



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Meeting of the Parliament

**Wednesday 11 March 2020**

**Session 5**



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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 11 March 2020

*[The Deputy Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 13:30]*

## Mental Health Services in Tayside (Independent Inquiry)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The first item of business is a statement by Clare Haughey on the independent inquiry into mental health services in Tayside. The minister will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

**The Minister for Mental Health (Clare Haughey):** Last month, Dr David Strang published the final report of the independent inquiry into mental health services in Tayside. I thank Dr Strang, the inquiry team and Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland for their hard work.

In particular, I also thank everyone who contributed to the inquiry. More than 1,500 people shared their often incredibly painful experiences and personal testimonies. Far too many people have been let down. Although not enough on its own, I offer my apology on behalf of the Scottish Government for what they have endured. Many Tayside patients and their families and friends, including those who have lost loved ones, will have found the report challenging. Their bravery, courage and candour was vital to shaping the report.

I also thank staff who participated in the inquiry and who are committed to ensuring the delivery of excellent services in the future.

The report outlines a range of issues and calls for a new culture of working across NHS Tayside and the three health and social care partnerships. It makes 51 recommendations in five areas: governance and leadership, crisis and community services, in-patient services, child and adolescent mental health services and staffing.

NHS Tayside and its local authority partners have accepted the report, its findings and its recommendations in full. At NHS Tayside's board meeting on 27 February, the chief executive, Grant Archibald, apologised to anyone whose experience of Tayside's mental health services had fallen short of the expectations that we all rightly have for those services. The board agreed to collaborate with partners to deliver a Tayside-wide response to the inquiry's findings.

Partnership working is the cornerstone of the approach that will be taken to respond to the

inquiry report. A Tayside collaborative strategic leadership group has been established, comprising chief executives from NHS Tayside, Angus Council, Dundee City Council and Perth and Kinross Council, as well as the Police Scotland Tayside divisional commander.

Collective responsibility and accountability are emphasised in the group's published statement of intent, which commits to implementing necessary improvements through the development and delivery of a Tayside-wide strategy and change programme for improving mental health and wellbeing.

One of the recommendations of the inquiry report relates to the delivery of mental health and wellbeing services in the context of health and social care integration. It recommends that the NHS board and the three integration joint boards review the delegated responsibilities for the operational delivery of those services across Tayside, to ensure clarity of understanding and commitment.

In line with the inquiry report and the views of national health service trade unions and professional bodies, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport and I have made no secret of our concerns about the approach to the operational management of in-patient mental health services in Tayside. The arrangements have been unduly complex and are unique to Tayside. That is why I am clear that the operational management of general adult psychiatry services must now be led by NHS Tayside, rather than an integration authority. NHS Tayside will implement that change and will work closely with its integration partners in doing so. I believe that that simplification will bring welcome clarity to the local arrangements and allow the partnership to focus on improved services for patients.

The issues that were identified by the inquiry cannot be resolved by a single agency, and it is crucial that there is a whole-system review of services. Last week, I received a progress report from NHS Tayside, which is published on the board's website and outlines activity to drive change. I have been clear that a comprehensive action plan to detail how each recommendation will be met must be taken forward, and that work is under way.

For that to happen in a way that delivers the change that we need, NHS Tayside and its partners must listen to service users, families, carers and staff. I am encouraged that NHS Tayside has set out a commitment to ensure that it listens to the voices of people who work in mental health services, service users, families and carers, so that future services can be co-designed and co-produced. The inquiry report recommends that a full plan be developed in partnership and

published by June 2020, and I expect that timescale to be met.

Later today, I will meet members of the Tayside stakeholder participation group, which is chaired by Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. I look to NHS Tayside and its partners to continue to build on that and to keep patient needs at the heart of the discussions.

Organisational development is vital. The report found that many staff did not feel valued, listened to or treated with respect. Staff reported “a lack of clarity” around line management and accountability, and a “culture of blame”, rather than an organisation that is open to “learning from adverse events”. That is unacceptable.

Engagement is the first step, and work with staff is already under way to support that. I am encouraged to hear that safe space meetings, which enable staff to discuss concerns confidentially, are happening.

The report explores the impact of workforce challenges on delivery of mental health services, which includes the ability of staff to participate in training and supervision requirements. That raises questions about how we ensure that people have the right skills and experience to do their jobs and how they are involved in helping to find solutions to workforce challenges across social work, social care, clinical settings and the third sector. I am encouraged that NHS Tayside is working with staff, unions and professional bodies to develop a response, which will form a key part of its whole-system strategy.

We are pursuing action in that area. Psychiatry recruitment challenges across the United Kingdom require collaborative, concerted action. To address those challenges, we are working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, NHS Education for Scotland and medical schools to promote psychiatry as an attractive career. We are also on course to deliver our commitment to 800 extra mental health workers in Scotland by the end of 2022. As of 1 January this year, 375 posts had been recruited.

On 31 January, I announced a support package to help to deliver improvements in Tayside. That package includes multidisciplinary clinical and practice support and brings together specialists from across a range of specialties and backgrounds to provide support and challenge. I welcome the fact that colleagues who helped to produce a highly regarded Lanarkshire mental health strategy are now also working with NHS Tayside. That multidisciplinary support will develop a mental health strategy for all of Tayside, strengthen governance and reporting arrangements, improve consultation and engagement, enable delivery of Tayside's

improvement plans, create a Tayside-wide culture and change programme for all mental health and care staff, and undertake a review of current service provision. That will be complemented by programme management expertise that will be provided by the NHS Information Services Division. The multidisciplinary team will work with NHS Education for Scotland to engage with the NHS Tayside organisational development team, in order to ensure that it responds to the inquiry's recommendations to support staff.

The Royal College of Psychiatry's UK college centre for quality improvement—CCQI—will independently assess the quality of clinical services in Tayside. The CCQI will focus on four key areas: quality networks, accreditation, national clinical audits and research and evaluation.

Through the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Scottish Government's former principal medical officer, Dr John Mitchell, we have also facilitated expert clinical support and guidance, and Healthcare Improvement Scotland will offer specific support to Tayside to address the quality of adult community health services. That is not a one-off support package. Through the Tayside oversight group, we will continue to work closely with NHS Tayside and local partners, to seek assurance that improvements are being implemented. We will also continue to work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to ensure that NHS boards, councils and integration joint boards are supported to work together across Scotland.

I am grateful that the chair of the independent inquiry, Dr David Strang, has agreed to undertake a progress update in Tayside in February 2021, which will provide an independent assessment of improvements.

I have already committed that learning from the inquiry will be fed into our national approach to quality and safety. We want to bring greater coherence to the arrangements for quality planning, improvement and assurance for mental health. That is why we have established a quality and safety board for mental health. On 19 February, I chaired the first meeting of that board. It will have an important role in taking forward two of the national recommendations that are contained in the inquiry's final report. The first is for a national review of the assurance and scrutiny of mental health services across Scotland, including the powers of Health Improvement Scotland and the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland. The second is for a national review of the guidelines for responding to substance misuse on in-patient wards. With regard to the latter, there are commitments in our mental health strategy and in this year's programme for government that will drive service improvements for people with

comorbid mental ill health and substance misuse. I look forward to updating parliamentary colleagues on the work of the quality and safety board in due course.

We must work to ensure that the issues about which concerns were raised in Tayside are not being experienced elsewhere. It is vital that we continue to put people at the centre of that work. The safety of our patients and the quality of the services that they receive are paramount.

I reaffirm this Government's commitment to support Tayside to deliver the services that people need. I am committed to learning from the experiences in Tayside. It is vital that people in Tayside have access to high quality, safe and effective services, and that they have trust and confidence in their care. That is what they and all communities across Scotland deserve.

**Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con):** I thank the minister for advance sight of the statement.

The report of the independent inquiry into mental health services in Tayside is a shocking indictment of mental health services failing some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and it reveals a culture in NHS Tayside that has resulted in staff who are demoralised and are not supported in providing the care and services that people desperately need. Families will, therefore, welcome the public apology that the minister has given today. However, the most important thing is for us now to see real change. How will the recommendations to restore trust be benchmarked beyond 2021 in Dr Strang's work, which the minister has outlined today?

In other parts of Scotland, similar concerns are being expressed about pressures in mental health services and about overworked and demoralised NHS staff, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists has warned that services are facing a workforce crisis. Therefore, what steps will ministers take, following this inquiry, to guarantee that we do not see a repeat of these failings across other boards? Will the quality and safety board outline any of those problems when they are highlighted, so that we see early intervention with regard to the reporting of staff and patient concerns?

**Clare Haughey:** Mr Briggs raises some important issues. We need to ensure that NHS Tayside and its partners listen to those who use the service and to the staff who provide the service, as well as to the trade unions and professional bodies. NHS Tayside and its partners have made a commitment to do so, and I will be scrutinising the work that they do in that regard to ensure that they deliver what they have said that they will deliver. We will work closely with all of the organisations that are involved in that.

I am heartened to hear about the on-going work that is being done with organisations such as the alliance to ensure that all service reviews in NHS Tayside and its partners will be advised by service users and their carers, and that they will have a voice in the development of those plans.

With regard to the benchmarking beyond 2021, I cannot commit Dr David Strang to that. To provide a measure of assurance to the people who have participated in this inquiry—I again sincerely thank them for doing so—I have asked him to independently scrutinise what has been done after a year. I am aware that people would be concerned if there was no such scrutiny. I am happy to engage in discussions on how we can continue to ensure that NHS Tayside and its partners deliver high quality healthcare from 2021 onwards.

**Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab):** I thank the minister for advance sight of her statement. Scottish Labour welcomes the Government's apology to the families for what they have endured. We are pleased that NHS Tayside and its partners have accepted the Strang recommendations in full. Any resistance to positive change must be left in the past.

The minister set out her expectations around implementation, but can she give a guarantee that the action plan that she has instructed will meet the 51 recommendations in full? What action will the Government take if progress is too slow or is not comprehensive?

The minister said that we must work to ensure that the concerns that were raised in Tayside are not being experienced elsewhere. I know constituents in Lanarkshire who are working with some of the families in Tayside because of their common experiences. They include Karen McKeown, who met the minister following her partner's death by suicide. What guarantee can the minister give people across Scotland that they will not have to fight as hard as the families in Tayside for whole-system changes to be made in their areas?

**Clare Haughey:** I thank Monica Lennon for her questions—there were several questions, and I apologise if I do not answer them all. I will be happy to come back to her with more detail if what I say does not satisfy the questions.

I welcome her statement welcoming NHS Tayside's and its partners' acceptance of the report. There should be no resistance to change or to acceptance of the recommendations of the independent inquiry, and I am assured by the reassurances that I have had from the Tayside collaborative strategic leadership group that it accepts them and wants to work together to change and ensure that there is quality and safety

and that people feel reassured about accessing those services.

One reason why I set up the quality and safety board, which includes members from the royal colleges, NHS chief executives, COSLA, the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland, was to ensure that we have an overview of mental health services across Scotland and that we can look at areas where we perhaps need to improve, and also at areas of best practice and how we can spread that across the country.

I assure Ms Lennon that I will certainly not be taking my eye off the ball in relation to quality and safety across mental health services in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Eleven members want to ask a question and we have 13 minutes left, so I ask for self-discipline and, if possible, shorter answers.

**Shona Robison (Dundee City East) (SNP):** I thank the minister for her statement and I welcome the changes to the governance arrangements for in-patient beds. I thank David Strang for the meeting last week, and I particularly thank those who shared personal experiences with the inquiry.

How will NHS Tayside take forward the 51 recommendations, particularly those that relate to the building of trust and respect between patients and their families, staff and NHS Tayside? What capacity does the board have in mental health leadership to drive forward the changes that are required? Finally—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** No—

**Shona Robison:** What oversight will the Scottish Government provide to make sure that the changes happen?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I appreciate that you are a member for the area, but we have to move on.

**Clare Haughey:** I thank Shona Robison for her questions. I am really grateful to David Strang for agreeing to undertake a further review, which will build on the Scottish Government's Tayside oversight group and continue to monitor the progress there. The member spoke about trust and respect, which are absolutely key in ensuring that all the voices that need to be heard by NHS Tayside and its partners are heard. I am encouraged by what the Tayside collaborative strategic leadership group and the key stakeholders are saying in that regard.

**Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** It has been recommended that the NHS board and the three integration joint boards review their delegated responsibilities. How can the minister ensure that NHS Tayside will provide the

protected training time for its staff that is required in order to ensure that that becomes a reality?

**Clare Haughey:** I thank Mr Stewart for that question. It is key that we ensure that staff feel adequately trained, have capacity to reflect on their work, have supervision and can express their concerns in such a way that they do not feel judged but, rather, feel that they will be supported. That is why I welcome the sessions that NHS Tayside has introduced, in which staff are able to express their concerns. The driving forward of quality and safety and service redesign within NHS Tayside will need to include those staff-side partners.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I remind members that I am co-convenor of the cross-party group on mental health. Can the minister clarify for those with lived experience what role they will have in ensuring that the report's recommendations are delivered, so that patients can remain central to that process?

**Clare Haughey:** As I said in answer to an earlier question, I welcome the involvement of all stakeholders in the on-going and previous discussions about NHS Tayside's care and treatment of people who access mental health services. Their voices are absolutely key to future work. I welcome NHS Tayside's continuing engagement with the stakeholder group.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I and other members across the chamber have been aware of pressures on mental health services in our areas, so a commitment to a national review by the Government is very welcome. Can the minister outline the expected timescale for the completion of the work and when she expects to update the chamber on the quality and safety board's work?

**Clare Haughey:** I am sorry if Mr Stewart has misunderstood what I said. I am not carrying out a review of mental health services across Scotland. The quality and safety board is there to draw organisations together to look at quality and safety across the country. However, I am happy to make a commitment, as I did in my statement, to come back and provide further updates on the quality and safety board's work. Two of the Strang report's recommendations are national recommendations, and they will be key parts of the quality and safety board's work.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** How can the report's findings and NHS Tayside's response to them help to address recruitment challenges in mental health services on Tayside?

**Clare Haughey:** The development of the whole-system approach to the mental health and wellbeing strategy will create new roles and new opportunities for staff, such as advanced nurse



practitioners, and I hope that that will create more capacity and attractive opportunities. As I said earlier, we are working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists, NES and medical schools to promote psychiatry as an attractive career. In looking at its services and service redesign, I am sure that NHS Tayside and its partners will consider how to use the skills that they already have in their workforce to maximum effect, which will also be good for staff development.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** The report states that patients were sometimes dismissed by staff as

“troublesome, antagonistic, problematic and not to be trusted”.

It is clear that staff at NHS Tayside were under enormous pressure and that compassion fatigue may have been a factor in the service. Can the minister outline how staff will be supported to develop positive relationships with patients and actions to address staff wellbeing more broadly in NHS Tayside?

**Clare Haughey:** The Scottish Government has regularly engaged with staff representatives and it was clear from our most recent meeting with them on 28 January, where I was in attendance with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, that significant concerns remain. We welcome NHS Tayside’s commitment to working in partnership with its staff and staff representatives to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute, learn, influence and shape the future of mental health services in Tayside. As I said in my statement, I am encouraged to hear that the safe space meetings are running; they will enable staff to raise concerns in an environment that they feel is a confidential space in which they are supported.

**Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD):** The catalyst for much of that work was the tragic circumstances under which David Ramsay was twice turned away at Carseview before he sadly took his own life. What assurance can the minister give the chamber that, should somebody appear today at Carseview in a state of mental health crisis, they would not also be turned away?

**Clare Haughey:** I expect that anyone who presents in a state of mental health crisis is given a thorough mental health assessment and that a proper risk assessment is carried out by the person who did the assessment, whether a doctor, nurse or allied health professional, as happens day in, day out across the country in mental health teams, accident and emergency departments and in-patient settings.

I expect that people would be thoroughly assessed, and, if it was felt that admission was not the best course of treatment for them at that point,

appropriate treatment services would be put in place for them—whether those were crisis, community or third-sector organisations’ services. I also expect that people would be appropriately signposted and given the support that they need to deal with whatever crisis they are going through. I expect that across our NHS.

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** The report states that

“honest scrutiny is a powerful tool leading to improvements in service”.

How can the Scottish Government assist NHS Tayside to create a culture of greater openness, allowing greater scrutiny?

**Clare Haughey:** One of the findings of the report was that, as an organisation, NHS Tayside was not open to learning from adverse experiences, and staff reported a “blame culture”.

Organisational development is vital. NHS Tayside is already taking steps to better engage with staff, and with service users and their families.

The package of measures that I announced in January, and the work that is being done between NHS Tayside, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NES and the Royal College of Psychiatrists, along with the oversight work of the new quality and safety board, will support that.

**Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con):** People from Tayside and further afield were given the gold standard of acute treatment at the Mulberry unit’s bespoke, friendly centre. The end of that service sent them all to the overloaded Carseview unit in Ninewells.

Does the minister agree that the Government and NHS Tayside—now that the buck is stopping with NHS Tayside, instead of the IJBs—should reintroduce the gold standard Mulberry facility for the benefit of the people in Angus and Dundee whose relatives are crammed into the overcapacity Carseview?

**Clare Haughey:** NHS Tayside halted changes to its reconfiguration programme in line with the inquiry’s interim report recommendations, in May 2018.

The cabinet secretary and I made it clear that we would not support NHS Tayside’s proposals for changing in-patient services until we were satisfied that they were framed by consideration of the whole system, including local community services. As I described in my statement, I expect NHS Tayside’s strategy for transforming and improving mental health and wellbeing to give careful consideration to all available resources at its disposal to ensure the best outcome for staff, and for patients and their families.

**Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland)**

**(Lab):** The minister mentioned the Royal College of Psychiatry. David Strang was clear that nursing and allied health professional leadership should also be involved in designing a balanced and sustainable mental health service in Tayside. Does the minister agree that that recommendation is very important, and how will it be delivered?

**Clare Haughey:** I absolutely agree, and I am sure that that will come as no surprise to Mr Macdonald. AHPs, nurses and others play a key role in delivering mental health services day in, day out across the country. As I mentioned, the use of advanced nurse practitioners can expand services and provide additional support in situations when, perhaps, there are not as many medical staff or psychiatrists as we would like. AHPs, occupational therapists and nurses provide vital care, day in, day out, to our mental health services. We need to use their skills more effectively and to have those professionals working to the top of their licence so that they are able to free up capacity in other parts of the service, and provide quality service, which is key.

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** Will the minister set out what impact improved recruitment in mental health in Tayside might have on achieving the recommendations in the report?

**Clare Haughey:** Recruitment plays a part. In an earlier answer, I set out the steps that the Scottish Government is taking to increase the number of medical students who are taking up training in psychiatry. The issue of the number of students studying psychiatry is not exclusive to Scotland, or to Tayside; it is faced across much of the western world.

We need to look at investing in, and improving the capabilities of, our other healthcare professionals, and at ensuring that our services are provided with quality and safety, regardless of the profession that is delivering the service.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes questions on the statement. I thank the minister and members; we got through all the questions, which is excellent.

## Portfolio Question Time

### Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

14:00

#### Petition (Ecological Emergency)

1. **Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to a recent petition calling on the First Minister to declare an ecological emergency. (S5O-04236)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** Tackling loss of biodiversity ranks alongside climate change in importance, and our actions are designed to address those twin issues in tandem, wherever possible—for example, through the £250 million investment in peatland restoration over the next 10 years.

The programme for government announced an extension to the biodiversity challenge fund of £2 million, which increased to £3 million in the budget, and totals £5 million overall since 2018-19. However, that is only a small part of the estimated £98 million that we spend on biodiversity each year in Scotland.

**Claudia Beamish:** The petition has been started by young environmental campaigner Holly Gillibrand.

It is a pity that it seems to be highly unlikely that we will meet our Aichi biodiversity targets this year, especially given the importance to Scotland of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Does the cabinet secretary acknowledge a correlation between the missed targets, the

“fivefold drop in official monitoring”

by Scottish Natural Heritage over the past decade and the significant reduction in funding for SNH since 2007?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I do not think that it is possible to draw a line as Claudia Beamish is trying to do.

The Aichi targets are challenging, but our meeting seven out of 20 compares favourably with the global picture, which is that there has been progress on only four of the 20 targets. Yes—there is a great deal more to do in Scotland, but we are already doing a great deal more than most other countries in the world.

SNH makes decisions about how it manages its budget on the basis of its own professionalism. I think that, from SNH's perspective, it is not doing

anything that would in any way damage our ability to try as best we can to meet the targets.

We are not complacent: we know that a lot more needs to be done. The conference in April—we are currently attempting to turn it into an online conference, for reasons that I need not go into—is part of that and part of our global commitment to the work.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** Climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss. What measures are there in the environmental strategy to create and restore natural habitats?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The environmental strategy sets out the links between the crises of climate and nature, which I mentioned. Climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss, and healthy natural habitats play a vital role in removing carbon from the atmosphere.

The resilience of the natural environment in the face of the changing climate is a key element of our adaptations programme. Our focus is on the most effective and complementary policies to address the climate and nature crises, which is why I keep mentioning the amount of money that we are putting into peatland restoration, which delivers multiple benefits.

Other nature-based solutions are incredibly important. For example, tree planting and protecting and enhancing our sea beds are key parts of the dual plan to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

#### **Greylag Geese (Impact on Farmland and Crops)**

**2. Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on preparations for a ministerial visit to Orkney to view the impact of resident greylag geese on farmland and crops. (S5O-04237)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** Liam McArthur might recall that I wrote to him on 17 February to provide an update on my proposed visit to Orkney to see at first hand the impact of resident greylag geese on farmlands and crops, and to discuss potential solutions. My office is looking at potential dates and will be in touch shortly with the member's office and the NFU Scotland branch on Orkney to agree a suitable date for the visit.

I understand that my colleague Mairi Gougeon is finalising dates to visit Orkney separately and would be happy to meet Liam McArthur, if he would find that useful.

**Liam McArthur:** I would certainly find that useful. I thank the cabinet secretary for her answer

and for taking up my invitation to come to Orkney to see at first hand the damage that is caused by the large—and growing—resident greylag goose population.

As well as agreeing the details of the plan for the visit with Orkney NFUS, and given the progress that has been made with setting up the various options to control resident greylag geese in Orkney, will the cabinet secretary confirm that funding will be available to continue with control measures, should they prove to be successful in reducing overall numbers?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I clarify that the original agreement that I made with Liam McArthur was to visit in early summer for reasons to do with my diary, which is why I said that Mairi Gougeon might want to think about meeting the member separately.

In respect of money, we have committed to continuing a level of funding until spring 2021. I cannot commit to more than that for obvious reasons to do with budgets and budget timetables, but I am sure that that will be an active part of the conversation that Liam McArthur will wish to have.

#### **Budget 2020-21 (Climate Change)**

**3. Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how measures in its budget for 2020-21 will help Scotland to meet its climate change ambitions. (S5O-04238)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** The budget responds directly to the global climate emergency by proposing an ambitious package of measures to help to deliver our transition to being a greener and fairer nation. That has been recognised by Chris Stark, the chief executive of the United Kingdom Committee on Climate Change, who said that climate change is

“taking centre stage in Scotland's Budget”.

We are investing more than £250 million of multi-annual funding in peatland restoration, introducing a new £120 million package to deliver a heat transition deal and to begin decarbonising our heat usage, delivering an initial £40 million for the agricultural transformation programme, and investing more than £100 million in active travel.

I could also mention the total low-carbon capital investment of around £1.8 billion in 2020-21, which is £500 million more than in 2019-20. By taking decisive action now in areas that are challenging to decarbonise, we have shown our commitment to tackling the global climate emergency.

**Angus MacDonald:** Local authorities have a critical role to play in responding to the climate emergency. What steps is the Scottish

Government taking to incentivise local authorities to use the assets and levers that are at their disposal to reduce emissions and boost the economy, including the green growth accelerator that was announced as part of this year's budget?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** It is true that local authorities and the rest of the public sector have a vital role to play in tackling the global climate emergency. That is why in the budget we have made significant commitments to supporting their efforts. Measures include the new £50 million heat networks early adopter challenge fund, which will allow local authorities to significantly expand, or instigate the development of, heat networks such as will be critical to decarbonising heat in our homes.

As Angus MacDonald mentioned, the green growth accelerator is another vital lever. At budget time this year, we made a £200 million multiyear commitment to delivering additional low-carbon investment through that mechanism.

We are committed to working closely with local government and the wider public sector to go further and faster towards net zero emissions for the benefit of all.

**Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** Dumfries and Galloway claims to be the birthplace of renewables because it was the first place to have onshore and offshore wind farms. Will the cabinet secretary accept my invitation to visit Dumfries and Galloway and explore how the region could be an exemplar for the 26th conference of the parties—COP26—of local action and partnership working to respond to the climate change challenge?

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** I asked that yesterday.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I get a distinct sense that a pincer movement on Dumfries and Galloway has emerged in the past 24 hours.

I am, of course, always happy to visit all parts of Scotland. If there are specific things that Finlay Carson wishes me to see or people he wishes me to speak to, we will do our best to fit that into my diary.

### Deposit Return Scheme

**4. Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with small brewers and specialist retailers regarding its plans for a deposit return scheme. (S5O-04239)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** The Scottish Government has met representatives of small brewers to discuss deposit return on two occasions, and that

engagement is on-going, with a further meeting scheduled to take place on Friday this week. I also plan to meet representatives of the sector in the near future.

A number of retail and brewing trade bodies also participate in the various working groups that have been formed to progress our plans for the DRS. I look forward to laying the final regulations to establish the scheme shortly.

**Patrick Harvie:** Scotland has a fantastic range of small independent brewers across the country, as well as retailers that specialise in their products rather than in volume sales of mass-manufactured products. Those businesses want the DRS to work, but does the cabinet secretary recognise that it needs to work in a way that reflects the specific circumstances of small independent producers and retailers, and that, so far, big business has had a louder voice on the advisory board than small businesses?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I absolutely agree. We are keen to ensure that the scheme works well for small and specialist producers as well as for retailers. That is very important. Proposals that we are considering very carefully have been made by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. We are committed to working with industry, including small businesses, on implementation of the DRS.

We are looking very closely at things that might assist small businesses or reassure them that their concerns are being taken care of. I hope that people will see that very soon, when the final regulations are laid.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** There are supplementary questions from Colin Smyth and Annie Wells, who will both have to be brief.

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** The deposit return scheme will have a unique impact on businesses that are close to the English border—in particular, small businesses that make home deliveries to premises that are very close to each other, but are on either side of the border. What action is being taken to mitigate the challenges that such businesses will face?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** That issue has been discussed. I make it clear to members that the scheme administrator, when it is up and running, will consider the potential for what we might call fraud in such instances. The issue is on the radar: we understand that there are difficulties in some respects.

A variety of schemes that are in operation across Europe work on both sides of a border. The problems are not insurmountable, and I do not for

a single minute suppose that we will be unable to find solutions for Scotland.

**Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** I have been in my role only for a few weeks, but already businesses at almost every single stage of the supply chain are raising concerns about the DRS. We are fully behind the principles of the scheme, as most businesses are. However, businesses are worried—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I want a question.

**Annie Wells:** Businesses are worried that the Government is rushing the scheme. I say to the cabinet secretary, “Let’s do this, but let’s get it right.” Will she agree to delay the deposit return scheme until small businesses are on board and ready to make it a success?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I did mean brief.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** I will be laying the final regulations very soon, at which point all questions will be answered.

### **Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy**

**5. Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its cleaner air for Scotland strategy. (S5O-04240)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** An independent review of the cleaner air for Scotland strategy has been completed and has identified priorities for additional action. A new strategy that takes into account the review findings is now being produced and will be subject to consultation.

**Alexander Stewart:** Friends of the Earth Scotland reported that there are still streets in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness that are in breach of legal limits that should have been met a decade ago. Why are we still waiting for those targets to be met?

**Roseanna Cunningham:** For a very small number of streets in Scotland there continue to be issues. That is why we have introduced low-emission zones in Scotland and why work is being done to ensure that the zones work well and deliver what everybody wants to see with regard to air quality. Once low-emission zones are in place in the largest cities, we will move on to local authority areas with air quality management areas and consider whether low-emission zones might be appropriate for them. That work is all on-going and is being done to achieve exactly what the member is suggesting.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Four members want to ask supplementary questions. To be fair, I will not take any of them.

### **Gareloch (Discharge of Radioactive Waste)**

**6. Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green):** To ask the Scottish Government, in light of its response to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency’s consultation on the matter, for what reason it did not object to the application by the Ministry of Defence to discharge more radioactive waste into the Gareloch. (S5O-04241)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** The member will be aware that matters of defence are reserved to the United Kingdom Government. The Scottish Government is firmly opposed to the possession, threat and use of nuclear weapons. They are morally, strategically and economically wrong, as well as being indiscriminate and devastating in their impacts.

For as long as the UK Government continues to base its weapons in Scotland, our primary concern is the safety of the people of Scotland. The responsibility for regulatory matters at specific sites lies with the independent regulator SEPA, which I understand is now publicly consulting on the MOD’s application.

**Ross Greer:** I welcome the cabinet secretary’s comments about moral outrage at the very existence of the weapons, but the reality is that the Scottish Government is a statutory consultee in a process in which the Ministry of Defence proposes the discharge of up to 52 times more radioactive cobalt-60 and up to 30 times more radioactive tritium directly into the Gareloch. The Scottish Government, as a statutory consultee, did not object. I am simply asking why.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** The consultation is open now and until 13 March. I encourage everybody who is interested in the matter to make a submission to the consultation.

Following a vote for independence, we would obviously make an early agreement to remove all of that from Scotland. I appreciate that Ross Greer would agree with that, but others who are concerned about the issue might ponder the future and the reasons why they will not follow our view that independence would be the best option with regard to it.

### **Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019 (Revenues)**

**7. Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how much coastal communities in the north-east have received in Crown Estate revenues since the

Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019 came into force. (S5O-04242)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** In September 2019, the Scottish ministers announced new funding arrangements whereby coastal community benefit would be sourced from the net revenue of the Scottish Crown Estate. That announcement included £7.2 million-worth of funding to coastal local authorities in 2019-20, based on a distribution formula that had been agreed with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Of that amount, more than £500,000 was provided to council areas in the north-east for coastal community benefit. A further announcement will be made in due course on the allocation of funding for 2020-21.

**Gillian Martin:** As the revenues from the Crown Estate are allocated to local authorities, will there be an assessment of how that funding has been delivered to community projects by local authorities? Will there also be an appraisal of the guidance that is available to communities that are looking to make applications?

**Mairi Gougeon:** The Scottish Government's monitoring arrangements will be used to develop a report on how the funding has been used by local authorities. That will include information on funding to individual community projects.

We have requested information from councils on how they plan to use that funding. As members can imagine, we will be looking at that information with some interest. We are also in discussion with COSLA and the stakeholder advisory group on the Crown Estate about the potential need for guidance for local authorities.

However, I highlight that nothing is preventing communities from making a request to their local authority for a share of that net revenue for the benefit of their own coastal communities.

### Climate Change Risk Assessments

**8. Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that there are adequate climate change risk assessments in place in all policy areas. (S5O-04243)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham):** Climate change risks, including severe weather, flooding and wildfire, are included in the Scottish risk assessment process, which informs communities and responders about how to prepare for and mitigate such events.

The Scottish Government's climate change adaptation programme follows an outcomes-based approach that is aligned to the national

performance framework. That ensures that adaptation to climate change risk is integrated into wider Scottish Government policy development and service delivery.

As set out in the process, there are a range of policy-specific risk assessment tools in place, such as the national flood risk assessment.

**Daniel Johnson:** A constituent who is a climate change scientist recently met me to point out that temperatures in excess of 30°C are likely to be more frequently experienced occurrences in Scotland, going from a rate of once in a decade to much more frequent than that. What assessment of the impact of that on schools and hospitals has been made? Obviously, excessive temperatures will have a serious impact on front-line services such as schools and hospitals.

**Roseanna Cunningham:** All those risks are assessed. With regard to our assessment, I do not know that a specific risk has been attached to schools and hospitals as opposed to the public sector as a whole. I am happy to look at whether the programme drills down to something as specific as that.

There are significant concerns about our infrastructure across the board, and they are not just to do with temperature. Coastal erosion is a big issue as well, and a number of buildings and essential infrastructure developments are impacted by that, too. Sometimes there are double impacts that need to be taken into consideration.

I undertake to get back to the member on the specific question that he asks. I will ensure that if there is an answer to that question, he gets it, and if there is not, the question will be asked. I hope that we will then be able to have a proper conversation about that issue.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes questions on environment, climate change and land reform.

**Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. That a local member was not able to ask a supplementary question on such an important subject as nuclear waste being dumped into the River Clyde system—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Will you sit down, please, Mr Paterson? That is not a point of order.

**Gil Paterson:** I have not finished yet.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Sit down, please. It is for the Presiding Officer to decide on supplementaries in getting through questions. That is not a point of order.

## Rural Economy and Tourism

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to questions on rural economy and tourism. I remind members that questions 2 and 6 are grouped.

### Covid-19 (Impact on Tourism)

**1. Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the potential impact on tourism of the coronavirus, Covid-19. (S5O-04244)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government is working closely with our national tourism organisation, VisitScotland, to monitor the situation as it develops and the impacts that it might have on our tourism industry. At this stage, it is key that we share messaging about measures to limit the extent of the outbreak. VisitScotland is the main conduit of information on Covid-19 to the industry and to current and future visitors. That links directly to the advice from the national health service and the Scottish Government.

**Claire Baker:** The tourism sector is already impacted by coronavirus, as bookings are being cancelled and holiday plans are being delayed. What can the Scottish Government do to give emergency support to tourism businesses in the months ahead? Is there an opportunity to look at business rates? That reflects calls from the Scottish Tourism Alliance.

**Fergus Ewing:** All those things will require to be considered very carefully in due course. Claire Baker is correct to say that the tourism industry suffers earlier than other industries. That is principally because of cancellations, many of which are not really because of the facts; rather, they are because of perceptions and media reports. I have already received, as members across the chamber will have, many expressions of concern, especially from small tourism businesses that are particularly vulnerable.

We are taking the issue very seriously and we will come back to it. I have fed in the concerns to SGoRR—the Scottish Government resilience room—which is our equivalent of COBRA, and I will continue to do that.

At the moment, the most important thing is that all of us listen to, act on and respond to the messaging that is put out by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport, the chief medical officer and others in order to best minimise the consequences of a very serious virus.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There are three supplementary questions on this important issue. I want them to be brief.

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** What discussions has the cabinet secretary had with the food and drink sector on the potential impact of Covid-19?

**Fergus Ewing:** This morning, I had a conference call with, I think, 27 participants who represented the main retail organisations in Scotland. We discussed a number of very important practical things that we will take forward.

On the food and drink sector specifically, later this afternoon I will chair by telephone a meeting of a resilience group for the wider food and drink sector. We will discuss the practical impacts of coronavirus and how best we can tackle them.

Rest assured, I and, of course, all my colleagues in the Scottish Government are treating the matter as the most important matter that requires to be dealt with by us at this time.

**Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** I draw members' attention to my entry in the register of interests. I am a shareholder in a hospitality business.

With the pressures on the hospitality and tourism industry and a potential drop in visitor numbers to the United Kingdom because of coronavirus, does the cabinet secretary agree with the calls from UK Hospitality and the STA, which have said that a delay to introducing or abandoning proposals to introduce a damaging tourist tax at this time would be preferential?

**Fergus Ewing:** First, it would be less than courteous of me not to welcome Ms Hamilton to her new responsibilities. I appreciate that she has a lifetime of experience in the field. I welcome her to her role and look forward to working constructively with her.

Turning to the member's question, I think it important that we postpone concerns about other matters—of which the visitor levy is one—which the Parliament will deal with in due course. With respect, right now we should focus on matters relating to the coronavirus and how we might tackle them. We must also ensure that we are engaging fully with sectors such as the food and drink sector, which Mr MacDonald mentioned, and the retail sector, so that, as a team, we are all able to respond as effectively as possible to minimise and mitigate the consequences for all in Scotland, including the tourism sector.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** The cabinet secretary will be aware of the growing importance of the cruise liner market to our tourism sector, including in Orkney. What specific advice and support are the Government and its agencies able to give local authorities such as Orkney Islands Council to ensure that risks relating to cruise traffic are managed effectively?

**Fergus Ewing:** Mr McArthur is absolutely right: the cruise sector is extremely important to Scotland. It is one of the fastest-growing sectors in tourism that we have had—I think that it has grown around tenfold since the Parliament was reconvened. When I visited his constituency when I was on holiday last summer, I saw just how popular Kirkwall and the Orkneys are as tourism destinations for cruise liner passengers—as, indeed, is the case around our coasts.

I assure Mr McArthur that there is close liaison with all local authorities about how best to deal with the coronavirus. The headline information, on which my colleague Jeane Freeman is leading, is that it is important for us all, as individuals and as citizens of Scotland, to get the published messages across, to continue to follow them correctly and to use our role as leaders in society to ensure that others follow our lead.

### Trade Negotiations (Fishing Rights)

**2. Annie Wells (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it supports the position of the United Kingdom or the European Union on fishing rights in relation to the trade negotiations between the two Administrations. (S5O-04245)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** My priority for the negotiations is, as it has always been, to defend the interests of the Scottish fishing industry and the wider seafood supply chain.

**Annie Wells:** The choice for the Scottish National Party Government is pretty simple: either it wants the UK to take back control of our waters and for us to become an independent coastal state, or it wants to drag us back to the hated common fisheries policy. Instead of the usual waffle, could we not just get an answer? Will the SNP Government back the UK Government and support Scottish fishing, or would it rather send our catch back to Brussels?

**Fergus Ewing:** It is disappointing that such a partisan approach should be taken on the issue. In recent weeks, I have noticed that many who might previously have supported Brexit are now expressing serious questions about the emerging problems that are becoming manifest.

First, contrary to what Michael Gove told me, there will be environmental health certificates. It is estimated that those will cost up to £15 million, although that estimate was provided some time ago and might now have been superseded by the first Boris Brexit bill.

Secondly, we will undoubtedly see people from other countries in Europe, who are so important to the fishing communities around Scotland, being sent the message that they are not welcome to

stay here—a poisonous, unpleasant and insidious message that the Scottish Government totally and utterly rejects.

Thirdly, we do not know whether there will be any deal on fisheries—we are completely in the dark on that.

Fourthly, we do not know whether the desire to get a trade deal will take precedence over the formerly expressed interest in the livelihoods of fishermen.

The Tories really should go back and look at the facts about what are now emerging as the consequences of their Brexit policy—which very few of them used to support, incidentally.

### European Negotiations (Aquaculture)

**6. Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with the United Kingdom Government regarding its European Union negotiations on aquaculture. (S5O-04249)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** We have not had specific discussions on aquaculture with the UK Government, but we are concerned about the approach that it is taking in respect of tariffs thereanent.

**Beatrice Wishart:** Aquaculture is hugely important to small rural communities. The cabinet secretary may be aware that 23 per cent of UK farmed salmon and 75 per cent of Scottish farmed mussels are produced in Shetland. Does the cabinet secretary share my concerns that the industry could be hit with a sea of red tape as a consequence of leaving the European Union? Can he set out what plans there are for additional resources to help producers to continue to export when the transition period comes to an end?

**Fergus Ewing:** I broadly share those concerns. I know from a recent visit to Shetland just how important the aquaculture sector is to the Shetlands.

The sector sustains around 12,000 jobs in Scotland and it increasingly operates in accordance with the sustainable standards that we all support. That is a task that we are committed to and on which lots of work is being done. For example, I made an announcement today in response to a question from Mr Gibson about the regulation of wrasse and a consultation thereanent. Those matters are very important and I am pleased that the member has raised them in the chamber.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** The cabinet secretary alluded to the vile remarks of the Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack, who claimed that migrant



workers, including those who work in the fish processing industry in my constituency, come here only for benefits and to access the national health service. Does he agree that that confirms why we need immigration policy to be devolved at the earliest opportunity?

**Fergus Ewing:** Yes, I agree entirely. Such remarks fail to recognise the very valuable contribution that non-UK workers make to Scotland. Each EU citizen adds, on average, an estimated £34,000 to Scottish gross domestic product annually. The expert advisory group on migration and population has also confirmed that

“EU migrants typically contribute more through tax revenues than they consume by way of public services.”

However, it is not the monetary contribution that is so important; it is the human contribution. They come to Scotland; they choose to do so and they choose to work hard here. Is that not a good thing for a human being to do, rather than something that should be treated with such contempt by the UK Government?

### **Trade Negotiations (Food and Animal Welfare Standards)**

**3. Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with the United Kingdom Government regarding food and animal welfare standards in non European Union trade deals since the rural secretary's letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 20 February. (S5O-04246)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon):** The Scottish Government has consistently raised the importance of Scotland's globally recognised food and animal welfare standards not being sacrificed in order to secure trade deals. In recent days, officials have engaged in technical discussions with their UK Government counterparts to reiterate those concerns. As yet, the UK Government has not provided any reliable assurances that the likes of hormone-treated beef, among other products, will not be granted access to the UK market.

**Gil Paterson:** Does the minister also have concerns about the potential impact of the UK Government's proposed tariff regimes on Scotland's food and drink sector, including the very valuable exports from my constituency, which are sent worldwide?

**Mairi Gougeon:** I absolutely share those concerns. The Scottish Government and Scottish food and drink businesses have deep concerns about the potential impact of the tariff regime that has been proposed in the UK Government's rushed consultation. We have been clear that unilateral reduction or removal of tariffs reduces

the UK's negotiating capital and exposes Scottish producers to increased competition from imports that are produced using lower and cheaper production standards.

There is a very real risk that Scottish farmers and food producers are going to face the worst of both worlds in the situation that we are facing, as there will be higher barriers and the high cost of trade with the EU as well as competition against imported food that has been produced to lower standards.

As I hinted at, the UK Government has, as yet, offered no guarantees that those things will not happen. We appear to be getting told to simply check the labels on our food. Our position is simple: we should not be letting inferior products into the country in the first place.

### **Agricultural Support (Pilot Schemes)**

**4. Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I draw members' attention to my entry in the register of members' interests.

To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the publication of the NFU Scotland document “Stability—The Platform for Change”, what pilot schemes for agricultural support it will introduce for the 2021 claim year. (S5O-04247)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** As convener of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, Mr Mountain will be aware that I and Scottish Government officials recently gave evidence on the issue as part of the stage 1 process on the Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill, when we set out our approach and thinking on pilots.

I note the recommendations of the committee's stage 1 report in that regard, to which I will of course respond before stage 2 begins. I am happy to keep Parliament updated on the development of policy on pilots.

**Edward Mountain:** As we debate the issue here in Parliament, spring calving is under way. Farmers who plan three to four years ahead need to know what to do with their calves now. Will the cabinet secretary bear that in mind and introduce pilot schemes as quickly as possible, so that farmers can see a way forward?

**Fergus Ewing:** I am always acutely aware of the importance of providing long-term assurances to farmers. That is precisely why we set out in our document an approach that will take us to 2024. It is most unfortunate that the United Kingdom Government is to take an annual budget approach to replace the seven-year programme that the European Union provided in respect of rural

support. That is exactly the opposite of the approach that farmers require.

Happily, farmers—who include some of Mr Mountain's colleagues—have received the first tranche of their convergence payments. More than 17,400 active farmers have received £86.2 million. I think that farmers are very pleased that we are dealing with the day job effectively and getting that financial support out to them.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will allow two brief supplementaries.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I declare a part ownership in a registered agricultural holding.

Does the cabinet secretary agree that, contrary to the suggestions of the Tories down south, agriculture and food producers are far from irrelevant?

**Fergus Ewing:** I was astonished that any adviser of the UK Government or any other Government in these islands would say, essentially, that farmers and farming are expendable. That was quite shocking, and it displays an attitude that we believe has been prevalent for some time in the Treasury, where people are anxious to get rid of support for farmers and crofters in Scotland. Well, they will not be doing that as long as I am around—that is for sure.

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** Does the cabinet secretary accept that one way in which he could set out a clear direction of travel during the transitional period would be by including a purpose clause in the Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill, in which he could set out what he believes the pilot schemes should be used for?

**Fergus Ewing:** We will debate the inclusion of a purpose clause in the bill. It is right that we take that suggestion very seriously.

However, I say to Mr Smyth, with respect, that, at the moment, farmers and crofters are concerned about paying their bills and carrying on their work. They are concerned about the unfounded attacks on them from many quarters. What do they need from Government? They need the support schemes to be administered efficiently, and we are delivering that. They also need a clear sign about where Scotland is going. We have provided that in the document that I alluded to earlier and in many utterances that I have made in this Parliament, and we will continue to do so.

#### **Heathrow Expansion (Impact on Tourism)**

**5. Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has carried out of the potential impact on tourism in

Scotland of the recent ruling against building a third runway at Heathrow airport. (S5O-04248)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** We do not hold sector-specific analysis. However, we are clear that, now more than ever, Scotland needs to have excellent connections with the rest of the world. That connectivity will be provided through a mix of direct routes from Scotland and connections to global hubs such as Heathrow, Dubai and Amsterdam.

VisitScotland and partners will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that Scotland is an attractive destination that is easily reached by our visitors.

**Adam Tomkins:** I thank the cabinet secretary for that answer, but I say to him, with respect, that it was as clear as mud. Could we have a bit of clarity on the matter? Is the Scottish Government in favour of a hub airport at Heathrow for Scotland's tourism and other economic sectors—yes or no?

**Fergus Ewing:** If Mr Tomkins had listened to what I said, he would know that I have already said that we need to have global connections through, among other airports, Heathrow.

Mr Tomkins might not be too happy about this, but I am bound to point out that it was under Chris Grayling's instruction that the United Kingdom Government omitted to take account of its commitment to the Paris agreement on climate action in its drive to build a third runway at Heathrow. The consequences came at the Court of Appeal, when the project was refused permission to take off. If the UK Government paid more attention to the day job, perhaps it would not keep getting defeated in court.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Patrick Harvie, but he must be brief.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Is not the real lesson of the defeat of the unlawful attempt to expand Heathrow, in defiance of the climate emergency, that the Scottish Government should have spent the past decade and more reorienting our Scottish tourism industry around surface travel instead of schmoozing with the unsustainable airline industry and trying to win it tax breaks?

**Fergus Ewing:** It might not surprise anyone to hear that I do not agree with Mr Harvie's characterisation of the matter. We have taken great steps to improve connectivity in Scotland. We recognise that air routes are one way in which visitors come to Scotland. Those routes are, and will continue to be, important. Scotland needs more direct air routes, which, of course, have many advantages. That is the Scottish Government's view. Mr Harvie may want to cease

aviation throughout the world entirely, but I do not support that policy.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes portfolio questions on the rural economy and tourism. I apologise to Jamie Greene and Joan McAlpine—if I take supplementaries, I am afraid that some questions get omitted at the end. It is a difficult balance to strike.

## Funded Childcare (Expansion)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani):** The next item of business is a Conservative Party debate on motion S5M-21177, in the name of Jamie Greene, on the expansion of funded childcare.

14:42

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** From August this year, universal funded early learning and childcare for three, four and vulnerable two-year-olds will increase from 600 to 1,140 hours per child, per year. The Scottish Government promises to provide high-quality and flexible early learning that is accessible and affordable for all families. For the most part, the policy was well intentioned, has been well received, enjoys broad political support and is viewed as a positive step towards encouraging parents back into the workplace and closing the attainment gap, which is vital.

So far, so good. It is hard to disagree with any of that, I hear members say, “So why it is urgent that we have this debate?” Two years ago, Audit Scotland published “Early learning and childcare”, which was a comprehensive report that looked at the increase in provision from 475 to 600 hours per year. It flagged several concerns about the proposals to increase that to 1,140 hours. On page 5 of the 2018 report—right up front—it said:

“There are significant risks that councils will not be able to expand ... to 1,140 hours ... In particular it will be difficult to increase the infrastructure and workforce to the levels required, in the limited time available.”

Just last week, Audit Scotland published “Early learning and childcare: Follow-up”. On page 5 of that report—right up front again—it states:

“These plans are critically dependent on achieving much in a short time ... This creates ... significant risks around getting enough people and buildings in place to deliver the expansion ... it is likely that some aspects of the policy, such as delivering flexibility and choice, will not be ... implemented by August 2020.”

Therein lies the answer to why we are having the debate. Two years ago, detailed, well-researched and independent commentary from a respected institution highlighted the key challenges that the Government faced. Two years on, those same risks are repeated, almost word for word, in the 2020 report.

Against the helpful backdrop of political consensus on the policy, today’s debate is crucial in bringing to the attention of ministers the fact that, out there in the real world, there are real concerns. There is genuine good will in the chamber to support the roll-out of the additional

hours of provision, but the Government ignores our concerns at its peril.

Following the initial expansion of early years provision in other parts of the United Kingdom, there are many lessons to be learned. Following the release of two in-depth Audit Scotland reports on the deliverability of the policy, one would think that the Scottish Government was armed with more than enough best practice, historical learnings and reality checks to have, at the very least, the modesty to admit that the policy is proving to be an almighty and challenging promise to deliver. However, in the absence of such modesty, as the Government's amendment predictably and disappointingly illustrates, the issues that we highlight today will be ignored.

Our motion positively welcomes the Government's ambition and rightfully acknowledges the cross-party support that that ambition continues to receive. In our motion, we point ministers in the direction of Audit Scotland's report, which notes some basic but important elements of the roll-out that pose a risk to its success. Those comments mirror the concerns of stakeholders who we have spoken to in the past few weeks.

Many eyes are on us today, such is the interest in getting it right. I say to those on the Government benches, "Please listen and let us help you to get it right."

There is a lot to cover, so I have chosen a few themes that strike me as the most pertinent and most in need of being the focus of our attention. First, Audit Scotland's report focuses on concerns over the infrastructure and workforce requirements to deliver the policy fully and on time. The second theme is sustainable funding and the role that funded providers will play, and the third is how the policy is being communicated by local authorities to early years providers.

Audit Scotland's report raises serious concerns about whether local authorities will have the staff, capital infrastructure and networks in place to deliver the Government's ambition in five short months. By September 2019, the number of staff who had been recruited to meet council-delivered demand was around 4,300, which is about half of the 8,200 staff that they will need to be fully staffed. By any measure, that is some way off target, and that is before we discuss the funded provider sector, which is also struggling as many staff move from private to council settings.

The minister will be keen to wax lyrical about what the Scottish Government has done so far and, today, she will no doubt point towards the increase in training opportunities and Government initiatives that are under way to improve recruitment. That is all very welcome, but the

numbers speak for themselves. What started as an absolute guarantee from the minister to deliver the policy by August 2020 last week turned into the comment that:

"We are confident that ... we will deliver ... this August."—[*Official Report*, 3 March 2020; c 4.]

Confidence is one thing; the ability to deliver is another. How the Government is going to double its recruitment numbers in a few short months is beyond me.

The people are not there and neither is the infrastructure. We are some way behind in the provision of the physical classrooms and buildings, the shared back-office systems, and the billing and financial reconciliation processes. Audit Scotland could not have been clearer on that. It said that

"Any delays to this will impact on service delivery",

which we are already starting to see. In Renfrewshire, delays to a major refurbishment of Lochwinnoch nursery have local councillors worried about whether they will cope with the increased demand that is placed on them. A council-run nursery in North Ayrshire had 60 applicants for just seven places. The cracks are already beginning to show.

The problem with loading capacity-building projects into the final few months means that any delay to those projects runs the risk of derailing delivery at the last moment. The Government talks about contingency planning in its amendment, which is surely a thinly veiled admission that all is not well. What are the so-called contingency plans and why do we need them?

On the face of it, as I said, the policy sounds all well and good. Few parents will complain at their nursery bills dropping from £700 to £200 a month, which leads me to a crucial point in the debate: funding and sustainability. The Scottish Government was eager to promise that local authorities will pay a sustainable rate to funded providers that will cover the true cost of running the service and providing a living wage to staff and allow for future investment and expansion in premises. However, unless someone has been living in a cave for the past six months, they will know that that is not playing out as intended.

In part, that is because some local authorities were underfunded from the outset. The Scottish Government tasked local authorities with setting out their financial projections for how much the expansion would cost to deliver in revenue and capital terms. Local authorities diligently costed the expansion and submitted their figures to the Scottish Government. However, 12 councils found that they will receive less revenue funding than they asked for, and 18 councils received less capital funding than they estimated was needed to

increase capacity, as was the case for South Lanarkshire Council.

However, the big elephant in the room is the issue of funding and the sustainability of the rate that funded providers are being offered to deliver the additional hours in return for signing up to the scheme. Today, many nurseries survive only by topping up the subsidised 600 hours per child per year rate; they have to be up front with parents about the hourly rate that they will charge and about what they will get for their money. Under the new contract, providers will have to deliver the funded hours at the agreed rate of subsidy, with no top-ups or extras. For many, that rate is less than the cost of providing the care and learning. Therefore, we need to have a sensible discussion about what constitutes a sustainable funding rate and why there is so much unexplainable divergence across Scotland.

To make ends meet, providers will face stark choices, none of which appeals to them very much. They can increase the rate that they charge for additional hours—the hours above the 1,140—and some have already done so by as much as 15 per cent, which will hit hardest those families who need more hours.

To make ends meet, providers could reduce the quality of service. As one nursery described, at the moment, parents get bells and whistles, high-quality, freshly prepared food and tonnes of extra-curricular activities. With the new rate, the nursery might have to charge extra for those services or reduce the quality of the experience. We know who the losers are in that equation, as the people the funded hours seek to help can least afford the extras. Many providers will give preference to applicants who want full-time places or require more hours, which will hit parents who want to work or study part time.

The Scottish Government promised a “provider neutral” approach to ensure that funding follows the child through whichever means of care the parents choose. The Government will stick to those lines today but providers have no way of tracking the child, money or hours.

The third point that I will raise is on communication, consultation and the roll-out of the policy. Providers raise their concerns with us and with the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government is failing in its duty to foster relationships between providers and the funding authorities. In its stakeholder outreach, the Parliament’s Education and Skills Committee found that there is major tension between local authorities and many providers. Many private and third sector nurseries feel as though they are being ignored by decision makers. The Government knows that there is tension, but it cannot abdicate its responsibility to ensure that all

providers of early learning and childcare are funded properly, as it claims that the policy will do.

What is the point of expanding early years funding? The Government says that it is to improve the attainment of our children, to encourage parents back into work and study, and to improve family wellbeing. Those are admirable aims, but they must also be measurable.

The Audit Scotland report rightly raises concerns about the absence of a robust strategy or the baseline data that is needed in order to analyse properly the short, medium and long-term success of the policy. If we cannot confidently analyse outcomes, how will we know whether the investment has offered value for money?

I have barely scratched the surface of the ground that we need to cover today. Since the expansion was first mooted by ministers, ELC providers have been forthcoming and vocal about their issues around recruitment and sustainability and their concerns about maintaining the high levels of quality of care that they want to provide. All those concerns have been vindicated in two Audit Scotland reports.

The Scottish Conservatives will work constructively with the Government to help it deliver that policy, but that requires the Government to work constructively with those who are tasked with delivering it. The nothing-to-see attitude in the Government’s amendment is unsustainable and untenable. I will take no joy in coming back to the chamber in five months’ time to say to the minister, “I told you so,” but, unless the members on the Government benches listen carefully to what is being said here today, I fear that I might have to do just that.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the strong cross-party support for the expansion of funded childcare to 1,140 hours; expresses its concern however, regarding the findings of the most recent report by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, *Early learning and childcare Follow-up*, which states that certain risks remain around buildings, staffing and the sustainability of the private, voluntary and independent sectors; is concerned that the report notes that it is likely that flexibility and choice for parents will not be fully implemented by August 2020, and that any delays to the expansion will impact service delivery and families who are planning to use these services, and demands that the Scottish Government urgently addresses these concerns.

14:54

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd):** In September last year, 50,000 children across Scotland were already benefiting from additional high-quality early learning and childcare—high-quality learning and care that we

know, from international evidence, can transform their lifelong outcomes.

The expansion is already happening. Nurseries have been, and continue to be, extended, refurbished and built. Staff at all levels have been, and continue to be, recruited. However, the most important thing—the reason why the Parliament supports the policy—is that children are already benefiting, and many more will benefit as of this August. Yes, there is still much to do. However, we are confident that by continuing to work closely with our partners in local government—as we have done from the beginning—we will have a successful delivery of the expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland.

In its report last week, Audit Scotland recognised the progress that we have made. I want to start by reading out the first two lines of the key messages in that report, which say:

“The Scottish Government and councils are making steady progress to deliver the expansion of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). At a national level, progress is broadly in line with plans to deliver the increased hours by August 2020.”

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):** Does the minister consider that “steady progress” is enough, given that only 40 per cent of the relevant children are receiving the increased hours, which means that provision will need to more than double by August?

**Maree Todd:** As I will go on to explain during the debate, I am absolutely confident that we will deliver in August 2020, and I will give my reasoning for that.

The report goes on to remark that there is “effective national oversight of the expansion”.

It is right that Parliament debates the challenges in delivering such an ambitious transformation programme, but first let us recognise what has already been achieved. That progress is testament to the hard work and commitment of team ELC.

I want to put on record some of the results of that hard work and commitment to date: 50,000 children already benefiting from additional hours; 4,310 full-time equivalent staff in post, a year before delivery, with hundreds more having been recruited since the September data collection; around 5,000 additional college and university places in ELC over the past three academic years; year-on-year growth in ELC modern apprenticeships, with more than 2,000 new starts last year; 361 capital projects already complete; and private and third sector partners now expected to deliver 28 per cent of total places, which is up four percentage points on original forecasts. That is real progress, with real

achievements, created through real partnership across the whole system.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** The minister will be aware that the Peedie Breeks nursery in Orkney is scheduled to close in July. What consultation has she had with the local council about meeting the gap there? Is she still confident that the expanded-hours target will be met in Orkney by August, given the closure of that important nursery?

**Maree Todd:** From my communication with the local authority, I understand that it is confident that places are available in the system already, despite the fact that that nursery has to close because of the dereliction order on the building that it operates from.

I have always recognised that delivering such a major transformation programme is not without risk. Effectively managing risk is key to successful delivery of any major public reform. Audit Scotland has highlighted two key areas of risk, around infrastructure and workforce. We have not only identified those risks but have designed robust actions to address and mitigate them. I will take each in turn.

On infrastructure, the data on capital projects in the Audit Scotland report is from October 2019. Significant progress has been made since then. Councils now tell us that, as of January 2020, 40 per cent of all capital projects are already complete, which is 3 per cent ahead of projections. Good risk management demands good contingency planning. Again, there is clear progress since October. In January, councils had robust contingency plans in place for all critical projects that are due to complete this summer.

**Jamie Greene:** Saying that councils have robust contingency plans is one thing, but what are they? Where are the places? Where are the children actually going to go?

**Maree Todd:** As Jamie Greene will be aware, members are perfectly at liberty to explore the robust contingency plans with the local authorities in their areas. I have been assured by my work—and the joint delivery board has absolutely been assured—that there are robust contingency plans in place for critical infrastructure.

**Jamie Greene:** What are they?

**Maree Todd:** Why does the member not ask his local authority? Why does he not work with his local authority, just as I am doing?

I turn to the workforce. It bears repeating that over half of the required workforce has already been recruited, and I am sure that Parliament will agree that prudent use of public money requires local and national Government to plan and phase

recruitment so that staff are in post for when they are needed.

**Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con):** In March 2018, I asked the minister whether she would guarantee that local authorities would not be short of staff. She said:

“I will absolutely give a guarantee that we will find ourselves with enough staff by 2020.”—[*Official Report*, 1 March 2018; c 2.]

Does she stand by that guarantee?

**Maree Todd:** Yes—I guarantee that we will not find ourselves short of staff by August 2020.

I know that there are concerns about movement of staff from private and third sector settings to local authorities. I assure all providers that everything that we do nationally to support the ELC workforce is done to support every sector—private, public and voluntary. The creation of more training places, free advertising for private providers and councils growing their own are all part of the solution.

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** What does the minister have to say to the childminding sector, which is already expressing grave concerns about the delay in issuing guidance and where the sector fits into the expansion, given that it is already losing children to council settings?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I can give you more time to cover the interventions, minister.

**Maree Todd:** Thank you.

We will come on to the issue of childminders, but I note that childminders are expected to more than double the proportion of ELC that they provide in the national picture. There are more childminders registered as partner providers with the local authorities than ever before, and this is an opportunity for me to highlight yet again that childminding is absolutely a fabulous choice for any family who want to use their childcare hours with a childminder.

There is more that we can do, and I am listening and will act. Our updated delivery support plan will include further actions to support our partner providers across the country and address recruitment and retention challenges.

I will say a few words on partnership. No single part of our early learning and childcare system could deliver the policy alone, and that is why it is encouraging to see Audit Scotland conclude that

“the Scottish Government, COSLA, councils and other stakeholders are continuing to work well together”.

I genuinely believe that we are on track because we are working effectively together, and that “we” is broad, as it includes the Government, councils,

public bodies, private and voluntary nurseries, our childminders and more. It is team ELC.

I know that there remains much work to do, but I am confident that, with the continued close partnership working that has characterised the expansion so far, we are on course to deliver the most generous, high-quality early learning and childcare offer in the UK, which can transform the lives of our children.

I know that this Parliament cares as deeply as I do about the future of our citizens in Scotland. I know that we agree with this investment in our citizens’ earliest years because of the benefits that it will bring to children, their families and their parents. I challenge members who contribute to the debate to ensure that children remain at the heart of their contributions and at the heart of their scrutiny of our progress in building a system of high-quality, expanded early learning and childcare.

The policy is not about buildings, recruitment, hours or even the flexibility of those hours for those things’ own sake; it is about improving children’s lives. From day 1, it has had quality at its heart because we know that we will improve children’s lives only if their experience of ELC day in, day out is of the highest quality. The benefits will be felt in every community in Scotland, and it is right that there is support across Parliament for such a transformational policy.

I move amendment S5M-21177.3, to leave out from “recognises” to end and insert:

“welcomes the findings of the most recent report by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, *Early learning and childcare Follow-up*, that ‘the Scottish Government and councils are making steady progress to deliver the expansion of funded early learning and childcare’; notes that the Scottish Government remains committed to working closely and effectively in partnership with councils to ensure that the expansion to 1,140 hours will be delivered from August 2020; recognises that a major and ambitious transformation programme is always subject to risk and challenges, but that the Scottish Government and councils have robust plans and contingencies in place to address these risks and challenges, and places on record its appreciation of the hard work and commitment of thousands of early learning and childcare professionals across Scotland who are working tirelessly to deliver the expansion while offering high-quality learning and care to young children.”

15:05

**Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to open the debate for Scottish Labour. We have long supported the ambitions behind the early learning and childcare expansion to 1,140 funded hours. With only five months until the expansion’s deadline, the Audit Scotland report is a timely intervention.

Scottish Labour welcomes the finding of the follow-up report into early learning and childcare, as we welcomed the initial report in 2018. Both reports show the scale of the expansion of funded ELC and the challenges to be faced then and now. We thank the Conservatives for using their debating time to discuss the Audit Scotland report and the overall expansion, once again. We will support the motion this evening and we ask for support for our amendment, which seeks to raise a crucial issue surrounding payment of the living wage.

The Audit Scotland report highlighted a range of risks and issues with the expansion, on which the Tory motion reflects. However, we believe that it is vital to close what we see as a loophole, which Audit Scotland highlighted. Legal advice shows that private providers may not have to pay their staff the living wage. We want the Scottish Government to acknowledge that loophole and set out how it plans to address it in the coming months.

The Audit Scotland report includes a range of recommendations based on its findings. We hope that the Scottish Government and councils act on the recommendations to minimise consequences that put the expansion at risk. The most significant challenges to the expansion are recruitment of staff and building of infrastructure projects. With only a matter of months until the August 2020 deadline, it is disappointing that those problems continue to be raised, which shows that the initial policy—welcome as it was—was hastily thrown together by ministers and introduced without any real action plans behind it.

In the next four to five months, the number of additional staff that will be required in council settings is estimated to be more than 2,200, which is about 27 per cent of the number of full-time equivalent staff required for the whole expansion. That is a major challenge for councils, but it is not the only recruitment challenge. Partner providers have reported a series of problems with recruitment and retention; councils expect them to play a larger role in the expansion, which means that those challenges have become more problematic.

In the West Scotland region, I have heard anecdotal evidence that some private nursery staff are leaving for council-run nurseries, and that is not restricted to my region. The Audit Scotland report points out the worries of funded providers, which they and other organisations have reported many times in the past few years.

**Jamie Greene:** The Conservatives will support the Labour amendment, which makes a very valid point. The reality is that funded providers in the private sector are struggling to deliver on the new rates that have been made available to them.

Does Mary Fee agree that they have the ambition to pay their staff more to try to retain them and stop them from moving to council sectors, but that they need to be adequately funded in the first place?

**Mary Fee:** I am grateful to Jamie Greene for his intervention. It is obvious that funders and providers need to be able to pay their staff the living wage and that they need to be properly supported and funded by local authorities. That issue needs to be examined further, as we go forward.

The anecdotal evidence is that some staff are returning to the private sector after a few months. That might be slightly helpful to some providers; however, it raises further questions about the sustainability of funded providers and the recruitment and retention of council-run services. The movement of staff between sectors—for which the planning should have started long before now, so that effective plans could be in place—needs to be better monitored at national and local levels. The recruitment and retention challenges for funded providers risk the sustainability of those services—if they are not sustainable, that would be a great loss to staff and to children and, most importantly, their families.

The biggest risk of the expansion surrounds the infrastructure projects that are due for completion before August 2020—that is only five months from now. Audit Scotland has told us that the infrastructure risk has risen to the maximum level. Half of the places that are expected to be created will come through infrastructure projects that are due to be ready between July and August. According to the Audit Scotland report, that equates to 303 projects, and we are warned that 250 of those are “critical” to meeting the expected demand.

We have also found out that there are a lack of contingency plans in place for many of the projects. Audit Scotland has told us that 83 are expected to be completed in the short space of time before August. For another 39 projects, we do not have such assurances.

Audit Scotland highlighted that Brexit would have an impact on the building work. However, we also face a greater threat that was not realised in the report: the potential spread of the coronavirus. I accept that the Scottish Government, like the rest of us, would not have factored a global pandemic into its planning. However, it knew the risks of the infrastructure programme in 2018, when Audit Scotland released its initial report. Two years later, those risks are the most pressing issue—with only a matter of months before the deadline.

Audit Scotland tells us that the expansion was ambitious. We have concerns that the speed of



the expansion might have been poorly conceived. The expansion poses risks to the sustainability of partner providers and childminders. It is teetering on the edge, and the only way that we will find out about its success or failure will be through the experience of children and their families.

The Scottish Government has five months to get it right, and five months to prevent families from being let down. It must listen to the recommendations from Audit Scotland and to the Parliament today.

Scottish Labour wants to see the best quality childcare, led by committed, dedicated and well-paid staff.

I move amendment S5M-21177.1, to insert after “independent sectors;”:

“notes with regret what has been identified by Audit Scotland as a possible loophole that prevents staff being paid the real living wage;”.

15:12

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** I am grateful to the Scottish Conservatives for using their business time to enable us to debate progress in the expansion of funded childcare.

If we deliver the policy properly and fully—that means the hours and the flexibility—the lives of more children and families can be transformed. Families are, and more will be, able to spend more on food, housing and leisure. People might be able to afford to work fewer hours and families could spend more time together.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child tells us that a child has a right to develop “to the maximum extent possible.”

One way in which we can help our youngest citizens to develop to that “maximum extent possible” is by ensuring that they and their families have access to high-quality early learning and childcare that are delivered by well-trained staff who are paid at least the living wage, and in buildings that really work for the people who work and learn in them. That is—it has to be—a partnership effort in which local authorities and the independent and voluntary sectors are at the heart of delivering Government policy. However, the Government needs to be absolutely clear that the buildings and workforce exist to deliver the transformative policy.

The minister suggested that if we wish to learn more about the robust contingency plans we should ask local authorities. However, I expect that the minister will have greatest oversight of the plans, and should be able to explain that to Parliament.

As we have heard, and according to Audit Scotland, infrastructure poses the largest risk to the offering of 1,140 hours. Its 2018 report found that

“getting enough buildings and facilities ... in place to deliver the increase in hours was a risk”.

It has now said that that

“remains the case”

and is

“very likely to occur and will have a very high impact”.

The data that councils have provided shows that only around 30 per cent of infrastructure projects were complete by October last year. It is certainly the case that much of what is in the Scottish Government’s plans rests on the ability to achieve a great deal in a very short space of time. Audit Scotland said in its report that

“Almost half of the places to be created through infrastructure development are due to be ready between July and August 2020”.

That very challenging timescale creates its own pressures. It not only increases the likelihood that a delay will directly affect the services that are available in August 2020, but means that a large volume of new places might be being registered at once, which could create capacity issues for the Care Inspectorate.

Buildings are where the important work of childcare takes place, but as we have heard, it is the workforce who make our nurseries by looking after our youngest children and helping them to develop. Important workforce challenges remain in all sectors: in September 2019, councils still needed to recruit about half the additional staff who will be required for the expansion.

Moreover, as Mary Fee was quite right to say, Brexit is likely to impact on delivery of the policy. It is estimated that non-UK European Union nationals account for about 7 per cent of the daycare workforce. Given the significant number of additional staff who must be recruited in order to achieve delivery of 1,140 hours per child, any reduction in the workforce could significantly delay plans. I note that the Tory motion does not mention that.

The excellent briefing that Close the Gap has provided for today’s debate stresses the need to end the extreme gender segregation in the ELC workforce in order for the policy to be delivered. Close the Gap said:

“If more men are to work in the care sector there needs to be an economic imperative to do so, with appropriately remunerated jobs with clear progression pathways as evidence that it is a good career choice. Women continue to comprise 97% of the ELC workforce”.

I argue that those women continue to be undervalued and underpaid.

Scotland is striving to be a better place for children and young people to grow up in, so initiatives such as the baby box and the best start grant are warmly welcomed. However, the debate is taking place in the context of increasing child poverty. Therefore, each and every measure that we take to improve the lives of Scotland's youngest people is important.

I wish that we had more time to consider the production and sharing of food in nursery schools. Why are we building nursery schools that do not have kitchens? I also wish that we had time to consider the impact of expansion on closing the attainment gap.

I will support the Conservative motion this afternoon; it is factual. I understand why the minister focused on the positive findings in the report—there are many—and I agree with her that delivery will be challenging. However, I am still unconvinced that she fully appreciates the scale of the challenge that we face.

I do not have much time left. I must thank the people who work in childcare. I volunteered—some time ago—in my daughter's nursery school. At the time, there was no flexibility; my daughter attended for two and a half hours per day. I used to go in on a Thursday morning, when I would help to prepare snacks and would read stories. At the end of those two and a half hours, I was always absolutely exhausted, so I appreciate how hard, albeit rewarding, the work is. Everyone who works in the sector deserves fair pay and the best training and on-going support.

I have been contacted by constituents who are concerned about the on-going lack of flexibility. One mum told me that she wants to work two full days but has been offered five mornings of childcare: the offer does not match her requirements. Nurseries in my region and outwith it have brought up the issue of the sustainable rate: if we want to deliver the policy, it has to be sustainably funded.

I appreciate that I must draw my remarks to a close, Presiding Officer.

15:18

**Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I thank Jamie Greene for giving Parliament the opportunity to debate the Government's progress in expanding early learning and childcare. The expansion is an important policy that my party wants to be fully realised. High-quality childcare provision is essential in giving all young people the best start in life; it is one of the best investments that we can make. However, as members have

discussed in Parliament before, there are many issues that raise questions not about the direction of travel but about how we are getting there.

The guiding principles of the ELC expansion are quality, affordability, flexibility and accessibility. As members have said, Audit Scotland reports that it is likely that flexibility and choice for parents will not be fully implemented by August 2020. Just this week, I was contacted by a parent who said that, come August, their child will not be using her full 1,140 hours entitlement at a local authority nursery, and that they would like to use the remainder of the hours during school holidays at a private nursery that will be a partner provider. However, the local authority has told them that they cannot use the remaining hours at that nursery, so they will have to pay for care themselves or remove the child from a nursery in which she is settled, and enrol her full time at the private nursery. That does not represent flexibility or affordability.

There is an urgent need for the Government to clarify guidance to local authorities to ensure that they are informing parents correctly. That is another example of the "Take it or leave it" approach that I am worried will be the experience of too many parents from August.

I noted the minister's careful choice of words during topical questions last week. She said:

"I expect flexibility and choice to continue to expand".—  
[*Official Report*, 3 March 2020; c 5.]

Parents will not be satisfied with having to wait until some date in the distant future for childcare hours that work for them. Parents need to know what will be available to them in their local authority so that they can make plans.

August is only five months away. The Government has data from every local authority on the progress that it is making towards being ready for August 2020. It is frustrating that that important information is not in the public domain. In its most recent progress report in December, the Improvement Service said:

"there is significant variability seen across the country".

That is not detailed enough: we need to be able to hold ministers to account. Scottish Liberal Democrats have lodged a series of parliamentary questions to try to get the information. I asked the minister last week whether she will allow us to see the data. We have been told that the Government has no plans to place a copy of the information in the Scottish Parliament information centre, and that withholding the data is in the public interest. I reject the idea that hiding the data is in the public interest. Will the Minister commit today to publishing the data?

I have another question to ask the minister. Right now, parents who choose to defer their child's entry to school will be paying for childcare because their local authority did not approve funding for another year of ELC. Others will be choosing to send their children to school against their better judgment because they cannot afford to pay for childcare. I have written to the minister to ask that parents who have had to pay for childcare be reimbursed. Has the minister considered that proposal? Why cannot a Scottish statutory instrument be laid in Parliament this year that would guarantee that parents who exercise their right to defer will automatically receive funding?

We cannot end up in a rush to the finish line. As Mary Fee pointed out, we now know that 250 infrastructure projects that are critical to meeting demand are due to be completed between June and August, but that 83 of those projects have no contingency plan. Between April and September, councils will need to recruit 27 per cent of the additional staff who will be needed. Quality must continue to be at the forefront if we are to improve outcomes for our youngest children.

I support the motion and call on the Government to urgently address the issues that are being highlighted this afternoon.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We move to the open debate. Can I have speeches of up to six minutes, please? I can allow a little time for interventions.

15:23

**Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP):** I welcome the opportunity to debate the policy, because it is one of the most important in our most recent manifesto. The expansion to 1,140 hours of childcare will be transformational for the lives of many of our citizens. Nothing that we do as legislators or politicians is more important than that.

In supporting our communities, it is absolutely vital that we tackle the attainment gap and reduce poverty. The policy will allow more parents to get into work and give them the opportunity to take advantage of the workplace. It will also ensure that the highest-quality education is given to our young people at the earliest opportunity.

I repeat the statement that the minister quoted from the report:

"The Scottish Government and councils are making steady progress to deliver the expansion of funded early learning and childcare ... At a national level, progress is broadly in line with plans to deliver the increased hours by August 2020."

Progress is already being made, and we can look to the 50,000 children who are already in receipt of expanded childcare.

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** Will the minister take an intervention?

**Clare Adamson:** I am a member. *[Laughter.]*

**Brian Whittle:** I am sorry; it is not up to me to promote Clare Adamson.

In a previous debate, you raised concerns about the sector in your constituency. Are you now comforted by what has been said, and are you happy that the expansion will be delivered in your constituency, despite what you said the last time we debated the matter?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can members always speak through the chair, please?

**Brian Whittle:** I apologise.

**Clare Adamson:** I believe that every member in the chamber is absolutely focused on delivering the best for our young people. Doing so involves scrutiny and taking on board what has been said by Audit Scotland. I go back to its point that we are making the steady progress that was expected. Members should believe that if progress had stalled and we were in a worse position than was set out in the previous Audit Scotland report, the new report would say so.

It is disingenuous of politicians to demand guarantees right now. As a population, we are facing one of our biggest challenges in that we do not know what will happen with the coronavirus. It could impact on all sorts of areas. To pretend that it is not a risk is also completely and utterly disingenuous.

I thank Mary Fee and Alison Johnstone for acknowledging that Brexit has also had an impact on how we deliver this policy, including in respect of recruitment of people to the building trade, who are required in order that we can deliver the capital investments. Without free movement of people, we cannot encourage people to come to Scotland to work in what will be a transformational childcare opportunity.

Yes, there are challenges. As convener of the Education and Skills Committee, I have listened to our focus groups and to the concerns of childminders and private providers. We took those concerns to the Government and it has listened. It is working with those parties on finding solutions. It is incumbent on us all to acknowledge the progress that has been made and the work that has been done, and to make parents realise that it is an amazing opportunity for their young people that we are working as hard as we can to deliver.

The policy is important, because its anticipated outcomes are about having early learning and

childcare of the highest quality. That means that we have to look to the fair work agenda and ensure that people are paid well for the work that they do. That is crucial for our young people. I make no apology for the equal pay guarantee that is being asked of private providers. I take on board Mary Fee's concerns in that regard, but we feel very positive about it. If there are differences between the local authorities that are paying the real living wage and the private sector, business models will need to be examined. People must have a fair-work entitlement attached to their employment.

We are trying to make the scheme affordable for all parents. Recently, there has been budget setting and there has been talk about tax changes and about who pays more and who pays less tax. The policy is a £4,500 investment in each of our young people.

I know from discussions with my children's friends and the children of my friends who will benefit, or are already benefiting from the expanded hours—sadly, not from discussions with my own friends, because I am a bit outwith the generation that has young children—that the policy has made an immense difference to the capabilities of their families, because they have secure and high-quality funded places for their children. Flexibility exists and is important. The fact that the model of the funding following the child is built into the policy gives parents flexibility and the chance to choose what is best for them.

**Mary Fee:** Will the member give way?

**Clare Adamson:** I am just over time.

15:30

**Michelle Ballantyne (South Scotland) (Con):**

At the beginning of the debate, Jamie Greene set out the background and the reasons for the concern. All too often, a policy that sounds good on paper is hard to implement in practice: it might create unintended consequences, or it might challenge the very things that it seeks to promote.

The 1,140 hours policy has broad support, because we know that a good start in life can make an enormous difference to a child's life chances, both socially and economically. However, to deliver the desired aims, we must ensure that the policy buttresses the work and capabilities of providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The policy is teetering on the edge of failing to achieve its goals. Although I have listened to the minister's repeated assurances that all is well, I respectfully suggest to her that that obstinate position fails to engage with some of what is underpinning the weaknesses of the roll-out. As a result, she might be endangering the very things that the policy seeks to deliver.

I have visited many nurseries, and I see excellent progress on the provision of good-quality environments and early learning education. I agree that there is huge commitment by local authorities and by private and third sector providers to giving our children the best start. Quality of delivery for children was always at the heart of nurseries. I remind the minister that the underpinning of quality standards in the policy came later. Many providers were working without clarity about roles or quality standards long before the standards came in. She has had to rely on the good will of those partners during the roll-out.

Flexibility and choice were at the heart of the original proposition, but they are now threatened with being lost if actions are not taken. The principle was that funding would follow the child—a point repeated by the previous speaker. However, parents who work know that they can need childcare from the first year of their child's life, and they require hours that are flexible and can cover a full working day and travel time. Wraparound care that is accessible allows them to be confident that their children will thrive.

**Mary Fee:** Does the member agree that flexibility is crucial to lone parents, 91 per cent of whom are women?

**Michelle Ballantyne:** Absolutely, and that is where I have most of my concerns about the roll-out of the policy. Local authority provision is inevitably focused on the three to four-year-old age group, and less than 10 per cent of it is the 8 am to 6 pm provision that working parents—particularly lone women who need a full-time job—might require.

When the Government handed control of the delivery and funding of the 1,140 hours policy to local authorities—without a plan, I hasten to add—it made the market subordinate to local authorities' priorities and needs. As a result, parental choice and flexibility were put at risk, not through ill will, but due to the challenges of delivering the policy.

Local authorities now have just over five months to recruit 2,000 full-time equivalent staff in order to meet the Government's target. More pressingly, the current timetable requires nearly 50 per cent of funded places to be made available over the course of just one month—between July and August this year. Where does the minister think those staff are going to come from?

While local authorities invest in new facilities and offer competitive salaries to attract the staff that they need, the Scottish Government has made it clear that more than a quarter of additional funded hours will need to be delivered by private funded providers.

With partner provider contracts and payment rates decided and set locally, we now see

inconsistencies right across Scotland. Similarly, the financial templates for funding were developed individually by councils but were adjusted by the Scottish Government using population figures from six years ago, meaning that councils with rapidly growing populations are now being unnecessarily squeezed. Midlothian Council, for example, has been awarded 24 per cent less funding than its original financial template required.

I know that the minister will stand up at the end of the debate and say that the funding packages were agreed by COSLA. That is absolutely true, but that does not change the reality on the ground. For many nurseries, the funded partnership rates are set below the normal rate that they would have charged in the marketplace—a rate that would sustain their businesses. That is compounded by three-year funding templates that do not provide for inflationary increases. That reality will have consequences.

The cost of childcare for under-threes will potentially have to increase to cover running costs. Local authorities are not investing in that area. Nurseries—particularly those in the third and private sectors—will struggle to generate enough revenue surpluses to maintain and improve their services, especially when replacing equipment and facilities.

We may see a loss of innovation in the sector following a decline in revenue. It is important to remember that the principles of Montessori, Steiner and outdoor learning have all—through the flexibility of the private sector—influenced our state provision.

Senior experienced staff have faced the downgrading of their roles or are leaving the service because they do not meet the new national qualification requirements—in some cases, despite their having excellent reports from inspectors.

Many nurseries that I have spoken to have reported facing the loss of up to 50 per cent of their staff as they found themselves unable to compete with local authority salaries. They do not blame their workers for leaving and moving to higher-paid jobs, but that situation threatens to snuff out parental choice, which is one of the most enlightened principles of the 1,140 hours expansion. If a range of providers are unable to meet the staffing demands of the policy, parents will have no choice but to access their funded hours from a limited pool of providers that may be unable to deliver the flexibility that is promised by the policy. That will stifle parents' ability to tailor childcare to the needs of their children and force them to make difficult decisions about their family life.

If I were to accept the Government's argument, which has been made in the chamber, that there is no more money to fully fund the needs of nurseries, the Government must consider whether its policy restrictions—not allowing top-up fees, or independent nurseries being unable to choose how many funded hours they offer during their opening hours—will destroy the very policy that it has set out to deliver.

15:37

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** The transformation in early years learning that is planned for this year is hugely important and, despite the gloom and doom that we have just heard from Michelle Ballantyne, I am pleased that the Conservative Party has brought the debate to the chamber.

The Conservative Party's motion

“recognises the strong cross-party support”

for the policy of 1,140 hours of free childcare and acknowledges that we all want the best start in life for our children. Indeed, the policy provides an historic opportunity for Scotland. No other policy has such potential to transform the lives of children and their families while improving the prospects of Scotland's economy in the short term and the long term.

An initiative of such magnitude will have and has had its ups and downs along the way. However, nothing in the Audit Scotland report suggests that the 1,140 hours expansion cannot be delivered on time, and the minister has said that she is confident that, from this August, all three and four-year-olds and around a quarter of two-year-olds will benefit. In fact, of the 10 recommendations in the report, one has already been completed and a further seven refer to work that we already had under way before Audit Scotland reported in October last year. Local authorities have worked constructively with the Government to make that happen, and they should be commended for their hard work in implementing a transformational but fairly complex process.

The Audit Scotland report quite rightly highlighted that there might be some risk of delays in certain areas to do with buildings and staffing, but it recognised that huge progress had been made.

**Liam Kerr:** Does Rona Mackay agree that the handling of the policy has forced a particular approach to recruitment by local authorities, with which private nurseries simply do not have the resources to compete?

**Rona Mackay:** That should have been addressed during the negotiations—as we know,

things were done through COSLA—and it will have to be addressed. I understand that there are issues in that area, but that should not compromise such an amazing and fantastic initiative.

As I was saying, the Audit Scotland report quite rightly highlighted the risk of delay. However, in my own constituency of Strathkelvin and Bearsden, huge progress has been made since the report was published in October last year. As the minister said, it is also important to remember that, in many areas—my own constituency included—the 1,140 hours provision has been operating successfully in pilot projects in selected nurseries.

The Scottish Government has engaged with the people on whom we depend to make the policy work. It has also addressed earlier concerns, many of which members have debated in the past couple of years. At this stage, many of the practical elements around buildings and process are in the hands of local authorities, although of course our door would always be open so that we can listen to authorities that might experience difficulties on aspects of the policy's implementation.

On staffing, members will know that the Government has embarked on a massive recruitment drive to train early years practitioners. That process is on-going. There is no doubt that qualified early years practitioners are a highly skilled and vital profession. Gone are the days when nursery teachers or childminders were thought of as glorified babysitters. Our children deserve better, and we are giving them the best. Quality of teaching matters and, among many other things, an understanding of the importance of trauma-informed learning is vital to the role. I agree entirely with Mary Fee that private providers should be able to pay the living wage and that all early years practitioners should be paid it. Increased flexibility will allow families to make choices and huge savings in childcare costs. Amazing benefits to children's social development and wellbeing will be gained from this transformative policy.

It might sound like a cliché, but it is true: the Scottish Government is striving to make Scotland the best country in the world in which to be a child and to grow up. Policies such as the baby box and the expansion of early years provision are of paramount importance to that aim, and will be crucial in growing our economy, closing the attainment gap and tackling inequality.

This issue is about our children's and our grandchildren's futures, and it really is more important than politics. Let us not cast doubt on this ground-breaking initiative; let us embrace it and work together to overcome any challenges

that arise. Future generations of families will benefit so much from our policy. I say again that I am proud that, through it, Scotland is leading the way.

15:42

**Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):**

At the beginning of her speech, Rona Mackay accused Opposition parties of casting "doom and gloom". I say respectfully to her that we are not. The reality is that we are months away from delivery of the 1,140 hours provision, and we will need a quantum leap in the capacity of our system in order for us to deliver it.

The minister talked of 50,000 children already receiving 1,140 hours of care, but she did not acknowledge that that is only 40 per cent of the number who will require to receive it in August alone. She also mentioned the number of staff who have been recruited and who are in place, but she did not acknowledge that, at the start of this year, only half of the staff that we need to deliver the provision had been recruited. Some 30 per cent of the staff that we still need will have to be recruited over the summer.

On top of that, only 30 per cent of the additional buildings that will be required have been built. Although the minister talked about contingency plans being in place, a fifth of all the buildings that are incomplete do not have such plans. The reality—and the reason why we are having the debate—is that we will need to double our capacity in five months in order to deliver the provision.

**Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP):** Nonsense.

**Daniel Johnson:** It is not nonsense—those are the numbers. If Mr Brown would like to intervene, I will happily give way to him.

**Keith Brown:** I said that that is nonsense. Daniel Johnson might be talking about Scotland in general, but we have heard from Rona Mackay about the situation in her area. In my area, more than 60 per cent has already been delivered and the rest will be delivered by August, and the same is true in Stirling. Therefore, what Mr Johnson asserts is not true across the country.

**Daniel Johnson:** There might be places that are prepared, but Audit Scotland's report is very clear and the numbers that I have quoted come directly from it: those are the figures for the whole system. Therefore, we must ask ourselves whether such a leap is achievable or advisable—that is the important point in the debate.

I absolutely agree with members on the Government benches about one thing: nothing is more important than the start that we give our

children. The benefit to our children and their families of delivering the policy could be huge; likewise, it could hugely benefit the aim of tackling poverty, in terms of both children's experiences and enabling their families to get to work. Those things will benefit us all. We ask whether it is reasonable for a guarantee to be provided. The reality is that we are only months away from delivery, so it is only right that Opposition members should question whether it can all be delivered.

Let us look at the detail. Nothing is more graphic than exhibit six on page 23, which shows the number of buildings that have been completed and those that need to be built before the policy is delivered. There is a cliff edge over the summer, and there needs to be a huge leap, given that 20 per cent of the buildings will not have been completed by the start of August—and that is if we stay on track. The contingency issue is pressing because, even if we stay on plan, we will not have the capacity that we need. The position in relation to the workforce is similar. Only half the number of staff are in place, and 27 per cent will need to be recruited over the summer. Those are the facts and figures from the report.

The number of training places across multiple routes have not increased significantly since 2014. That is why the report points to the fact that there is cannibalisation within the sector, with independent providers losing staff to local authority providers. Overall, we have to question the impact that all of that has on quality, because that is what matters. Quality suffers when there is such rapid expansion and staff are poached from one setting to another.

Quality is also in question when we look at the funding of the policy. In too many settings and in too many local authority areas, the underlying assumption is that the rate that will be paid is £5.31 per child per hour. That figure was arrived at in 2016—four years ago. Even if we take that most simple assumption, the living wage has increased by more than 10 per cent since then—yet £5.31 is still the rate that is being used in many local authorities. That has an impact on the quality that can be delivered. It also assumes a staff to children ratio of 6:1 and makes no allowances for supervision, administrative or training requirements, sickness absence or the fact that partner providers in the third and independent sectors very often provide childcare year round.

We have to ask whether that rate is sustainable and whether it will deliver quality. That is why we hear of situations such as those that Beatrice Wishart and Michelle Ballantyne outlined. I have also heard from partner providers that they face too many requirements—they tell me that they feel straight-jacketed by local authority requirements.

That leads to the situation that Beatrice Wishart outlined where, essentially, parents have all or nothing—they take all their provision from one provider or none at all. Quite simply, a provider, whether in the local authority setting or in the independent sector, cannot afford to provide care unless parents take all their provision through that one provider.

Ultimately, the Government needs to come forward with a clear and evidence-based assessment of where we are on the policy. It needs to outline how the living wage will be delivered. Funding the policy adequately, and making sure that it is funded properly across all providers, is the only way that we will deliver quality. We are five months away from the policy's delivery date but there is a mountain to climb and we need clarity and honesty from the Government. We all want the policy to succeed, but there are an awful lot of reasons why the Labour Party doubts that the Government will succeed.

15:48

**Fulton MacGregor (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP):** It gives me great pleasure to speak in this debate. Jamie Green started off by saying that this is a policy that is broadly supported cross-party; other members have also mentioned that and they are right. The motion and the Government amendment are not as far apart as they might seem. That is also the case for the debate so far. The Tory motion discusses “certain risks” in relation to buildings and staff and the Government amendment talks about “making steady progress”. Perhaps, as everybody has said, we need to work together on the issue.

**Jamie Greene:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** I will make a bit of progress, but I might come back to the member.

I want to focus on what constituents are saying to me. Generally, as we have heard, people are positive; they are making plans and feel that the policy will benefit them, their families and their work life balance. Indeed, I am of the age where I have children of nursery age myself, as do many of my friends. I know from the general talk among us and other folk that most people feel that the policy is very good.

However, I am glad that the minister has recognised that it is an ambitious task that will not be easy to deliver in full. We need time. In my area of North Lanarkshire, the struggle has been real. Just weeks ago, I had to write to the chief executive of North Lanarkshire Council after many constituents had contacted me. Their main issue was that many council nurseries were offering provision from 8 till 12.45 or 1.30 till 6, which

meant that they might have to move to another nursery that offered a full day's provision. I think that the council has a patch-up arrangement, whereby some nurseries offer a full day of provision and some offer provision only in the hours that I mentioned. Members might think that that is no big deal, but it could involve parents taking their child out of the nursery that they are in, where they are settled in a routine. It might mean splitting up siblings.

**Michelle Ballantyne:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Fulton MacGregor:** Not at the moment, because I want to finish my point.

It could also mean children going to a nursery that is not in the catchment area of the school that they will go to. People also raised concerns about the hours of childcare provision in North Lanarkshire being spread out over 48 hours and not aligned with school holidays. I am still waiting for a response from North Lanarkshire Council. I want to make it clear that I am not having a dig at NLC. The council is in a difficult situation, and it needs to do something to make the system work. My partner and I accepted that we would not get our first preference and moved on to something that works.

However, we should not put the blame at the Government's door, as other parties have sought to do. We in this chamber talk about local decision making a great deal, but when it does not work excellently in various areas, we are up in arms. I come back to the point that I made at the outset. If we are to make this groundbreaking policy work, all of us must work together, across parties and at all levels of government.

**Jamie Greene:** Will Mr MacGregor give way?

**Fulton MacGregor:** I apologise, but I want to make progress.

I have also been contacted by local private nurseries, whose situation I raised in Parliament, as the minister might recall. My representations led to a number of measures and interventions being agreed to by the Government and North Lanarkshire Council that led to improved relationships between those providers and NLC. From speaking to some of the nurseries concerned, I know that there has been improvement. Issues remain, though, and, as Rona Mackay said, we need to get this right.

I will give way to Jamie Greene now, if he still wants to intervene.

**Jamie Greene:** I thank Mr MacGregor for giving way. He is right to say that there is cross-party support for the policy. Why, therefore, is the Government seeking to delete the wording of my motion from "That the Parliament" and to replace it

in its entirety? Which bit of the Audit Scotland report that I quoted does Mr MacGregor disagree with? Why does he think that the Government wants to delete what the motion says?

**Fulton MacGregor:** Rather than being to do with what the report says, I think that it is more a question of emphasis. I would say that the emphasis of the Tory motion is negative. *[Interruption.]* That is my opinion—I am entitled to it. The motion offers a negative narrative about a positive policy. The narrative of the Government's amendment is positive. I said at the start of my speech that it is possible to find some common ground between the motion and the Government's amendment.

We celebrated international women's day at the weekend, and I want to take some time to talk about the gendered nature of childcare in Scotland, as members such as Alison Johnstone have done. It is gendered in that women are still doing more of the day-to-day care of children. Members will be aware of my campaign for increased paternal leave to bridge that gap. The gendered nature of childcare represents a major barrier to work and study, which is why it is so important that we get right the policy of expanded provision.

For the purposes of this debate, we are talking about the childcare workforce and the stereotypical perception that women are more naturally suited to childcare work, which results in significant overrepresentation of women among the early learning and childcare workforce. That point has already been well made. Therefore, it is not hard to understand why childcare provision has become a critical policy area for addressing the gender pay gap. Historically, the sector has often been characterised by low pay and poor working conditions that further aggravate the gender pay gap. I welcome the steps that the Scottish Government has taken to address the situation, which include the provision of 2,000 additional college and university places in the 2019-20 academic year and measures to improve the uptake of ELC modern apprenticeships.

I am delighted that the Government's amendment pays tribute to our dedicated staff and workforce; I hope that that alone will mean that it gets the support of the chamber. I do not see how it cannot, because neither the motion nor Labour's amendment recognises that.

I want to end by mentioning a nursery that I visited last week—the Stepping Stones family learning centre in Stepps—because I said that I would do so the next time I spoke in the chamber. I recommend that the minister visit it, if she has time. I was there for world book day. I was pretty nervous about reading to a bunch of nursery-aged kids who were not my own, but it is good for us as



MSPs to learn about and see the great work that our early learning practitioners do day in, day out. There are many positive things about the learning centre, including the play-based approach that is used in the nursery and the outdoor experiences that the children get from using the local forest. That fantastic centre is reflective of centres across my constituency, but I do not have time to mention them all, because I see that the Presiding Officer is signalling for me to stop.

I support the Government's amendment, and I hope that we can all work together to make this policy work.

15:55

**Brian Whittle (South Scotland) (Con):** I am pleased to once again have the opportunity to speak about the progress of the roll-out of this vital service. As Jamie Greene said at the start of his speech, it is true to say that the roll-out of 1,140 hours of free childcare to all three and four-year-olds and disadvantaged two-year-olds has the full support of every MSP from every party in the chamber. The implementation of the programme has the potential to be transformative in many ways, including by helping with the battle to tackle inequality, poverty and the stubborn attainment gap. It could be a major factor in tackling issues relating to activity and social inclusion, healthy eating and health education. I was pleased to hear Alison Johnstone talk about the potential for nurseries to grow their own food, although the idea of building nurseries without kitchens is alien to me. Members know how passionate I am about our youth having access to such activities.

When we discuss the mental health crisis, the drug and alcohol addiction crisis and all the ill-health statistics that Scotland has an unwanted lead on, we should recognise that all the solutions begin with early intervention so that people get a better start in life. Those are the real implications of getting the policy right, and it shows how crucial it is to get the delivery of the programme right.

However, in recognising that every party supported the introduction of 1,140 hours of free childcare, we also have to highlight the unprecedented fact that every party except the Scottish National Party has voted in the chamber to highlight their concerns about how the policy is being implemented. This is not a political issue. It is far too important to play politics with, because we all want the policy to work.

For two years, we have been raising the concerns of partner nurseries with the minister. Alison Harris and I facilitated a meeting with the minister and representatives of partner nurseries, but we were told quite unceremoniously that we just did not understand. The Scottish

Conservatives used their debating time last year to raise such concerns again, but all we got was the response, "Everything is fine—you just don't understand."

Now we have an Audit Scotland report that tells us exactly what we have been telling the minister for the past two years: there is a staffing shortage, and aggressive recruitment campaigns by local authorities have encouraged staff to migrate across from private nurseries, which have spent time and effort developing that talent and delivering quality care. A local nursery close to where I live is sitting at less than half capacity because of the number of staff who have left, while the local authority is building another nursery just down the road.

The Audit Scotland report says that choice is being taken away from parents, which is exactly the opposite of what the policy is supposed to deliver. It is supposed to be a partnership, with capacity being built across the sector, but the danger is that years of dedication and experience in providing quality childcare could be lost. If we lose that capacity and experience, replacing it will not be easy or quick.

The positives are significant, as I have said, but the potential impact of getting the implementation wrong is just as significant. There could be inequality across regions, depending on the behaviour of different councils. The impact of not getting wraparound, flexible care on parents' ability to work and earn will be stark.

The minister recognises the importance of the policy and the potential for it to be transformative, but if partnership nurseries are forced to close, there will not be the capacity to deliver this transformative policy. That would drive inequality, and I find it incredible to hear the minister continue to use the same old nothing-to-see-here line in the face of all the evidence. The sector is telling us otherwise.

We have consistently tried to bring the concerns of partnership nurseries to the minister to highlight that there is a postcode lottery around Scotland and that capital spend on partnership nurseries is secondary to the spend on council facilities. It might be working in the minister's back yard, but the Audit Scotland report will surely cause her to finally lift her head out of the sand and take a proper look at what is happening in the sector—and not at what she wants to happen.

It is vital that the policy works for every community. If the minister will not listen to the members of this Parliament or the sector itself, will she listen to Audit Scotland and, even at this late stage, take the measures that its report asks for? I hope that it is not too late for her to take the actions that are required.

16:00

**Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP):** Presiding Officer, I hope that you will bear with me as I give a history lesson of sorts.

When my children were young, which obviously was not yesterday, there was no childcare unless someone lived close to family members who could watch their kids or they could afford a nanny; neither of those options was available to me. All that was available was a morning or afternoon session, one day a week, in a local church. As Alison Johnstone did, I used to go along and make sandwiches and so on. It was just somewhere to go with the kids. Socialisation was considered important, as well as the other aspects of childcare.

However, those sessions did not run on public holidays or in the school holidays, and nothing else was available at those times. The only thing that I could do was to set up a play scheme in my local area. I worked with the community, which was fantastic, and the local authority gave us some funding. We went on to be successful. However, through time, the funding was withdrawn and we could not continue with the play schemes. Trying to get some money to continue the play schemes led me to join a political party—the SNP—and I was asked to stand for the council. I won that council election by 16 votes. I suppose that we could say that lack of childcare brought me to the political world and the Scottish Parliament—some might say that that is a good thing and some might say that it is not quite so good.

In stark contrast to those days—thanks to previous Governments, but predominantly thanks to this SNP Government—we now have universal free early years childcare, which supports modern families. I am not saying that I was not modern, but at that time there was not a lot of childcare.

Since it was elected, the SNP Government has introduced some of the most forward-thinking and innovative improvements to early years and childcare. In 2007, free childcare hours were sitting at just 12.5 hours a week. That was increased to 16 hours a week for all three and four-year-olds and the provision was extended to two-year-olds from low-income families, which was important. The Government now wants to go further, increasing free childcare hours to 30 hours per week, which is 1,140 hours a year.

**Michelle Ballantyne:** Does Sandra White agree that although we refer to the provision as 30 hours a week, if someone works full time and gets six weeks of annual leave, it drops to just over 24 hours a week and, if we include travelling time, that means that that person could work for only 22 hours a week?

**Sandra White:** I take on board what Michelle Ballantyne said. That is one of the reasons why I have been a consistent supporter of childcare. I do not want to keep going back to when I was younger and my kids were young, but what we have now is an improvement on what we had then. Michelle Ballantyne mentioned travelling time, and such aspects have to be looked at.

As I said, the Government wants to increase the provision to 1,140 hours a year, and we can all agree that that will have a transformational impact on families and children around the country. It will be difficult to implement—the Government has admitted that—and the scale and ambition of the policy will prove to be challenging.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** On the basis that the expansion is an ambition, which is accepted, what is it in the Conservative motion or the Audit Scotland report that Sandra White disagrees with?

**Sandra White:** No one disagrees with the Audit Scotland report; “disagree” is a strong word. I am concerned that the Conservative motion is not ambitious; it is an attacking motion. If, instead of using words such as “demands” and “urgently”, the amendment had said something like “work with other parties”, it might have come across a wee bit better. That is my concern. As I said, the expansion will be challenging but it is ambitious and we are a party of ambition—for our children and for Scotland; that is lacking in the motion.

I agree with what Mary Fee said in her amendment with regard to “the real living wage”, but I disagree with what Brian Whittle said. He talked more about the private sector than about kids being looked after in any other sector.

**Brian Whittle:** The private sector is raising the issues, because it is supposed to be in a partnership. That is important, because in order to deliver the capacity, the sectors need to work in tandem. I raised the partnership because that is not happening and it is important to deliver across the sector.

**Sandra White:** Brian Whittle has constantly mentioned the private sector. If the public sector—local government—is proposing nurseries in children’s academies and better salaries and conditions, it is up to the private sector to match that and not to ask the public sector to go lower. That is what I took out of what Mr Whittle said. Maybe we could have less talk about the private sector and more praise for what is coming forward from local government.

We should be proud of the policy and we should look forward to its delivery. We should be ambitious; Audit Scotland said that maybe we were too ambitious, but I have always said that, if I had not fought against the lack of childcare and had the ambition to do something, I might not be

standing here today. Mr Whittle might say that that would have been a good thing; I am sure that he would not.

As I said, everyone thinks that all children should have access to quality early years childcare and education. Despite the challenges that it faces, this Government has the ambition to provide that.

16:07

**Alex Rowley (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):**

Much evidence is available for policy makers, which supports the view that early learning and childcare are crucial for all children; that is why I support the actions and direction that the Government and local authorities in Scotland are taking.

The early years are a critical time, when children's rapidly developing brains are ripe for learning; recent research suggests that up to 90 per cent of brain development has already taken place before a child starts primary school. The amount and nature of stimulation and interaction that children receive in those years make all the difference, which is why access to quality early learning is so important. Therefore, that policy is the right thing to do and the emphasis on good quality must be at the fore of the provision. However, that cannot be delivered on the cheap.

Given the current early years provision and the level to which we are trying to move it forward, there are big challenges to overcome with regard to the facilities and staff that will be needed.

I will make two points about the concerns in the Conservative motion, which notes from the Audit Scotland report that choice and flexibility

"will not be fully implemented by August 2020".

First, the Conservatives should be making the case for the end to austerity and cuts and for investment in capital and revenue funding from the UK Government. There is no point in defending failed Tory austerity and then coming here and making massive demands that cannot be delivered because of failed Tory austerity.

Secondly, when I look at what is happening in Fife, I have to say that there is a mixed picture of provision; there are many communities in which the kind of flexibility and choice that is envisaged will not be available by August, mainly because there is not enough money to invest in the necessary infrastructure.

This ambitious programme will take time, but we should be in no doubt about the fact that it is absolutely the right thing to do.

I want to address the amendment in Mary Fee's name. If there is one thing that we know for

certain, it is that the quality of the staff will be crucial for the success of the early years programme. That must mean putting in place a minimum standard of qualifications, making clear that to work in early years is to have a career that rewards people with training, skills, qualifications and, ultimately, decent pay. That point is picked up in the briefing from Close the Gap. It says:

"In the Early Learning Childcare contexts ... the low pay and poor working conditions found in the sector were a key theme identified in the independent review of Scottish Early Learning Childcare workforce and out of school care workforce, with more than three quarters of practitioner and stakeholder organisations' responses highlighting tackling the low rate of pay as being important for raising the status of the workforce".

It goes on to say:

"The undervaluation of work done by women, such as in Early Learning childcare, is a key strand linking together the cause of the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, women's unequal share in caring, and pay discrimination".

I believe that, with the right levels of investment, an increasing amount of early years childcare can and should be provided directly by the public and third sectors. However, for now, we should be clear that minimum standards for pay and qualifications should be introduced across all sectors.

I will end where I began. The policy is the right thing to do for our children and our communities. A report on research that was conducted by the European Commission says:

"This interest in the early years is inspired by a rapidly expanding body of scientific research in different disciplines that points to substantial economic, social, educational and developmental benefits of participating in high-quality early childhood education and care. These benefits are not limited to the children involved, but extend to society at large. At the level of the individual, participation in high-quality early childhood education and care is associated with higher earnings, greater educational attainment, improved social integration and better health, among other advantages. Moreover, for parents, it is found to encourage labour market participation, especially of mothers, in addition to educational and other impacts. At the societal level, there are ample potential benefits as well, ranging from reduced spending on welfare and lower crime rates to higher tax revenues and improved social cohesion. In other words, the benefits are both widespread and long-lasting."

The policy is the right thing to do. There are massive challenges, but we are making massive strides in the right direction, thanks to all the staff out there who are working to make this happen. We need more resources. Let us try to get them going in through the public sector.

16:14

**Keith Brown (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP):** There is no question but that the Audit Scotland report raises concerns, and that is quite right. Members have raised concerns in

the chamber, and that is quite right, too. It is their right to challenge the Government on the policy. However, the Tory party's motion is nothing more than a poorly disguised hit job on a policy that will be transformative for the children who live in this country. The motion is designed to unduly worry and concern families across Scotland, as if they did not have enough to worry and be concerned about as things stand.

Nothing in the Audit Scotland report suggests that the expansion to 1,140 funded hours cannot be delivered on time, yet the Tories in this Parliament see fit to undermine the significant progress that is being made to introduce a bold and hugely progressive policy that will almost double the amount of childcare that is available for two, three and four-year-olds. It will be double the amount that is currently on offer to hard-working families in England from the Tory UK Government.

It is easy for the Tories to cherry pick from the Audit Scotland report, completely ignoring the fact that it clearly states that

"The Scottish Government and councils are making steady progress to deliver the expansion of funded early learning and childcare"

and that we are on course to meet

"plans to deliver the increased hours by August 2020."

Jamie Greene's motion raises concerns about buildings. In terms of infrastructure, we are ahead of what councils predicted this time last year, with 40 per cent of all projects being completed, providing over 6,000 new places for children. Additionally, the Scottish Government has already implemented the Audit Scotland recommendation on contingency planning.

**Daniel Johnson:** Does the member acknowledge that the Audit Scotland report makes it clear that we will be 20 per cent short in the buildings delivered by August and that the other buildings will not be delivered until a year after the policy is meant to be implemented? Does he acknowledge that 20 per cent figure?

**Keith Brown:** I am happy to acknowledge that figure if the member acknowledges that the Audit Scotland report suggests that there is nothing to prevent the policy from being delivered on time, as described.

**Daniel Johnson:** Will the member take an intervention on that point?

**Keith Brown:** I must move on.

The Scottish Government has already implemented the Audit Scotland recommendation on contingency planning, with all local authorities putting in place plans for capital projects that are due to be completed this summer.

I have a concern—I do not think that this has been mentioned so far, but if it has been, I will apologise—about some of the plans, given that the situation that we face with the coronavirus is bound to have an impact throughout the economy.

However, returning to the report, I note that seven of the 10 recommendations refer to work that was already under way before it was published and one refers to work that is already complete. That is decisive action by a Government that is not only committed but able to deliver the expansion by August, not least in relation to staffing and the sustainability of both the private and third sectors.

We have heard a lot about staffing levels. In my area, the local authority started an early years academy. Tranches of apprentices have been taken on in each of the past three years and the local authority has ensured that existing staff have gone for additional qualifications. That is decisive action by the local authority.

On staffing levels, let us not forget the circumstances in which we are attempting to roll out the expansion. Over 7 per cent of childcare workers in Scotland come from the EU. Due to Scotland being dragged out of the EU against our will by a hard-right Tory UK Government, it will now inevitably become harder to recruit the skilled childcare workers that we will need. *[Interruption.]* I know that the Tories do not like it, but facts are chieftains that winna ding. The point is explicitly made in the Audit Scotland report that the Tories keep referring to. The Government put forward plans for a sensible immigration plan for Scotland that would have assisted in the recruitment of childcare workers for the expansion. Will the Tory MSPs now back our calls or will they continue to stand up for their Westminster bosses?

Despite all that, we are on track to meet the required numbers by August, with over half of the total requirement already being met in September last year. The report welcomes the progress that councils are making to recruit the workforce that is needed to deliver the expansion. As the minister has pointed out in the chamber, the apprentice recruitment process has been successful, with increases of 21 per cent in the first year and 24 per cent in the second. Training opportunities and routes into the childcare sector have been increased, and we now have a record 40,000-strong workforce. Many people—in my constituency, the majority of people—are already benefiting from the expansion in childcare.

**Brian Whittle:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Keith Brown:** I will not. I have taken one already.

The sustainability of private and third sector partners is a key element of the flexibility that is offered by the expansion, and ensuring their future is a key priority. That is why local authorities continue to work with them to recruit additional staff and to help with advertising and retention. Taking those things together, we can see that the Government is working well with partners, reacting and adapting where necessary to address concerns and deliver on the expansion by August this year.

We know that childcare can be one of the most expensive items in the household budgets of many families with small children, and the costs hit those who are on low incomes—and are least able to afford it—the hardest. Come August, for the first time ever, parents of eligible two, three and four-year-olds will have 1,140 hours of childcare that will save them up to £4,500 per child per year. That is completely transformative and, as part of wider progress in Scottish welfare, it will have a material impact on the lives of millions of people across Scotland.

The expansion will tackle child poverty, improve the wellbeing of children and parents and support parents into work, study or training. The value of the expansion cannot be overstated.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston:** Does Keith Brown agree that, as he suggested earlier in one of his interventions, the policy may be delivered in some areas but will not be delivered across Scotland in August?

**Keith Brown:** No. I refer for the third time to the paragraph in the Audit Scotland report that says that there is nothing that will make this impossible to deliver by August this year. It is in the Audit Scotland report—it might be an idea for the Conservatives to read the report and see if they agree with it.

The truth is that the Tories in the chamber are unable to imagine implementing policies that would improve the lives of the low paid. Under the watch of their colleagues at Westminster, the welfare state entitlements and opportunities for ordinary working people have been slashed. England has the highest levels of child poverty—and who governs in England? While the Government here has worked to protect Scots from the worst of the Tory UK Government, the UK Government has imposed a welfare system that has left 1.4 million people destitute. The SNP Scottish Government is introducing the revolutionary Scottish child payment, but the Tories have instead introduced the bedroom tax and rape clause—policies that target the most vulnerable in our communities. It is no coincidence that child poverty in Scotland has dropped the most. Policies such as the expansion of childcare hours help to empower families living in

Scotland—[*Interruption.*] Apparently, child poverty has increased in England due to the SNP. That is new from the Tories—try to work out the logic.

The policy frees up valuable time for parents to provide for their children or to undertake studies or reskill. For the Tories, politics is all about maintaining inequality, imposing austerity and cutting taxes for the rich. It is no surprise that they seek to undermine the work of this Government to improve the lives of those who live here. This childcare policy is the most progressive and ambitious in the UK and will provide the flexible support that families in Scotland deserve, unlocking new opportunities for the many. I am pleased to speak in support of the Government amendment.

16:21

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I will get the debate back on track to the matter in hand. Jamie Greene made very clear that, exactly two years ago, the Scottish Conservatives used our chamber business to debate the findings of the 2018 Audit Scotland report. We did so because we believed that some of the findings needed urgent attention from the Scottish Government. Two years and another Audit Scotland report on, it is very clear that, right across the chamber, members believe that a considerable number of issues stand in the way of the successful implementation of this flagship policy.

No one doubts the considerable importance that all parties in the chamber attach to the expansion of childcare and I am very surprised that the Scottish Government chose to lodge an amendment to take out that line in the Conservative motion. However, surely one of the key challenges is to strike the right balance between extending the number of hours that are available and addressing the qualitative issues by ensuring that there is much better accessibility and flexibility. Both of those are so important to parents—in fact, I think that parents would argue that they are the most important issues. They will be the defining issues in terms of whether Scotland succeeds in delivering the policy that is—quite rightly—the minister's ambition. I accept that it is her ambition—the problem is how we deliver it.

We know from the 2018 Audit Scotland report that there was genuine concern about the mismatch between demand and supply and that, although the ambition of the childcare policy was in line with national strategic objectives, the Scottish Government had implemented the increase in hours without comparing the cost and potential outcomes of expanding childcare and without looking at the different economic models of childcare and how they would compare in terms of

delivery. In other words, it had not identified exactly which measures would indicate success or what baseline data was available. The Scottish Government had not defined what it meant by high-quality childcare, which is crucial for parents.

As a matter of priority, parents will, quite rightly, talk about the right numbers of qualified staff. My colleague Liam Kerr quoted to the minister the phrase that she has used: she said that she would give an absolute

“guarantee that we will find ourselves with enough staff by 2020.”—[*Official Report*, 1 March 2018; c 2.]

His question was about the minister’s words. She was confident that that was going to be the case, but she could not provide the evidence to support it. I challenge her to provide that evidence when she sums up. I do not think that the evidence is there. If we consider what happened between 2008 and 2018, we find that there was a considerable reduction in the number of staff who were involved in the sector.

Nor should we forget that there is an additional cost to the training. We still need answers before we can be sure about what the minister has confidently predicted.

The quality of staff is probably the biggest concern for parents. However, the learning environment is also a concern, and therein lies the issue about providers and the building space that is available. There are fewer early learning centres and childcare services than there were a decade ago. That decline has, unfortunately, occurred predominantly in the more deprived areas. It has coincided with the decline in the number of childcare services that are rated good or better, which now stands lower than it was a decade ago. That concerns me, because it reflects not just the quantity but the quality of the hours that are available.

Related to that is the major point about provision, which many members have talked about. The fear among private sector providers is that local authorities are in a position to call the tune. It is not a genuine partnership for so many of them in the way that they want it to be—and it has to be. The minister was right to say that if we are going to make this policy work, it has to be a combined effort from the private, public and voluntary sectors, but it will not work if there is not a level playing field for all of them.

The Scottish Conservatives firmly believe that the issue of primary importance is provision and ensuring that there is a genuine understanding among local authorities that they will not be able to deliver unless they engage with the private sector to provide flexibility, accessibility and the number of hours. As the minister knows, that point was made by the fair funding for our kids campaign,

which was so influential in providing evidence in earlier stages.

It is abundantly clear that the latest report has laid bare the extent of the challenges that we face, and the failures on the part of the Scottish Government to address them. It highlighted that some progress has been made; but that is not what we are arguing about. There has been some progress, and the minister was right to highlight that. However, as Daniel Johnson rightly pointed out, there is not nearly as much progress as there will have to be to deliver this policy. On that basis, the Conservatives are arguing strongly that the minister must listen with considerable care to what is being said, not by us in the chamber, but by the sector, because, at the end of the day, those people are the ones who are on the ground and who have to deliver the policy.

16:27

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** I respect Liz Smith and am glad that she acknowledged the progress that has been made. She began her remarks by referencing the 2018 Audit Scotland report. However, the Scottish Government acted quickly to address the points that were made in that 2018 report—in particular, the gap that it highlighted between local authority and Scottish Government estimates. By April 2018—three months after the Audit Scotland report was published—an agreement was reached with COSLA on a multiyear revenue and capital package to fully fund the expansion to 1,140 hours.

Audit Scotland has recognised that the Scottish Government, COSLA and other stakeholders continue to work well together at national level. It is important to point out that the most recent Audit Scotland report refers to capital projects in October 2019, and that significant progress was made in the last quarter that is not referenced in the report. In January 2020, 40 per cent of projects were complete, which will provide 6,100 new places—3 per cent ahead of what councils predicted last year.

**Liz Smith:** What Joan McAlpine has said is quite correct. However, that progress is not the progress that we need in order to deliver the policy in August. That is the issue. That is why a second recently published Audit Scotland report flags up some of the exact same issues that existed in 2018. Does the member acknowledge that?

**Joan McAlpine:** I repeat the point that my colleague Keith Brown made: absolutely nothing in the second Audit Scotland report says that we will not meet the 1,140 hours target by August.

The Government has already implemented Audit Scotland’s recommendation on contingency

planning, which relates to the point that Liz Smith made. All councils now have contingency plans for all critical capital projects that are due for completion in summer 2020.

We should get back to the core of what we are debating, which is that access to high-quality care and education is foundational to a child's development and their ability to achieve their potential. It also provides invaluable opportunities for parents to study, train or work at times when it would be impossible to do so without access to childcare.

The difference that early learning can make to a child can be huge, especially when it comes to boosting confidence and social skills. Providing a child with high-quality childcare gives them access to a variety of activities and experiences that might otherwise be unavailable.

An important part of the expansion is the move to increase children's access to outdoor play and learning, which is made possible through funding of more than £860,000 for Inspiring Scotland to support that charity's work with local authorities and the ELC sector on expanding outdoor learning spaces. That is a really exciting project.

By delivering expansion of funded childcare to 1,140 hours, we are unlocking a crucial component in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. I repeat what Keith Brown said: we are miles ahead of what is happening in Tory-run England. The Scottish Government has been working with councils to ensure that nurseries in Scotland's most deprived areas will benefit from having an equity and excellence lead—an additional graduate post for highly qualified candidates. That commitment has led to the creation of 435 new graduate-level posts.

The progress that has been made towards our highly ambitious target to expand early learning and childcare has begun to benefit many children and families. It is encouraging to know that 50,000 children are accessing more than the minimum 600 hours of early learning and childcare to which they are currently entitled. Soon, all three and four-year-olds and a quarter of two-year-olds will be able to benefit from almost twice as many funded hours each year.

Central to the expansion is the move towards the funding follows the child approach, which will enable parents to choose from a range of ELC providers. My impression is that considerable progress has been made in that regard over the past two years. The provision of flexible access to options from public, private and third sector providers, as well as childminding settings, gives families the power to choose childcare that best suits their children's needs.

**Jamie Greene:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Joan McAlpine:** No. I am about to close.

Private ELC providers will make a larger contribution than was previously forecast—up from 4 per cent to 26 per cent. Considerable progress has been made on flexibility. I used private as well as local authority providers when I had children of nursery age, so I know that flexibility is important.

By working closely with stakeholders, the Scottish Government has finalised the national standard that all providers who deliver funded hours will be required to meet. That will give parents confidence that their child will be offered a high-quality experience.

By investing in our children and prioritising high-quality early learning and childcare, we are providing opportunities for all our children to learn, have fun and thrive. The peevish pessimists who are behind the Conservative motion should bear that in mind.

16:33

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** I congratulate Jamie Greene on bringing the debate to Parliament. A lot is going on in the news, but the motion refers to an important report on an important policy, so it is right that we devote the afternoon to debating it.

Most members have acknowledged the simple fact that the policy has support from members of all parties. It is also the case that members of most parties have significant concerns about delivery of policy, given that parents expect the expanded childcare provision to be delivered and available from August.

The key finding of the Audit Scotland report is that we will, in the period between now and then, be required to find half the workforce increase and to deliver half the new infrastructure for the whole programme. Daniel Johnson pointed out that August is only months away: from my calendar, I see that the Scottish Government has 146 days left to make good on its promise. Time is short. I, for one, hope that the commitments that have been made are delivered, and that the assurances that the minister has given reflect the reality of the situation. Otherwise, parents and members from across the parties will rightly ask why contingency actions were not taken now, rather than assurances being given that everything is fine.

As many others have done, I remind members of the task that has to be done during the next few months. It is required that 34 per cent of places be physically created by July, and that 79 per cent be available by August, after which a further 20 per cent are supposed to be ready. About half the

additional staff that it was said at the start of planning will be needed—more than 2,200—are still to be recruited.

We have heard from a number of colleagues and from people in various parts of the country of their concerns about the significant challenges that are being reported—in particular, by independent and third sector providers.

The figures represent a real and considerable challenge for the Scottish Government, and it needs to acknowledge that. Several SNP members have accused colleagues from other parties of doom and gloom, but we are not the people who are expressing the concerns; we are reflecting the concerns that Audit Scotland raised in its report.

I am reminded of an episode of “Yes, Minister”—I cannot remember the detail of the script; it was too long ago—in which Sir Humphrey demonstrates how the most extreme catastrophe can be described in the most diplomatic, polite, laconic and understated language in order to hide its severity. Audit Scotland is a bit like that. No matter how serious the situation it believes it is describing, it will always do so in a way that is positive, polite and diplomatic.

However, Audit Scotland is saying things like,

“plans are critically dependent on achieving much”;

that “significant risks” are being created; and that some aspects of the policy

“will not be fully implemented”.

I therefore say to Rona Mackay, who said that nothing suggests that the policy will not be delivered on time, that that is Audit Scotland suggesting that the policy will not be delivered on time. When Audit Scotland has carried out an audit in 2018 and then comes back within 18 months to follow it up, that is Audit Scotland saying that it is not convinced that the initial audit was responded to.

The biscuit goes to Keith Brown, who took the opposite approach from Audit Scotland to language, when he described as a “hit job” a motion that simply quotes Audit Scotland. That is just hyperbole and a refusal to acknowledge what Audit Scotland is saying.

We also have some experience. When funded hours were expanded to 600, it took a long time for that policy to be fully delivered. It is therefore entirely fair to be concerned, especially when we look at the situation with childminders, as Mary Fee said. At the moment, only 4 per cent of childminders are providing funded hours. That represents 404 children. Councils are predicting that they will need childminders to provide funded

hours for almost 2,500 children. It is hard to see how we will get to that point.

I agree that councils are doing a lot. My council has an early years academy and held a jobs fair just the other day, but the challenge is huge and it is complicated by what Daniel Johnson described as the “cannibalisation” of the sector. Alex Rowley was right to say that the living wage and conditions are key to getting the policy right.

I will use my final few seconds to talk about an issue that Beatrice Wishart raised. There is a group of parents who will not, under any circumstances, benefit from the 1,140 hours, because they have chosen to defer entry to primary 1 for a child whose birthday is before the turn of the year, and will therefore be refused funding. Parliament has already agreed that that is unacceptable, but since then another cohort of parents who believe that their child is not ready for primary 1 have had to deal with that unacceptable hurdle. I take no pleasure in the fact that my local council is the worst for turning down such requests. However, I have to acknowledge, as my council tells me, that it is simply implementing the law as it stands. It is time that the law was changed. The minister needs to tell us now when and how she will do so, so that the 1,140 hours will be available to every young person prior to primary 1.

The motion is a perfectly reasonable one. It reflects the Audit Scotland report and should be supported. The Government amendment should be rejected.

16:41

**Maree Todd:** The benefits of this policy will be transformational, far reaching, long term and felt by children, families, parents and communities. The recent international evidence suggests that the benefit for children is not only lifelong but intergenerational, such that it will benefit the children of those who experience high-quality early learning.

We have been clear from the beginning that the primary driver of the expansion is to improve and reduce gaps in children’s lifelong outcomes. We are investing in high-quality and nurturing early learning and childcare, because it is the foundation from which every child can develop socially, emotionally and educationally, thereby enabling them to reach their full potential, as many members around the chamber have recognised.

Such ambitious change requires proper programme management and governance. If colleagues read the Audit Scotland report carefully and objectively, that is what they would see. The Government cannot be accused of complacency.



We are recognising and actively managing the risks.

**Daniel Johnson:** Paragraph 1 of the report states:

“This creates a number of significant risks around getting enough people and buildings in place to deliver the expansion.”

Paragraph 3 states:

“Important workforce challenges in all sectors remain.”

Paragraph 4 states:

“Putting in place the necessary infrastructure remains a big risk”.

The minister talks about programme management. How will the Government mitigate the risks that I have just read out from the very first page of the Audit Scotland report?

**Maree Todd:** Last week, Audit Scotland made 10 recommendations. Seven of those relate to actions that we had already identified and which Audit Scotland asked us to continue, and we have already implemented an eighth recommendation, which relates to contingency plans for critical capital projects. Our active management of the risks is a team approach, which involves working closely with COSLA, the Improvement Service, the Scottish Futures Trust and, of course, local authorities.

As I said clearly in my opening speech, by January this year, councils had in place robust contingency plans for all critical projects that are due to complete this summer. More than half of the contingency plans involve provision at established ELC facilities, which may mean temporarily bringing more capacity into use at those facilities. Thirty per cent of the contingency plans involve changing the operating model at the existing or nearby nursery, which means that session times and lengths will change. Other contingency plans involve using local authority or community facilities for a short space of time, which might include using spare classrooms or communal spaces in local rooms.

**Michelle Ballantyne:** Will the minister explain where the staffing capacity is coming from for those contingencies?

**Maree Todd:** I will come on to that.

Most important, all local authorities are working closely with the Care Inspectorate to ensure that quality is not compromised in any of those contingency plans.

The expansion cannot be delivered without the contribution of the private, third and childminding sectors, which are forecast to deliver more than a quarter of funded provision from August 2020. The principle of provider neutrality is at the heart of the

funding-follows-the-child model, because we are putting quality first.

It is important to note that, in its careful scrutiny of the ELC expansion, Audit Scotland does not report concerns about the rate that is paid to funded providers during early phasing, nor the rates that have been set from August 2020 onward. In fact, the rates in Scotland compare very favourably with the rates in the other UK nations. In Wales, the nationally agreed rate of £4.50 per hour is considered commercially viable. Average rates have increased by over 26 per cent in the two years of phasing. Glasgow City Council increased hourly rates for funded providers by more than 50 per cent a year ahead of full implementation.

Last year, we placed in SPICe an overview of all local authorities' hourly rates for the early phasing of the 1,140 policy. We intend to repeat that exercise for the 2020-21 financial year and to find out from local authorities how they went about setting sustainable rates. I am sure that colleagues will agree that it is important that that information is in the public domain.

Mary Fee raised a concern about childminding. The latest data from the Scottish Childminding Association showed a fourfold increase in the number of childminders who are approved to offer funded early learning and childcare. We are also funding research into the childminding workforce, in partnership with the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Childminding Association.

Mary Fee is also quite right that, in its report, Audit Scotland commented on the fact that the Scottish Government cannot legislate for the real living wage, because employment law is reserved to the UK Government. That so-called loophole is indeed the case under the current constitutional arrangement, but we are doing everything in our power to create the conditions for a real living wage ELC sector, and setting our ambitions unashamedly high. Our policy framework, which has been developed through careful consideration with the sector, is designed to make it very difficult to deliver funded ELC without meeting the real living wage ambition. Local authorities' sustainable funding rate for the delivery of funded ELC will reflect the real living wage, thanks to our multiyear funding agreement with COSLA.

From the very beginning, this expansion has focused continuously on improving the quality of ELC that our children experience. Our plan for doing that, “Expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland: Quality Action Plan,” was published in October 2017. Within the next few months, we will have delivered all the 15 actions that it contains in order to support the workforce, our children's learning environments, play pedagogy, home learning and family learning. We

have been relentless in maintaining a focus on quality as the expansion progresses.

The International Council of Education Advisers has recognised Scotland's potential to be world leading in this field. Quality is so central to our offer that it can happen only thanks to the dedication and hard work of front-line staff up and down the country, caring for children, adapting to change and welcoming new members to their team. It is also thanks to local authority teams managing the expansion in their areas and leading at local level one of the biggest social infrastructure transformation programmes in public services in recent years.

It is also thanks to early learning and childcare providers across the private, third, childminding and public sectors, who demonstrate professionalism and passion every day. Let me finish with some provider testimonials, because I would like to add more balanced testimonials to the debate. A playgroup in Argyll and Bute told us:

"We have received lots of support within our setting with funding for better resources in order to obtain better outcomes for children."

A playgroup in Edinburgh said:

"Two years ago, we were at the point"—[*Interruption.*]

So the Conservatives do not want to hear the providers' view. The playgroup in Edinburgh said:

"Two years ago, we were at the point of closing the nursery. Our numbers were forecasted to be low going into August 2018, and having struggled financially for a number of years just to cover our basic running costs, we felt that the group was no longer viable. For many years, we had been relying on fund raising just to bridge the gap, and also on staff goodwill as we could not pay a decent rate for the job, and the whole thing had just reached breaking point.

The pilot scheme for us has meant that, due to the increase in the hourly rate paid by the Council, we have been able to give our staff a decent pay increase, and although we are not able to reach the pay and benefit levels of the council equivalent, we were able to improve our rates."

A playgroup in Angus said:

"The support we received from Angus Council has helped us upgrade our facilities. We will be having work on the building both interior and exterior, creating exciting new opportunities for outdoor education."

Although it is right that the Parliament scrutinise and challenge progress in delivering such an important public service, I ask colleagues not to undermine the commitment of those who are working tirelessly to make a success of the expansion in local authorities, ELC settings and supporting organisations across Scotland.

I welcome the Parliament's support for expanding early learning and childcare, and thank colleagues for their contributions today. I encourage each and every member to support

their local authority and local providers as they work to transform children's lives.

16:51

**Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con):** I am happy to close for the Scottish Conservatives in this vital debate on the expansion of funded childcare, and I thank my colleague Jamie Greene for bringing the motion to the chamber. He and other members who spoke in the debate were absolutely right to highlight the grave concerns that were noted in last week's Audit Scotland report. I will touch on a few of those concerns in my speech.

Here we are in our final five months before the Scottish Government's ambition to expand funded childcare to 1,140 hours becomes a requirement for local authorities across Scotland. Today, we have heard about the many problems that are being faced in relation to the roll-out. Not least of those, as was evidenced in the Audit Scotland report, is the sheer lack of adequate planning that was done before initiating such a policy commitment. Mary Fee and many other members mentioned that.

During the roll-out, I have focused on the exclusion of the private, voluntary and independent—or PVI—sector. The minister no doubt takes the view that progress reports show that there is a greater proportion of PVI sector involvement in the policy's delivery than was originally planned, and she will undoubtedly have that charted as a success. However, I have spent a great deal of time working with the PVI sector, and I assure the minister that it is still feeling excluded from the expansion, despite there being just five months to go.

That point leads me to reiterate two things. First, the context is crucial. When reports talk about the originally planned level of PVI sector involvement, it is important to note that the bar for that was very low in many local authority areas. I remember meeting council officials who were shocked by the very idea that PVI sector nurseries would want to be included in the capital expansion programme.

Secondly, the proportion of entitlement that is being delivered in PVI settings does not equate to the level of partnership or engagement that was intended, even at the outset. The revenue funding rates that councils offer partner providers for delivering the entitlement hours are a basic and fundamental aspect of provision.

Let us focus on the most common planned rate for August 2020, which is £5.31 per child per hour of entitlement. That figure was derived from a 2016 report that was based on cost estimates at the time, but costs have changed since 2016. For

example, the requirement to pay the real living wage was not taken into account in 2016.

Although £5.31 is the most frequently offered rate, we see a varying picture across Scotland. In Perth and Kinross, for example, the rate was £4.00 and the planned rate, reflecting increases from August 2020, will be £5.05. In comparison, West Lothian Council will pay providers £6.80 per child per hour from the beginning of the new financial year. After accounting for the cost of providing meals, that could mean that an independent nursery in Perth would receive almost £2,000 less per child per year than one based in Linlithgow, for example. That just does not strike me as being fair—it is not a level playing field. Even if we consider that those different rates will have different cost provisions, such a differential is just wrong and surely cannot be acceptable.

It is no secret that there has been a mass exodus of PVI sector workers moving across to council-led nurseries. In large part, that has been due to the low funding rates that have been offered in the PVI sector, which cannot compete with council-offered salary levels, as my colleague Brian Whittle mentioned in his contribution. I remember that, last year, North Lanarkshire Council advertised a vacancy for an entry-level practitioner at an annual salary of £26,000 to £29,000, which was almost £10,000 more than the market average at that time.

**Sandra White:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alison Harris:** I will have to keep going—I am sorry.

I have heard, at first hand, how some nurseries are struggling to break even. In December last year, figures revealed that, between the start of 2018 and September 2019, more than 150 nurseries in the PVI sector were forced to close their businesses. That was not a temporary measure; it was permanent. Businesses failed and parents were left in the lurch. Let us not forget that the PVI sector provides more than 25 per cent of the places that the Government will need for children in the roll-out.

Towards the end of last year, I conducted a survey that was aimed at the PVI sector throughout Scotland. The response to one of the questions showed that just one in five providers—20 per cent—actually believed that the 1,140 hours model would leave their business in a sustainable position. Some 80 per cent were unsure whether they would be able to remain in business due to the current expansion—let us think about that statistic for a minute.

The reality is that, despite my questioning, the minister remains vague when it comes to offering any support, advice or guidance. Members will

have heard me mention businesses being lost and parents being left in the lurch. The more important question is: what about the children? Where do they go when those businesses are forced to close? Where is the flexibility in those circumstances? Where is consideration given to the flexibility that means that a parent's four-year-old daughter receives her entitlement hours at the same nursery as her one-year-old little brother?

I know that the Scottish Government's intention was to maintain and enhance flexibility but, sadly and without question, it is going the other way as a consequence of the roll-out. As Beatrice Wishart said, flexibility will reduce. Scottish Conservatives have long argued that flexibility should be given greater focus. It is almost exclusively the PVI sector that currently provides such flexibility, but that flexibility will also be a casualty of the roll-out. That might not have been the Government's original intention, but the Audit Scotland report also highlights the risk to flexibility that the expansion poses.

Just last week, in this very chamber, I asked the minister about the report's finding that flexibility and choice will not be in place by August. I asked about the report's exposure of the lack of any meaningful attempt to monitor the staffing drain from the PVI sector to councils, which I have raised many times over the past two years. I also asked about uncertainty over the future of paid childcare for children under three, and about planning and guidance having been rushed from the outset. The minister did not respond on flexibility or staffing, or indeed on the provision for under-threes. Instead, everything was downplayed and assurances were given that all would be well. That has been the Government's approach from the beginning.

I say to the minister that ignoring such problems will not make them go away. It is time to change that approach and tackle things head on. Alison Johnstone was absolutely correct to mention the scale of the challenges that the sector faces. In its present form, the roll-out is simply not working as planned. Meaningful and genuine partnership is not happening. Business sustainability is at risk, which ultimately affects places for children. Many speakers across the chamber have mentioned the severe staffing issues, and flexibility and choice are not likely to be in place by August 2020. Indeed, there are significant infrastructure problems.

This is actually very sad. The implementation of the policy is flawed, not the policy in principle. "Team ELC"? Seriously, minister? If the Scottish Government does not willingly accept that, the message is very clear: we have a Scottish Government that is set to fail our children and early years—[*Interruption.*] Yes, we have. Let us

make that right before it is too late. That is why I will support the motion in the name of my colleague Jamie Greene.

## Business Motion

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-21210, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 17 March 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: OECD Review of Curriculum for Excellence

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Sentencing (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) Bill

*followed by* Committee Announcements

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 18 March 2020

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Justice and the Law Officers;  
Constitution, Europe and External Affairs

*followed by* Scottish Labour Party Business

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 19 March 2020

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:  
Economy, Fair Work and Culture

*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 24 March 2020

2.00 pm Time for Reflection  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)  
*followed by* Stage 3 Proceedings: Consumer Scotland Bill  
*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill  
*followed by* Committee Announcements  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 25 March 2020

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions: Education and Skills; Health and Sport  
*followed by* Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 26 March 2020

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 11.40 am General Questions  
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.30 pm Portfolio Questions: Communities and Local Government  
*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Bill  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 16 March 2020, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** The next item of business is consideration of six Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, to move motions S5M-21206, S5M-21207 and S5M-21208 on approval of Scottish statutory instruments, S5M-21209 on sub-committee membership, S5M-21214 on designation of a lead committee and S5M-21215 on substitution on committees.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Social Security (Advocacy Service Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Social Security Chamber (Procedure and Allocation of Functions) Amendment Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Energy Efficiency (Domestic Private Rented Property) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that Shona Robison be appointed to replace Jenny Gilruth as a member of the Justice Sub-committee on Policing.

That the Parliament agrees that the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

That the Parliament agrees that Johann Lamont be appointed to replace David Stewart as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.—[*Graeme Dey*]

## Decision Time

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** I remind members that if the amendment in the name of Maree Todd is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Mary Fee will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S5M-21177.3, in the name of Maree Todd, on expansion of funded childcare, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)

Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S5M-21177.1, in the name of Mary Fee, which seeks to amend motion S5M-21177, in the name of Jamie Greene, on expansion of funded childcare, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 61, Against 58, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S5M-21177, in the name of Jamie Greene, on the expansion of funded childcare, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)  
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)  
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)  
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)  
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)  
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Davidson, Ruth (Edinburgh Central) (Con)  
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Golden, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)  
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)  
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)

Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)  
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)  
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)  
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)  
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)  
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)  
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)  
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)  
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)  
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)



Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 61, Against 58, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament recognises the strong cross-party support for the expansion of funded childcare to 1,140 hours; expresses its concern however, regarding the findings of the most recent report by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, Early learning and childcare Follow-up, which states that certain risks remain around buildings, staffing and the sustainability of the private, voluntary and independent sectors; notes with regret what has been identified by Audit Scotland as a possible loophole that prevents staff being paid the real living wage; is concerned that the report notes that it is likely that flexibility and choice for parents will not be fully implemented by August 2020, and that any delays to the expansion will impact service delivery and families who are planning to use these services, and demands that the Scottish Government urgently addresses these concerns.

**The Presiding Officer:** I propose to ask a single question on the six Parliamentary Bureau motions. As no member objects, the question is, that motions S5M-21206 to S5M-21209, S5M-21214 and S5M-21215, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Social Security (Advocacy Service Standards) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Social Security Chamber (Procedure and Allocation of Functions) Amendment Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Energy Efficiency (Domestic Private Rented Property) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that Shona Robison be appointed to replace Jenny Gilruth as a member of the Justice Sub-committee on Policing.

That the Parliament agrees that the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Bill at stage 1.

That the Parliament agrees that Johann Lamont be appointed to replace David Stewart as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The Parliament has just voted to demand that the Government respond to the Audit Scotland report on early learning and childcare. Will the Government respond to the Parliament on how it intends to address the serious issues that are identified in the report, as it has been instructed to do by the Parliament?

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you very much, Mr Greene. As most members will probably know, motions of this Parliament are expressions of the Parliament's will. There is an expectation that the Government will respond, and I am sure that it will do in due course.

## Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-20400, in the name of Linda Fabiani, on Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal 2020. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament welcomes Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal 2020, which runs throughout March; understands that donations are given and daffodil pins worn in memory of someone who has died, or to show support for Marie Curie services; recognises the dedication, hard work and contribution of volunteers across Scotland, including in East Kilbride, who raise funds and awareness during the appeal every year to support Marie Curie's services; commends the vital care and support that the charity provides in Scotland to over 7,500 people and their families every year, in their own homes across 31 local authorities, in Marie Curie hospices in Edinburgh and Glasgow and through the West Lothian Community Service; praises its information and support services, which are available for everyone affected by a terminal illness and its volunteer helper services, which provide emotional support, companionship and information to people, carers and families; notes the view that, as everyone is affected by dying, death and bereavement, all people deserve the best possible experience to deal with this, reflecting what is most important to them, and welcomes Marie Curie's ambition to enable this; recognises that it works to improve the lives of all people living with a terminal illness, their carers and families; believes that wearing the daffodil pin unites millions of people who believe that dying people should get the care and support that they need and desire, and notes the calls encouraging as many people as possible to support the Marie Curie campaign in March.

17:07

**Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** It is very strange to be on this side of the chamber for this year's debate when I was in the Presiding Officer's seat for last year's debate, which was led by my colleague Gordon MacDonald. I am glad to be leading this year's debate, and I am glad to see so many Marie Curie volunteers in the public gallery. *[Applause.]*

The debate on Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal has become an annual event; it is accompanied by an annual reception, which is always great. I have not done this before but, this year, I want to thank Richard Meade of Marie Curie's central office for all the work that he does to make sure that the appeal takes place every year. I have no doubt that, wherever he is sitting, he will be blushing.

The motion that I lodged talks about the campaign that we have every March, which involves the wearing of daffodil pins in memory of someone who has died or to show support for Marie Curie services. The pins are also worn—for

me, this is extremely important—in recognition of the dedication, the hard work and the contribution of volunteers all over Scotland.

Because the care that Marie Curie provides touches people so much, the organisation has many volunteers who, every year, provide vital care and support to more than 7,500 people and their families in their own homes across 31 local authorities in Scotland. On top of that, there are the information and support services that are available to everyone who is affected by a terminal illness.

The helper services provide emotional support, companionship and information to carers and families. After all, everyone is affected by death and bereavement, and everyone deserves the best possible experience in dealing with that, reflecting what is most important to them. Marie Curie's ambition to enable that to happen is very important, and it shows in all the work that it does, whether it is lobbying MSPs, speaking to the Government, encouraging people to volunteer or providing the training to volunteers and professional staff, including nursing staff, who carry out the vital services. Marie Curie has ambition and commitment to the individual, which is very important, as is the daffodil pin, which unites millions of people who believe in those ideals and who do that extra bit of campaigning every March.

I keep mentioning the volunteers, because they are crucial. I did a bit of research and looked up the Marie Curie website to see what volunteers do, because I thought that there might be something that I could do instead of just bumping my gums every year, putting money in a collecting tin and standing with a Marie Curie hat on every so often. I thought it might be time for me to commit to doing something more.

The first thing that I saw on the website was running and cycling, and I thought, "No way." That is not me. I can maybe do a wee bit of walking, and I might even do a wee bit of trekking and hiking if it is flat. I am absolutely not doing swimming; it is too cold and wet. I had no idea what gaming was until I clicked on the link, but I do not think that I would be very good at that either. I thought the overseas challenge sounded quite nice. I could go on holiday and pay the equivalent into Marie Curie, but then I realised that I would have to go on holiday to run, cycle, walk or hike, and I thought, "I'm not doing that either."

Then I saw the Marie Curie tea mornings, coffee afternoons and home-baking competitions, and I thought, "I could do that." It sounds quite good to sit with a cup of tea and speak with caring people who are all coming together to do good work. That led me to ask some of my colleagues what they were doing to be part of this wonderful movement.

Fiona Hyslop is like me: she does not want to walk, run, hike or swim, so she is going to a tea party at Armadale Methodist church to stuff her face with home baking.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture (Fiona Hyslop):** I am organising it.

**Linda Fabiani:** Oh, sorry! Fiona is organising it. I will tell you one thing for sure: if I know her, she will be buying the baking out of Marks and Spencer. You will notice that she is not arguing that point.

Bob Doris, who is the convener of the cross-party group on palliative care, is quite upset about not being able to be here tonight, but he wants everyone to know that the Marie Curie hospice at Stobhill in his constituency does absolutely wonderful work.

Alison Johnstone came to have a word with me just before she left the chamber. She said that, recently, the Marie Curie hospice in Edinburgh had given wonderful care to a friend of hers.

Fairly recently, Sandra White visited a Marie Curie hospice twice or three times a week to visit a mutual friend, Liz Quinn, and she was so impressed with the work that is carried out there.

I am looking at the time, Presiding Officer. You know that I never like to go over time, so I will throw away about 50 sheets of my speech.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I will give you a couple more minutes.

**Linda Fabiani:** Oh, good.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I do not know whether that was a wise decision. We will find out.

**Linda Fabiani:** I would like to give a couple more facts about the great daffodil appeal, because it is on the hook of that appeal that we have this annual debate. Scotland raises about £700,000 each year through the appeal, which sounds like an awful lot of money, but Marie Curie needs to raise more than £15 million every year to support its activities and services in Scotland. In central Scotland alone, there are 48 Marie Curie nurses providing care in NHS Lanarkshire, which is a lot of home visits and a lot of people being supported.

Marie Curie does absolutely loads in my constituency, East Kilbride, and the fundraising group there has gone from strength to strength. The only reason that they are not here tonight is because they had already made the commitment to make 14 collections in the two Morrisons stores in East Kilbride. They do wonderful work.

I have a couple of asks of the Government, which I hope that the minister will respond

positively to. Everyone recognises the need for palliative care and a palliative care plan, but we should never be complacent about that. I back Marie Curie's call for a commitment to a new national action plan. David Stewart has previously talked about the need to ensure that each individual gets the care that is best for them and their family, whether that be at home or in a hospice. Let us commit to looking again at a national action plan and co-designing it with those who know best how to do it.

We now have health and social care partnerships, which are so important to every community. I want to look at the requirement on them to publish local palliative and end-of-life care action plans and to make such plans a high priority.

Our demographics are changing and people are living longer, which is welcome, but we need to look at how best to manage that to the benefit of everyone. Everyone who volunteers for the Marie Curie charity takes that very seriously—I thank them for that. *[Applause.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I say to those in the public gallery that I understand why they are applauding, but it is not permitted. Only members may applaud.

17:17

**Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP):** I thank Linda Fabiani for shining a light on this year's Marie Curie great daffodil appeal. The appeal runs throughout March and provides members of the public with the opportunity to support Marie Curie by donating money for a daffodil pin. The pins are worn in memory of someone who has died, or to show support for Marie Curie's invaluable services and research.

As an organisation, Marie Curie cares for people in one of the most precious periods of life—their final years, months or days. By being provided with the best possible support at that time, patients are shown love, care and respect. That type of care—care in its truest sense—is incredibly important for people in that precious and important time in their lives, and many people in Scotland need palliative end-of-life care.

Raising awareness and donating money are relevant to the vast majority of Scots, because they directly benefit them or one of their loved ones. Of the 12,650 people who die in Glasgow every year, 75 per cent need palliative care. That high proportion of palliative-care need among the dying is the same in Scotland as a whole. We can see from that statistic that the great daffodil appeal is an incredibly meaningful movement.

Services that are provided by Marie Curie and its partners give dignity to people by providing choice to patients and by listening to them about their needs and preferences. There are many examples that illustrate the impact of that. One such example comes from the area that is covered by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, where 97 per cent of patients who are supported by Marie Curie are able to die in their place of choice, rather than having no options.

Facilitation of care and support at home is done by the fantastic Marie Curie nurses. They often stay with patients for hours on end—even through the night—to provide the care that is necessary to allow the patients to remain in their home. That nursing service is run by Marie Curie through the national health service, so it is free. It means that people are given dignity by being able to choose at-home care, should that be their preference, and it means that the overall cost of care is minimised. Therefore, people from all backgrounds are able to make end-of-life care choices that suit their needs and wishes. The Marie Curie hospices in Glasgow and Edinburgh are examples of that provision of choice and dignity.

Marie Curie also works in collaboration with partners including Macmillan Cancer Support nurses. They combine their efforts to offer exceptional support and pain-management advice to patients with terminal cancer. I acknowledge the work of all the Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers at the Beatson west of Scotland cancer centre in my constituency. They work with Maggie's and Marie Curie to provide the best possible support for cancer patients from across Scotland.

As my colleague Linda Fabiani said, in order to keep all that fantastic work going, Marie Curie needs our support—it must raise £15 million every year in order to run all its services in Scotland. The great daffodil appeal is a fantastic way to contribute to that, so I encourage everyone to donate and pick up a daffodil today in support of the nurses, volunteers and researchers, and in memory of loved ones who have passed away.

17:21

**Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** The Presiding Officer sneezing is not an auspicious start for me.

I thank Linda Fabiani for bringing the debate to Parliament. I am proud of all our charities. I recommend that she should not get on a bicycle, or she will end up like me.—[*Laughter.*]

The debate caused a stushie at home. When I told my wife that I was speaking in it, she wondered whether—because she is the chair of the local Macmillan fundraising group—I was

wandering. However, I pointed out that, as she knows, this is not a time for splits, because every organisation works hand-in-hand on such issues.

In 2003, my father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer and died a year later at home. In 2005, my mother was diagnosed with cancer and died that year at home. In 2006, my father was diagnosed with cancer and died in hospital, because the doctor considered it to be too risky to send him home. To this day, I struggle to understand what the risks were, because we all knew what the end of the journey would be, and so did he.

Those events prove that bad things often happen in threes, but more important is that they proved to me three other points: first, that the skill of doctors and nurses makes pain largely optional; secondly, that with the aid of charities such as Marie Curie patients can come home to die if they want to; and, thirdly, that we need substantial investment in community based care. I will look briefly at each of those issues.

First, is pain optional? In this day and age, we are blessed with medicines that mean that pain is almost optional. The days of being told to grit our teeth and take the pain are, in most cases, a thing of the past. They are not quite totally a thing of the past, because it often takes time to get the dosage correct for a patient. To do that, we need the help of nurses such as the Marie Curie nurses who provide specialist care based on in-depth knowledge and experience.

Secondly, I turn to the reasons why we should promote people going home to die. If patients want to go home to die, it is a duty of a civilised society to make that happen. Not everyone wants to go home to die and not every family is equipped to make that possible for their loved ones. However, why we would deny a person the ability to do so because a doctor deems the risks to be too high is beyond my comprehension. We need to change the views of doctors.

The third issue is that substantial investment in local care is needed. In the past few years, there have been clear pressures on our health service and a reduction in local healthcare professionals such as community nurses and home visitors. That needs to be reversed: we need to increase investment in local services, especially if we are to cope with an ageing population that will result in an increase of about 10,000 people dying each year in Scotland.

For those reasons, I want to commend all the work that Marie Curie does to make a difference and to support those who need its help. Marie Curie can do that only because of the extraordinary work of its fundraisers. For example, in Inverness a fire walk raised £13,000, an art sale raised £12,000 and a plant sale raised £6,000.

Last year alone, £39,000 was raised. I am told that, already this year, fundraisers in the area have raised £26,000, which is seriously impressive and seriously needed. I have told my wife that she and her committee need to do a lot better.

I welcome the debate and stand in awe of all that the people who are involved with Marie Curie do. They are impressive and inspirational, and Parliament and Scotland should applaud them. I do.

17:25

**Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP):** Marie Curie is a household name, and rightly so. Its nurses and volunteers give people with a terminal illness choice and dignity at the end of life. This fantastic charity makes it possible for people faced with a terminal illness to have the choice to die peacefully, in their own home, surrounded by the people they love. We simply cannot put a price on the work that it does. In Scotland, in 2018-19, 7,595 people with a terminal illness were cared for at home by Marie Curie nurses, but the reality is that one in four people in Scotland are still missing out on palliative care at the end of their lives.

We are all living longer, and it is estimated that around 43,000 people die each year in Scotland needing palliative care—that is around 75 per cent of all deaths. Sadly, health inequalities exist, with people from deprived areas, people with a minority ethnic background, people who are socially isolated or live alone and people who identify as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community being just some of the groups who are less likely to ask for help.

Everyone deserves a dignified death. Around 50 per cent of people in Scotland die in hospitals, but the majority of people would like to die at home, with the appropriate care. That is the care that Marie Curie offers: care that allows them and their families, despite a terminal diagnosis, to have the best quality of life.

The need for Marie Curie has never been greater, and that is why we should support the great daffodil appeal, which is Marie Curie's biggest annual fundraising campaign. From wearing a daffodil pin to organising large gala dinners and small bake sales, there are countless ways for people to get involved.

In my constituency, Marie Curie fundraising groups in Bishopbriggs, Kirkintilloch, Lenzie and Bearsden do fantastic work. They are just some of the 85 groups in Scotland that organise collections and tea parties. Alongside that, they speak in schools, clubs, groups and associations in the local area, and they always welcome support from the local community to help them grow and

increase the support that they give to Marie Curie. I want to give a huge shout-out to the amazing volunteers who do that incredible work. They are fantastic.

However, 11,000 people who need palliative care in Scotland each year cannot access it, and the charity needs to raise £15 million a year to support its services. It is calling on the Scottish Government to commit to a new national action plan for palliative care following 2021—one that is co-designed with key stakeholders, including all health and social care partnerships, practitioners and third sector organisations.

After international women's day last Sunday, I would like to conclude by remembering the remarkable woman who made all this possible. Marie Curie was one of five children, born into a poor family in Poland in 1867. She had an insatiable appetite for learning and, through sheer determination, she entered Sorbonne University in Paris, where she read physics and mathematics. Her discovery of radium and polonium, for which she and her husband Pierre Curie won the Nobel prize, has saved millions of lives throughout the world. Indeed, next month sees the release of a new film about her life: "Radioactive", starring Rosamund Pike, which I am sure will be fascinating. I think that, in it, we also learn the little-known fact that her daughter Irène was awarded the Nobel prize for chemistry for discovering that radioactive atoms could be created artificially.

Let us carry on these amazing women's legacy by helping Marie Curie and its fantastic army of volunteers to care for more people. I urge everyone to get involved in the great daffodil appeal in any way that they can. Every daffodil counts.

17:29

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I congratulate Linda Fabiani on securing the debate and thank her for her very thoughtful speech. I am glad to have the opportunity to speak in the debate, because on Friday evening I attended a Marie Curie fundraiser at the Farr estate near Inverness. It was a James Bond themed evening that made thousands of pounds for the charity. I was shaken but not stirred by the event. *[Laughter.]* Members could perhaps say that I am the man with the golden pun. *[Laughter.]* I will make no more jokes, Presiding Officer.

On a serious note, I congratulate Marie Curie on all the sterling work that its nurses and volunteers do, not just in my region of the Highlands and Islands but across Scotland and the UK. I welcome all the volunteers who are in the gallery this evening.

The daffodil appeal began here in Scotland in 1986, and it soon evolved into the widely known fundraising tradition that we are commemorating today. It is important that we appreciate Marie Curie's success in caring for the estimated 7,600 people in Scotland with a terminal illness and that, as we look to the future, we support the organisation's fundraising endeavours.

What began in 1948 as a small foundation whose first big donation was a diamond engagement ring became Marie Curie, which is a massive and truly positive force for good when it comes to healthcare and medical research. As we heard from Edward Mountain, in the Highlands and Islands, Marie Curie has been a fierce advocate for the right to die at home—a cause that I have enthusiastically endorsed—and it has been able to provide effective end-of-life care to cancer patients and those with other terminal illnesses.

In 2015, Marie Curie's 33 Highland nurses provided nearly 20,000 hours of care free of charge to 379 patients. In 2018-19, my region was fortunate enough to have 222 Marie Curie volunteers and 38 Highland nurses, who continued to provide exceptional healthcare services. According to the recent Marie Curie briefing, it has supported at least 89 per cent of patients in Highland, Grampian, Orkney and the Western Isles in dying in the place of their choice.

There are many fundraising groups across the region that are enthusiastic supporters of the organisation and the great daffodil appeal. Mother-and-daughter duo Kate and Olivia Howatson-Kerr walked all the way along the north coast 500 route to raise money for medical charities including Marie Curie, and their 29-day fundraising journey raised over £9,000.

Currently, Marie Curie supporters in Inverness are actively recruiting more volunteers to help with fundraising for the great daffodil appeal. One of the Inverness volunteers, Margaret Henderson, describing her experiences working on the campaign, said:

"I've met so many kind and interesting people along the way, many of whom have directly benefited from the care provided by Marie Curie nurses in their own homes."

The Inverness fundraising group, which raised over £39,000 for charity last year, has already raised £26,000 this year, and it is organising multiple events for the great daffodil appeal.

However, what speaks to Marie Curie's success and its reputation for kindness the most is perhaps the support that it provides to families, as well as to those who are reaching their final days. Recently, Brian Hanslip shared his experiences of a Marie Curie hospice and how the nurses took care of his daughter Charlotte in her final days. He said:

"The staff were like family to us. Every time you stepped through that door there were smiles and hugs".

The success of the fundraiser is extremely important in aiding Marie Curie in its mission to support everyone who wishes to die at home, surrounded by their community of family and friends.

I will conclude, Presiding Officer, as you are giving me that look again. *[Laughter.]* Former US president Barack Obama once said:

"We see the future not as something out of our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort."

I applaud Marie Curie for the incredible work that it does and wish it luck and support for the great daffodil appeal 2020.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You have given away the trick. I put my glasses on when I am looking to you to conclude.

17:34

**Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** I sincerely thank my friend and colleague Linda Fabiani for bringing this debate to the chamber. Her speech was not only thoughtful, as David Stewart said, but humorous.

As Linda Fabiani said, in recent years we have debated Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal annually. My memory is not as good as it used to be, but I recall that I have had the opportunity to take part in at least some of those debates. Indeed, I am fond of reminding colleagues that I think that I was the first MSP to host a Marie Curie blooming great tea party, with very kind donations of home baking. I will get that boast out of the way, because I am a modest sort of guy.

I thank Edward Mountain for sharing his story from his background—others may do the same. It was very moving.

I will recognise the origins of this fantastic charity in a slightly different way from others. A hospital in Hampstead named after Marie Curie was completed in 1930 and opened by the then Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin. The hospital specialised in radiological treatment for women who suffered from a range of diseases, including cancer. The committee involved decided to retain the name Marie Curie in the charitable medical field. By 1950, the appeal that was launched had raised £30,000 and the Marie Curie Memorial Foundation was born. Today it is known simply as Marie Curie.

We recently celebrated international women's day, which is a tribute to the power and contribution of women across the globe. One of those important women was certainly Marie

Sklodowska Curie. Born in Poland, she became a French citizen by marriage. She was a Nobel prize-winning physicist—the first woman to win the award.

Marie Curie developed the theory of radioactivity, discovered polonium and radium—as Rona Mackay rightly pointed out—and developed them for use in mobile radiography units for troops during the first world war. However, her passion killed her. In 1934, at the age of 66, she died in France from an auto-immune disease that was caused by overexposure to radiation during her research. She was a truly remarkable woman, and it is fitting that the charity that we are celebrating today carries her name as it conducts its vital work for people.

We are all aware of the work that the Marie Curie charity carries out in our constituencies and regions. All of us will know someone who goes through an end-of-life experience. That experience does not just affect one person but is a very difficult situation for the entire family. Marie Curie staff provide help and advice to people who are going through those experiences. The nurses provide free one-to-one nursing for patients with terminal illnesses, which can be overnight or even at very short notice—it is a very flexible service, reflecting the often unpredictable nature of terminal illness.

For many people, just knowing that the support is there is a great comfort. The families of terminally ill loved ones, who are juggling their own lives while sorting out the lives of their loved ones, also find the support a great help at that crucial time. I suspect that the Marie Curie services of its nurses will be required in this country and other places over the next few weeks, and probably in a way in which they have never been required for some time, as a result of the coronavirus. I will be thinking about the nurses, as they help us through the difficult days to come.

I will say a little about local fundraising. In my constituency, Marie Curie is blessed with a strong base of volunteers who raise funds from members of the public. The Stirling fundraising group has raised £42,000 since 2013—they are the fantastic volunteers who Linda Fabiani was quite right to concentrate on in her speech—through the efforts of the Marie Curie shop on the high street and fundraising activities in local supermarkets. They will be at Stirling farmers market in April.

Everyone deserves dignity and respect in their final days and hours. We should all consider what we can do to help through the great daffodil appeal. I thank everyone who is involved in the Marie Curie organisation for their amazing work.

17:38

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** After last year's interregnum, I join Bruce Crawford in welcoming back my friend Linda Fabiani to her rightful place in the body of the chamber, leading the annual members' business debate on the great daffodil appeal in aid of Marie Curie. I mean no disrespect to her colleague Gordon MacDonald, who did sterling work last year, but it felt rather strange not having Linda Fabiani setting the scene and regaling us with her fundraising exploits—even if they appeared to accumulate rather than expend calories along the way.

I add my voice to the tributes that have already been paid to the outstanding and selfless work by Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers on behalf of people with a terminal illness and their families. They genuinely help to provide dignity in dying.

Although many people are able to access palliative care, that is not always the case. It must concern us all that around 11,000 people in Scotland who need palliative care struggle to access it. With annual death rates on the rise, the number of people who are unable to access the end-of-life care that they need will increase unless steps are taken to address the issue. Commendably, the Government's action plan commits to ensuring that, by 2021, everyone who needs palliative care will get it. However, at this stage, that looks like a tall ask. It will require greater priority from health and social care partnerships as well as resourcing from the Government.

As we, hopefully, progress toward meeting that target, we also need to address the inequality of access and the difficulties that are faced by particular groups: those who are aged over 85, those who live alone, ethnic minority groups and those who are from deprived communities, as Rona Mackay suggested. We also need to address the large disparities between access for those who are affected by cancer and those with other terminal conditions, such as dementia, motor neurone disease and heart failure. All of those issues underscore the need for the revised action plan that Marie Curie has asked for.

As I have done in previous debates, I acknowledge the efforts of those who are responsible for delivering Marie Curie services in Orkney, in particular. Although the number inevitably remains relatively small, I was heartened to see that six people were supported over the past year—all of whom were able to die in their place of choice—and that numbers continue to rise. All of that helps to explain why additional Marie Curie nurses are being recruited, which I am delighted, although not surprised, to hear, given the feedback from those who have benefited from the service up to this point.

Meeting the need in future will require close collaboration by Marie Curie with general practitioners and other relevant local services—a genuine partnership between the public and third sectors. I know from speaking to Linda Lennie and Sara Duncan, who are two of Marie Curie's fabulous team of volunteers in Orkney and who are in the gallery this evening, that they are very keen to see such a partnership develop during the years ahead.

More broadly, across the community in Orkney there continues to be strong and growing support for the work that Marie Curie does locally. That continues to be reflected in the success of fundraising efforts by local volunteers such as Linda and Sara, but it also prompts a better understanding and awareness of what Marie Curie offers. That is very much welcomed.

I offer all the Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers, in Orkney and across the country, my heartfelt thanks for the exceptional work that they do in allowing people to die with dignity and in the place of their choice. My thanks also to Madame Daffodil herself, Linda Fabiani, for allowing this evening's debate to take place, and for the chance for all of us to bump our gums in the interest of the best of causes.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Due to the number of members who wish to speak in this debate, I am minded to accept a motion without notice, under rule 8.14.3, 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.—[Linda Fabiani]

*Motion agreed to.*

17:43

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate and congratulate my colleague Linda Fabiani on bringing it forward. What a fabulous opening speech she made—and what a wonderful celebration of the Marie Curie volunteers. The great daffodil appeal is one of the most iconic and recognised fundraising drives of the year. I echo Ms Fabiani's support for Richard Meade and the Marie Curie charity.

People all over Scotland wear their yellow daffodil with a sense of pride, to signify that they will donate money to support Marie Curie to deliver its world-class palliative care services in our communities and our hospices. The appeal enables the public to support Marie Curie's research, nurses, community workers and its campaigning, which support the information and

services that it provides to families whose loved ones are in, or require, palliative care.

As a registered nurse—although I am a surgical nurse, not a palliative care nurse—and deputy convener of the Health and Sport Committee, I have a keen interest in our care sector and I feel passionately about ensuring that we equip the sector and our population for years to come. Across Scotland and internationally we are seeing populations ageing better, living longer lives and generally becoming healthier. Although that is welcome, it presents challenges: with age comes a greater risk of health complications and a greater need for social care support and services.

The Health and Sport Committee has just commenced an inquiry into social care. I look forward to the inquiry providing information about end-of-life care, in particular. The evidence suggests that there must be an onus on healthcare professionals to have realistic conversations with people about their wishes in relation to their future care needs. That is realistic medicine and such an approach is essential if we are to support people to stay at home or in a homely environment and have care that is suited to their needs.

Marie Curie is at the forefront of pioneering research in Scotland. One of the charity's most recent publications, which was produced jointly with the University of Edinburgh, suggests that, by 2040, 66 per cent or two-thirds of deaths in Scotland will take place at home, in a care home or in a hospice. It is essential that more people have the opportunity to die in a place of their choosing and that we meet those future care needs.

In 2018-19, in the NHS Dumfries and Galloway area, which is part of my South Scotland region, the region's 31 dedicated Marie Curie nurses made 4,359 visits to 542 people. Support from those competent professionals enabled 72.5 per cent of the patients who had palliative care needs to die in a place of their choosing. That is welcome.

I am pleased that Marie Curie has seven shops in south-west Scotland that raise funds for the charity. It also has 896 dedicated volunteers. There are shops in Dumfries, Newton Stewart, Stranraer, Ayr, Troon, Girvan and Kilmarnock. I thank each and every one of the folk who work in the shops for their efforts to make other people's lives more comfortable and to support patients' loved ones.

Issues to do with out-of-hours Marie Curie coverage in Wigtownshire have been brought to my attention. I have written to Marie Curie and NHS Dumfries and Galloway about the coverage and I hope to find a solution in due course.



I am proud that the Scottish Government has an ambitious vision, which is set out in the Government's "Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care":

"By 2021, everyone in Scotland who needs palliative care will have access to it."

It is great that progress is being made, with the support of Marie Curie and others in the sector. I look forward to hearing an update from the minister on recent progress.

I again congratulate Linda Fabiani on securing the debate and I congratulate everyone at Marie Curie on the fantastic work that they do.

17:47

**Ruth Maguire (Cunninghame South) (SNP):** I thank Linda Fabiani for bringing this important topic to the Parliament and I acknowledge the lovely speeches that members of all parties have made.

The debate is about raising awareness and encouraging people to support Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal. It is about a bit more than that, too. Everyone knows someone who has been touched by a life-threatening condition, and many of us will have lost someone close to us. It is estimated that around 75 per cent of the people who die each year in Scotland need end-of-life care, and it is sad that a quarter of people do not get the care and support that they deserve at the end of their lives.

In 2018, 1,735 people died in North Ayrshire. Around 1,300 of those folk needed palliative care. Marie Curie nurses provided support for more than 95 per cent of those patients—and there are only 11 Marie Curie nurses in North Ayrshire. I want to take a moment to thank all the Marie Curie nurses and healthcare assistants in Ayrshire and throughout Scotland, who do a wonderful job of providing care and comfort to people in their final days. Life matters, from the first day to the very last day, and everyone can play their part.

I am proud to tell members about the volunteers of Marie Curie's Irvine and district fundraising group, which has helped to raise around £6,000 a year since 2015. I was privileged to join members of the group for an hour or so last Friday, to help with the collection—I am really grateful to them for not making me wear one of those big daffodil hats. The hard-working volunteers give up their time to organise local events and activities and to support local people, clubs and organisations in fundraising. They relentlessly spread the word about Marie Curie's work. I know that the group would welcome some new members, so I encourage anyone who would like to join them to do so.

The good news about our ageing population—and it is good news—is that people are living longer, but it brings some resource challenges across the health and social care sector for workforce, care delivery and, of course, finance. We know that, given the choice, most people would choose to die peacefully and at home, so I echo Linda Fabiani's ask and reiterate that we need to make sure that palliative care is a priority nationally and locally.

We need to support the people who are helping to deliver these vital services and we need to support Marie Curie.

17:50

**The Minister for Older People and Equalities (Christina McKelvie):** On behalf of the Scottish Government, I also welcome this year's great daffodil appeal and thank Madame Daffodil—Linda Fabiani—for bringing the motion to the chamber. It has been a lovely debate and it is a privilege for me to listen and respond to it.

The Marie Curie great daffodil appeal has been running successfully since 1986, which is an achievement of which Marie Curie and its staff and volunteers should be extremely proud. I also thank those across Scotland whose generous donations, fundraising and all the other things that they do have helped to make the Marie Curie great daffodil appeal such a great success for many years.

As Emma Harper said, we all wear our daffodils with great pride. When I see everyone wearing their daffodils, I always think that we are nearly into spring, and the nights are fair drawin oot rather than in. It feels as though there is a bit of renewal going on.

His name is Stewart, David Stewart—a wee James Bond joke there—and he reminded us that the great daffodil appeal started in Scotland. As many members know, I have long supported the great daffodil appeal and the work of Marie Curie in my own constituency, and it is a privilege for me to voice my support for the campaign this year in this setting.

I also want to give a shout out to Shona Robison, although she is not in the chamber. She was out in Dundee with her collecting can the other day, and I remind Ruth Maguire that Shona wore the big hat. I wore the big hat last year, and I think that we should sponsor Ruth Maguire to wear it.

My family has also been greatly supported by Marie Curie, its staff and volunteers at the Stobhill hospice. That was a time of great sadness for my family, but having that support was incredibly important.

In the short time that I have available, it would be impossible for me to cover all the services and support that Marie Curie provides. I will simply say that the contribution of Marie Curie to the wellbeing of those who are near the end of their life, their families and everyone around them is invaluable. Anyone who has been through that process will value that contribution.

Many colleagues across the chamber have reflected on how much Marie Curie services mean to them personally and to their constituents. That highlights the broad scope and reach of Marie Curie's work and why it is so important that we take the time, today, in our chamber, and for the month of March, to wear our daffodils and do what we do to voice our support.

The incredible work done by Marie Curie to provide expert care and support to those who are in the last months or weeks of their life, as well as to their families and carers, is more important than ever. David Stewart talked about people in the Highlands and Islands saying that they felt that the staff were like family, and I am sure that that will resonate with many who have had Marie Curie's care and support.

The Marie Curie great daffodil appeal therefore presents a timely opportunity for us to reflect on the challenges that we face and to consider what else we can do to address them. Scotland is already a world leader in the field of palliative and end-of-life care, and I am proud of the great improvements that we have made in palliative care over the past few years.

Rona Mackay and Emma Harper told us that staying at home, or coming home to die surrounded by one's family, cannot or does not happen for many people. Edward Mountain eloquently reminded us of the need that we all have to say goodbye in dignified way by sharing his personal experience, and we are grateful to him for that. Ruth Maguire also reminded us that 25 per cent of people do not get such care and support at the end of their lives. We will strive to make sure that such care and support are given.

We have had improvements, but they are possible only through the hard work of all health and social care professionals. I put on my record my thanks to them for all their hard work—particularly, as others have said, in the difficult times that we face right now.

To know that a loved one is being looked after with care and compassion at a difficult time in life is a real comfort. Rona Mackay, Bill Kidd, Edward Mountain and Linda Fabiani, as well as many other members, paid tribute to the volunteers, and rightly so—we need to support them because they are absolutely second to none in everything that they do.

I think that we could raise a bit of money by sponsoring Linda Fabiani to hike, run, cycle and swim. Let us see how much money we can make from her doing that. She is my pal; she is sitting right behind me.

**Linda Fabiani:** No. *[Laughter.]*

**Christina McKelvie:** I suppose that that was better than getting lamped by something from the back of the chamber. Linda Fabiani is a dear friend of mine and I am sure that she could run, hike and cycle. She is making faces at me now.

Bruce Crawford told us all that he had a blooming great tea party—I am still waiting for my invite. He is leaving the Parliament next year, but will he have another blooming great tea party so that we can all come? I think that that would be a great leaving party, and we could raise money for Marie Curie at the same time.

In December 2015, we published our “Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care”, which many members, including Linda Fabiani, spoke about. The framework set out a number of commitments that are designed to improve the quality and availability of palliative and end-of-life care across Scotland. I am delighted to see that it has generated such positive results that Marie Curie is calling for a new one when the current one ends in 2021. I say to Marie Curie that I cannot make a commitment to that today on behalf of my health colleagues, but an election year is a great year for getting politicians to listen to what one's needs are. That is a wee hint.

It is important that we look to the future and at what we need to do next to maintain or advance palliative and end-of-life care. Partnership working is one thing that we can do. Bill Kidd and Edward Mountain spoke about the benefits of partnership working, especially with others in the sector such as MacMillan Cancer Support. I know that the MacMillan partnership is one that is very close to home for Edward Mountain, and I wish his wife all the best in her fundraising efforts.

David Stewart spoke about the 20,000 hours of care that are provided in the Highlands. If we multiply that number across the whole country, we can imagine how many hours of care and kindness are provided. That is something to be proud of.

Delivering high-quality palliative care is something that members of all parties feel very strongly about. Regardless of where we are next year, there will be a desire to keep driving forward improvements. We have a great platform to work from.

Linda Fabiani and others asked about the local action plans. Ministers have asked officials to reflect carefully on the successes of the current

framework and to work with stakeholders, including Marie Curie, over the coming year to identify further opportunities and ideas to improve and develop our palliative and end-of-life care services. However, it is important to acknowledge that if we are to continue to improve services to truly meet the needs of people who are near the end of life, we must first understand the needs of the different communities across Scotland. Therefore, it was important to hear from members from the Highlands and Islands and other areas about those differences and the support that connects people in their areas.

It is essential that we create the right conditions nationally to support local communities in their planning, and the local plans are relevant to that. Key to the delivery of palliative and end-of-life care services is our work on health and social care integration. Integration authorities are working with local communities and building on expertise in partnership with organisations such as Marie Curie to commission services that are truly designed to meet the palliative and end-of-life care needs of both their communities and the individual.

It is important that that work is reflected, as it is, in our budget this year. The budget provides investment of more than £810 million in social care and integration, and we are on track to deliver our commitment that more than 50 per cent of front-line NHS spending will be shifted to community health services by the end of this parliamentary session.

I hope that Linda Fabiani, Liam McArthur and others will be pleased to hear that more integration authorities are developing local plans for improving services. Marie Curie has rightly highlighted the local plan approach as being key to making improvements in local services. I look forward to seeing how that work develops over the coming year.

I am sure that we all look forward to viewing the film “Radioactive”, which Rona Mackay reminded us of, about the life of Marie Curie. She had a place in one of our debates last week and when the Scottish Women’s Convention took over the chamber last Saturday, and she is one of the women we remember on international women’s day.

I have used up a lot of time, so I will close. I believe that, through the excellent work of specialist organisations such as Marie Curie and our on-going collaborative and partnership approach to improvement and development, we can, as a nation, remain at the forefront of innovation in palliative and end-of-life care.

I welcome Marie Curie’s contribution to that work, and I am proud to support its efforts for my family and the families of everybody here. I say to

all the volunteers and workers in the public gallery that I want to praise you—I am really proud of your work and your efforts in raising and maintaining awareness of the topic through events such as the great daffodil appeal. I wish you well for the month of March and the coming months—we will probably see you all when we write our manifestos next year. Thank you.

*Meeting closed at 18:00.*



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