would like.

Having fewer managerial posts in the fire service has resulted in stress and overwork in some cases, as the committee evidence showed.

Scotland's police and fire services, which includes special constables and retained firemen and women, want to serve their local communities as best they possibly can. However, the effect of the momentous changes on workload and, as a result, people's mental health, must be taken into account.

16:45

Humza Yousaf: In my opening remarks, I concentrated a fair bit on some of the challenges, but also the achievements of the police. I will come back to that later. I begin my closing remarks by focusing on some of the great successes of the Scottish Fire and Rescue

Service. We have all mentioned the SFRS in our speeches, but it has not been mentioned as much as the police, partly because it is, to some extent, the victim of its own success in respect of service reform.

It is understandable that the job of scrutiny—both for those in opposition and those in government—is to reflect on the challenges, such as how to improve and how to ensure that the service moves on to the next level of transformation. Of course there have been challenges for the SFRS. However, it is widely recognised, that if we want a model of public sector reform, the achievements of the SFRS as a single service are a good model to follow.

I will make some points about the great work that the fire service has done since its reform. In Parliament, we often talk about collaboration. I have been a member for eight years—goodness, time is getting on—and there has always been discussion about collaboration. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service really put that discussion into action.

I met the chief fire officer a couple of weeks ago and we talked about the great collaboration between the SFRS and the Scottish Ambulance Service in the out-of-hospital cardiac arrest co-responding trials. That was an excellent example of public services working together to achieve a common aim. The primary aim of the trials was to reduce incident response times, with a longer-term aim of improving patient outcomes. Although the trials are currently on hold, given the negotiations on pay, they can be hailed as an absolute success. During the call-outs, the SFRS made 83 potential life-saving interventions, with 28 positive outcomes.

If we consider the important statistics on safety, we can see that fires have been reducing. Daniel Johnson was right to make the point that it is a long-term trend; nonetheless, I note that, since 2010, fires have reduced by 33 per cent and fire deaths have reduced by 29 per cent. That is not an accident or a coincidence, but goes to the heart of the preventative and good work that our fire officers do. I am sure that every one of us has stories from our constituencies of the excellent preventative work that the SFRS has done in our high schools and so on.

Daniel Johnson: It is important that we do not overlook the fire service, but we should also not overlook some of the concerns that have been raised by the Fire Brigades Union, among others, about the reduction in firefighter numbers and about the need for appliances to be sent across the country just to provide basic cover. Will the cabinet secretary acknowledge that there are issues in the fire service and that the FBU and others have voiced criticisms?

Humza Yousaf: I have looked at the FBU briefing, and there are some challenges. However, I just wanted to spend a few minutes recognising our fire officers' great successes, because that point has not been given much time in today's debate.

I want to offer Daniel Johnson some reassurances, if I can. Over the past year, there has been an increase in the number of firefighters: Scotland now has more firefighters per head of population than other parts of the UK, and the number of operational firefighters at 31 March 2018 was 184 higher than in the previous year. That is not to detract from concerns about the retained duty system and other issues that members have mentioned.

Margaret Mitchell: Will the cabinet secretary dwell for a minute on the issue of retained firefighters? If that issue is not resolved, there is a real danger that it will undermine all the excellent work—which the cabinet secretary has just outlined—that the fire service has been doing.

Humza Yousaf: Of course I will reflect on that, and the Minister for Community Safety, who is not in the chamber, works very hard on the issue. The number of whole-time retained officers in the retained duty system has increased by 91 in the past 12 months, and there has been a small reduction of 15 among volunteer firefighters. However, the core issues around the RDS are not lost on me or the minister.

I echo the comments of Maurice Corry, Gordon Lindhurst and a number of others when they said that we should applaud our police officers and never, ever get complacent about the sacrifice that they make day in, day out. If ever we needed a reminder of that, the past couple of months have seen the terrible and tragic murder of PC Andrew Harper of Thames Valley Police and, closer to home, the death of PC Buggins, who died on duty in Montrose. We owe them all a debt of gratitude that we simply cannot repay.

I thank members for a very helpful and nuanced debate. I also echo James Kelly's praise of Daniel Johnson for his time on the Justice Committee. I have often said that I enjoy working with Daniel Johnson, and I am sure that we will work together again, as he takes a clear interest in justice issues. I agree with him about taking a collaborative approach, and I am sure that James Kelly will also do so in his new role—I see him smirking mischievously at that suggestion.

I take issue with one thing that Daniel Johnson said. He seemed to suggest that the Scottish Government says that the only two metrics of success are having 1,000 additional police officers and the creation of the national police service. Having the 1,000 additional officers is not

something that we are pinned to—we now say that it is for the chief constable to determine the right mix of officers. Those are not the only two metrics for success. We look at the pragmatic and practical effects of the national police service on the ground. One example of the very practical difference that the service has made to people is that we have the second-lowest crime rate in more than four decades. In addition, the vast majority of, if not all, murders are solved and detected. The investigation of sexual offences is much better and domestic abuse is getting a much greater focus. The majority of people think that the police do a good job in their local area, according to the crime and justice survey. We use a number of metrics and indices, which are focused on the practical and pragmatic differences to people in their everyday lives.

I see that I am running out of time, so I will just say that I commend the debate. I was going to talk about budgets and resources, but that debate will rage on, no doubt, and I hear members' concerns.

We are in a good place post reform. Of course there are still challenges, but the Government is very up for taking them on. I thank members for a very good debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Rona Mackay to wind up the debate on behalf of the Justice Committee.

16:53

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): This has been a wide-ranging debate about two of our most valued public services, and I have listened to the contributions with great interest. It has been a good-humoured and consensual debate.

I thank Daniel Johnson for being an excellent colleague on the Justice Committee. I also welcome James Kelly and look forward to working with him.

When the Justice Committee decided to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the police service, the view was expressed that the police service is in crisis. I am pleased to say that, following the committee's scrutiny of every area of policing that is covered by the 2012 act, the evidence is clear that there is no crisis in policing. It is important to put that on the record.

That is not to say that improvements are not still needed—we have heard members detail them. I will outline some improvements and refer to what we have heard from across the chamber.

There are great success stories from the creation of the single police service, in particular in specialist services, as the convener mentioned. I thought that the convener gave a very accurate

account of the evidence that we heard and which informed the report.

The committee was struck by the evidence that the single service has improved how it deals with victims of domestic abuse, rape and sexual offences. As my colleague Jenny Gilruth mentioned, Rape Crisis Scotland told the committee:

“In our experience, the move to a single police force has transformed the way rape and other sexual crimes are investigated in Scotland”.

That has been achieved through training police officers and use of specialist officers. Scottish Women's Aid told the committee that

“Police Scotland's response to reported domestic abuse has improved, dramatically in some places”

and that

“the single force has produced a better informed, targeted and more consistent approach to the investigation of domestic abuse.”

As co-convener of the cross-party group on men's violence against women and children, I believe that that is a great step forward, especially in the light of the increase in reporting of those crimes.

Governance and oversight of policing played a large part in the committee's scrutiny. We heard concerns about whether the SPA is adequately fulfilling its role of scrutinising the service, including concerns about lack of critical challenge and of consultation. The Justice Sub-Committee on Policing's recent inquiry into the proposal for police officers to use cyberkiosks to search the phones of witnesses and victims of crimes, which John Finnie and Liam McArthur mentioned, highlighted that issue. That was an important piece of work. The conclusion was that the SPA must consult more widely on all proposals, and must be far more open and accountable. That is now being put into practice. I look forward to the SPA review that the convener mentioned.

There have been a number of thoughtful contributions from members today. Margaret Mitchell talked about backfilling: Police Scotland will carry out an analysis of demand data, which we look forward to seeing.

Daniel Johnson talked of the capital backlog. The cabinet secretary said that his door is always open for discussion of issues around the fleet estate.

Liam Kerr and James Kelly talked about the SPA's historical problems, and about backfilling and recruitment problems, and said that we had learned lessons and that we must continue to learn for the future.

John Finnie spoke about the importance of human rights and said that Police Scotland is the

front-line defender of human rights. I could not agree more. He also spoke about centralisation and how it impacts on the day-to-day operation of policing.

Liam McArthur spoke of accountability and transparency. He took a trip down memory lane and painted a gloomy picture of the evidence that we heard.

Liam McArthur: Balanced.

Rona Mackay: Okay. I am told that the picture was "Balanced".

Fulton MacGregor talked of the positive changes of reform, how the public feels safer and the local area success in reduction of the crime rate.

Gordon Lindhurst spoke of concern about the long-term strategy regarding funding. The cabinet secretary said that in order to avoid drastic cuts in the service, the Government would fund deficits.

Daniel Johnson rightly praised police officers and talked about the demands on police and the changing nature of crime these days, as well as the capital funding issues.

Shona Robison spoke of the origins of the reform and its policy intentions. She said that despite issues in the early days, things have improved.

Oliver Mundell initially said that there are other ways of achieving the outcomes, but that concerns are being listened to. He also talked of local knowledge and accountability.

I turn to the committee's report on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Our evidence concluded that the service has met, or made good progress in meeting, the three main policy intentions of the act. I echo the comments that the cabinet secretary made in his closing remarks.

The committee found that the fire service has, on balance, protected and improved local services, despite there having been many challenges, including issues with recruiting and with keeping retained and volunteer firefighters, particularly in remote and rural areas. Recruitment issues and budgetary pressure mean that appliances often cannot be used to respond to call-outs, either due to shortage of staff or staff being diverted as emergency medical responders. For the safety of the public and the health and safety of our fire service staff, those issues must be addressed urgently. I am confident that the Government will take them seriously.

Despite growing demands, the fire service has responded to every emergency call with an appropriate response, and has made good progress towards creating more equal access to specialist support and national capacity.

The committee also heard that the connection between services and communities has been strengthened, with more local councillors now making decisions about how fire and rescue services are delivered in their areas.

The fire service has made great progress but faces many challenges. John Finnie, James Kelly and Fulton MacGregor spoke of the Fire Brigades Union's concerns and said that there is a need to negotiate in good faith—I share that view. The changing role of firefighters is obvious: they are first responders and have many new challenges to address, which must be reflected in any negotiation.

I thank the people who provided evidence and suggestions to improve the legislation, and I thank the clerks for their hard work.

The committee recognises that the dedication, commitment and hard work of police officers, firefighters and staff during a period of significant change is responsible for the many successes of the police and of the SFRS. We owe them a huge debt for their having embraced transformational change with their customary professionalism and hard work. On behalf of the committee, I record our thanks to them.

Decision Time

Meeting closed at 17.01

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There is one question to be put as a result of today's business. The question is, that motion S5M-18818, in the name of Margaret Mitchell, on post-legislative scrutiny reports on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament notes the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Justice Committee's 9th Report 2019 (Session 5), *Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 - The Police Service of Scotland (SP Paper 501)*, and its 10th Report 2019 (Session 5) *Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SP Paper 502)*.

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.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba